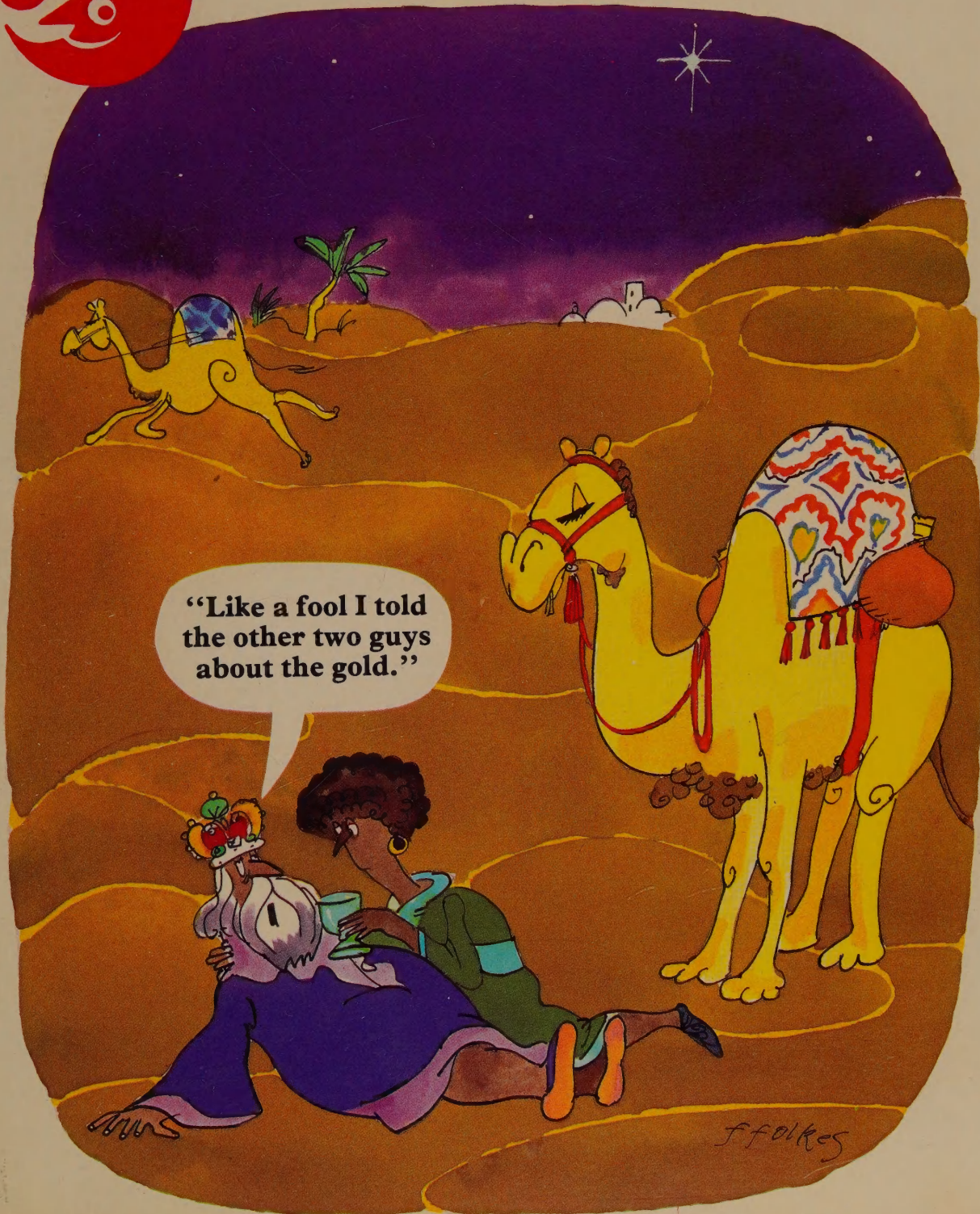


Pick of punch

Edited by
Alan Coren



Edited by Alan Coren

Pick of Punch

There can't be too many books in which director Terry Jones spills the inside story on LIFE OF BRIAN, Paul Theroux hangs around chemists' shops, Alan Coren biographs the world's only heterosexual novelist, and Richard Gordon explains how to disembowel yourself for money. The sort of book you have to look for, if you're after that kind of thing, is one containing the Parisian memoirs of Nigel Dempster, Peter Tinniswood's amazing account of the first and last German Test Match, and the explanation of how George Melly woke up in New York, and if you're that kind of reader, then there's every chance you'll also be expecting to find out what Robert Morley thinks about his audiences, what Keith Waterhouse thinks about the TUC attitude to outside lavatories, what Simon Hoggart thinks about bent MPs, and what Alan Brien thinks about everything. Nor will it come as a shock to discover what Jill Tweedie, Basil Boothroyd, Humphrey Lyttelton, Benny Green and Paul Jennings have in common with, say, Jeffrey Bernard, John Wells, Cyril Ray, Barry Norman, Hunter Davies, and Paul Johnson, not to mention why David Taylor, E. S. Turner, Kenneth Robinson, Angus McGill, Jonathan Sale, Fay Maschler and Katharine Whitehorn should suddenly find themselves embroiled in the . . .

In short, what you're looking for is the funniest, cleverest, most unpredictable book of the year, provided the hilarious text is accompanied by the best cartoons you can find anywhere in the galaxy.

Well, by the most incredible coincidence, you happen to be holding it. It's a funny world.

PICK OF PUNCH







Pick of PUNCH

*edited by
Alan Coren*

HUTCHINSON

London Melbourne Sydney Auckland Johannesburg

Hutchinson & Co. (Publishers) Ltd

An imprint of the Hutchinson Publishing Group

3 Fitzroy Square, London W1P 6JD

Hutchinson Group (Australia) Pty Ltd
30-32 Cremorne Street, Richmond South, Victoria 3121
PO Box 151, Broadway, New South Wales 2007

Hutchinson Group (NZ) Ltd
32-34 View Road, PO Box 40-086, Glenfield, Auckland 10

Hutchinson Group (SA) Pty Ltd
PO Box 337, Bergvlei 2012, South Africa

First Published 1980

©Punch Publications Ltd 1980

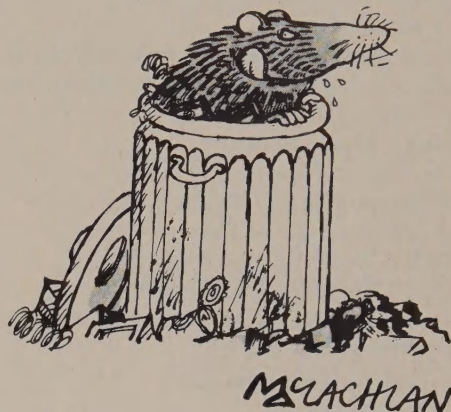
Printed in Great Britain by The Anchor Press Ltd
and bound by Wm Brendon & Son Ltd
both of Tiptree, Essex

ISBN 0 09 143680 X



Contents

FREAKY FABLES <i>Handelsman</i>	8
Getting the Hump <i>Alan Coren</i>	9
On Our Metal <i>Roger Woddis</i>	10
SERVICE WITH A STYLE <i>Dickinson</i>	11
Metropolis <i>Alan Brien</i>	12
ROGUE'S GALLERY <i>Mahood</i>	14
Under Plain Cover <i>Keith Waterhouse</i>	16
Let's Parler Franglais!	17
Latin Tourist Phrase Book <i>Miles Kington</i>	18
Lesser Degrees <i>Jonathan Sale</i>	19
ONCE ROUND THE BLOC <i>Bill Tidy</i>	21
Theatre of the Absurd <i>Richard Gordon</i>	24
Good and Faithful Servant <i>Roger Woddis</i>	25
The Making of Brian Terry <i>Jones</i>	26
NOVEL RELATIONSHIPS <i>Heath</i>	27
Did You Know?	28
LIVING WITH FATHER <i>Breeze</i>	30
ITV2	32
Ill Met by Moonlight <i>Stanley Reynolds</i>	34
Let's Parler Franglais!	35
AMERICAN GRAFFITI <i>Martin</i>	36
Straw Poles <i>William Davis</i>	37
Start the Year with Richard Baker	38
Currying Favour <i>Alexander Frater</i>	39
Handyman Punch	40
Let Freedom Ring!	41
Cinema <i>ffolkes</i>	42
Aqfalt - Iq - Sqh, Lost Palace of Pqueu <i>Basil Boothroyd</i>	44
By Bicycle Down the Opium Route <i>Alexander Frater</i>	46
Transatlantic Cables <i>Anthony Holden</i>	48
Shoptalk <i>Jacky Gillott</i>	50
Random Sample <i>Paul Jennings</i>	51
Yours, Faithfully Reproduced <i>Miles Kington</i>	53
The Unnatural History of Selborne <i>Alan Coren</i>	54
UP AND OVER <i>Albert</i>	56
A Nation of Shopkeepers	58
SITE FOR SORE EYES <i>Mahood</i>	60
Metropolis <i>Alan Brien</i>	62
The Singular History of Himmelweit <i>Peter Tinniswood</i>	64
Tons of Love for Lucky Norm!	67
Mellymobile <i>George Melly</i>	68
Not The Times Personal Column	69
WHAT'S BLACK AND WHITE AND RED ALL OVER <i>Mahood</i>	70
My Public <i>Robert Morley</i>	72
Sex à la Carte <i>Fay Maschler</i>	73
In an Ideal World <i>Barry Norman</i>	74
Theatre <i>Hewison</i>	76
SPRING OFFENSIVE <i>McMurtry</i>	78
Gloss Finish <i>David Taylor</i>	80
Red Star over Bethlehem <i>E. S. Turner</i>	82
YOUNG AT ART <i>Bill Stott</i>	84
Metropolis <i>Nigel Dempster</i>	86



Privy Council <i>Keith Waterhouse</i>	88
What the Paupers Say <i>Basil Boothroyd</i>	90
Paper Moon <i>Alan Coren</i>	91
On the House <i>Simon Hoggart</i>	93
FREAKY FABLES <i>Handelsman</i>	94
The Complete Child Breeder <i>Richard Gordon</i>	96
Stout Fellow <i>Alexander Frater</i>	98
SEPARATE TABLES <i>ffolkes</i>	100
Israelis Considering Boil Welfare	102
My Lords, Ladies, Posterity <i>Paul Johnson</i>	103
Shoptalk <i>Tom Crabtree</i>	104
MILLIONAIRE MINERS <i>Bill Tidy</i>	105
Garland of Valentines <i>E. S. Turner</i>	108
LITTLE WILLIES <i>Larry</i>	110
No Proust, No Iron Mask, November <i>R. G. G. Price</i>	112
Tinker, Tailor, All Fall Down <i>Basil Boothroyd</i>	113
Little Victims <i>John Wells</i>	115
The Nipperkraft Catalogue	116
PREGNANT PAUSE <i>Harpur</i>	118
Just Williamson <i>David Taylor</i>	120
Blithe Spirits <i>Jonathan Sale</i>	121
In an Ideal World <i>Jeffrey Bernard</i>	123
Oh, Well That's All Right Then	124
LAST OF THE FEW <i>Honeysett</i>	126
WHAT IN THE WORLD? <i>Roth</i>	128
In an Ideal World <i>Jill Tweedie</i>	130
Television <i>Jensen</i>	132
History is Debunk	134
Shoptalk <i>Humphrey Lyttelton</i>	135
U AND YOURS <i>Harpur</i>	136
Father's Day <i>Hunter Davies</i>	139
Jacob Cracker <i>Benny Green</i>	141
100 Years of News Pictures	142
Western Reproaches <i>Robert Morley</i>	144
Let's Parler Franglais!	145
JUST DANDY <i>ffolkes</i>	146
Manny Alive <i>Keith Waterhouse</i>	147
Let's Parler Franglais!	148
Woody Alien <i>Miles Kington</i>	149
Stout Party <i>Cyril Ray</i>	151
THE PET SET <i>McMurtry</i>	152
I Was Churchill's Double	154
Shoptalk <i>Angus McGill</i>	156
This Way Out? <i>Basil Boothroyd</i>	157
Screen Test <i>Kenneth Robinson</i>	159
Dear Mrs Thatcher <i>Sheridan Morley</i>	161
The Worst Rail Journey in the World <i>E. S. Turner</i>	162
Fever Pitch <i>Katharine Whitehorn</i>	164
Father's Day <i>Hunter Davies</i>	166
Handyman Punch	167
Spring Walk: Chester-le-Conklin to Bowel (35 miles)	168
FREAKY FABLES <i>Handelsman</i>	170
Straight Man <i>Alan Coren</i>	171
The Silicon Con <i>Paul Johnson</i>	173
CLUNK CLICK <i>Larry</i>	174
La Bête <i>Clotilde</i>	176
Pennies from Heaven <i>Basil Boothroyd</i>	178
LIGHT FANTASTIC <i>Heath</i>	180
Pilgrim's Progress <i>Guy Pierce</i>	182
Fear of Flying <i>James Watson</i>	184
Chips with Everything (batteries extra)	186
Shoptalk <i>Paul Theroux</i>	188
Gob Stoppers <i>Keith Waterhouse</i>	189
Springtime for Edna <i>Barry Humphries</i>	191
Home Hints	192



Introduction

THE STORY SO FAR: In the summer of 1841, with all Europe in political disarray, war raging in Afghanistan, the Chartist strikes threatening industrial chaos in Britain, and the American presidency in disorder (there were *two* Presidents elected that year), a group of madmen and layabouts got together in the back room of a London boozier to decide what could be done about the grievous world situation. After some thirty or forty creative pints, they came up with the answer: nothing. So they decided to found *Punch* instead.

Those of you who have been regular readers of the seven thousand weekly issues since then will know how the story developed. For the rest, the thing is rather too complicated to limn, and I should prefer merely to bring you rapidly up to date. In the summer of 1980, 139 years on, with all Europe in political disarray, war raging in Afghanistan, strikes threatening industrial chaos in Britain, and the American presidency in disorder, a group of madmen and layabouts continued to meet in London boozers in order to conclude that nothing could be done about the grievous world situation. Except go on producing the only magazine which offered a sensible alternative to worrying about it; that alternative being laughing yourself into a state of unconcern.

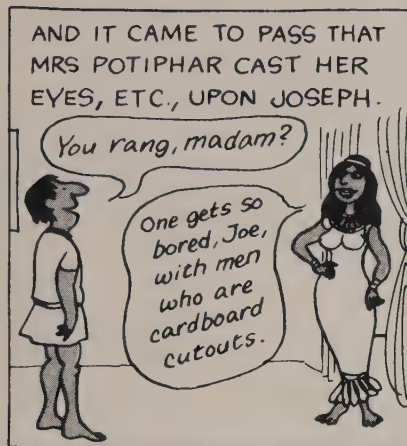
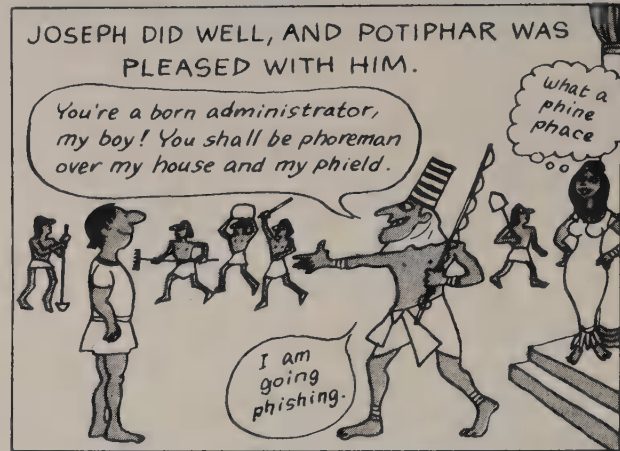
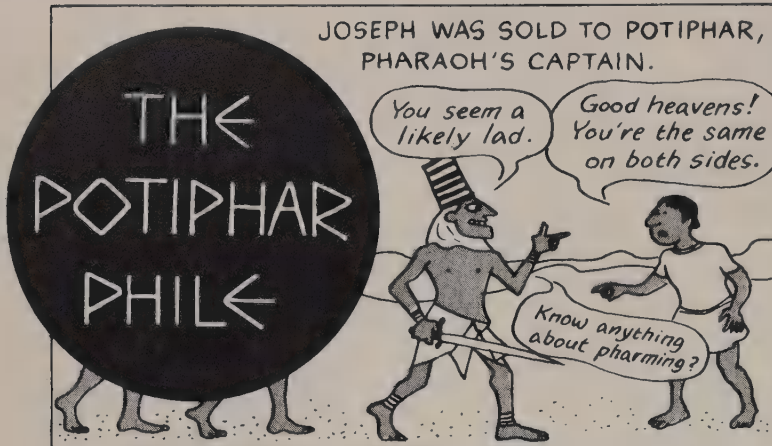
This book represents a typical selection from the latest barmy year we have to hand. It is probably the best thing to come out of 1980.

NOW READ ON.

AC



"I thought she usually sent a telegram."



JOSEPH WAS SUCH A GREAT SUCCESS IN PRISON THAT HE WAS SUMMONED BY PHARAOH.



Remember Joe, our phormer slave? He's rich and phamous and running Egypt. A giphted phellow, I always phelt he'd go phar.



Getting the Hump

"A suit of armour sold last week for £1,850 is believed to have been worn by King Richard III. It had been tailor-made for a man 5ft 4ins tall with a curvature of the spine and one shoulder lower than the other."

Sunday Express

ALTHOUGH, on the morning of April 6, 1471, the bright spring sun may have been warming the narrow London streets and cheering the spirits of the teeming citizens, its heartening rays unfortunately penetrated neither the dank and tatty premises of Master Sam Rappaport (Bespoke Metal Tailoring Since 1216) Ltd, nor the sunken soul of its hapless proprietor.

Master Rappaport had staff shortages. True, Rappaport's had had staff shortages ever since that fateful day in 1290, but this week was particularly bad: his vambrace cutter was off sick, his hauberk finisher was in labour, and the heads of his two best riveters were currently shrivelling on the north gate of London Bridge for dishonestly handling a church roof which they had hoped to turn into a natty spring range of lead leisurewear.

"So ask me where I'm getting gauntlets from!" he demanded bitterly of his senior assistant, as he walked through the door.

The senior assistant sighed; but it was what he was paid for, mainly, so he said:

"Okay, Sam, so where are you getting gauntlets from?"

"Don't ask!" snapped his master.

The senior assistant summoned his dutiful laugh, for the thousandth time.

"Gauntlets I'm buying off the peg, thank God my poor father never lived to see it," muttered Master Rappaport. "A man walks out of here in what he thinks are genuine

hand-forged Rappaport gauntlets, he goes into a tavern for a glass sherry wine, he bangs his fist on the table, and what is he looking at?"

"What?"

"Flat fingers, is what he's looking at. A webbed hand, is what he's looking at. Tin is all they are. Time was, a man in a Rappaport gauntlet, he wanted to shake hands, he needed two other people to help him lift."

The shop-bell jangled.

A tall good-looking young man filled the doorway.

"Good morrow," he said. "I am the Duke of Gloucester."

Master Rappaport turned bitterly to his senior assistant.

"See?" he snapped. "I ask for under-pressers, they send me dukes!"

"I think he's a customer, Sam," murmured the senior assistant.

The grey preoccupation ebbed from Master Rappaport's face. He smacked his forehead. He banged his breast. He bowed.

"Forgive me, Your Grace!" he cried. "How may we assist you?"

"I should like," said the Duke of Gloucester, "a suit of armour. Nothing flash, and plenty of room in the seat."

The master tailor beamed.

"Wonderful!" he said. "Formal, but also informal, smart for day wear, but if God forbid you should suddenly have to kill somebody at night, you don't want to be embarrassed, am I right?"

"You read my mind, sir!" cried the young Duke.

"I been in this game a long time," said Master Rappaport. "Nat, the swatches!"

The senior assistant bustled across with a

number of clanking plates gathered on a loop of chain. Master Rappaport flicked over them.

"Not the toledo," he murmured, mostly to himself, "toledo is all right an older man, it's a heavyweight, it's fine if you don't have to run around too much, also the sheffield, personally I got nothing against sheffield, it has a smart glint, but you have to be short, there's nothing worse than a long glint, believe me; likewise, the cast-iron, a tall man in cast-iron, he can look like a walking stove. For my money, I see you in the non-iron."

"Non-iron?"

"It's a synthetic, 20% copper, a bit of this, a bit of that; a lightweight, wonderful for summer battles. A lot of people couldn't get away with it, but you're young, you got broad shoulders, a nice figure, you can carry a thinner metal. It's flexible, it's cool, it don't creak suddenly when you're with — hem! hem! — a young lady, you should forgive my presumption. Also got a lightweight fly, just a little snap catch, very convenient; the cast-iron, for example, it's got a big bolt it can take you all day, first thing you know you're rusting from the inside, am I right, Nat?"

"Absolutely," said the senior assistant.

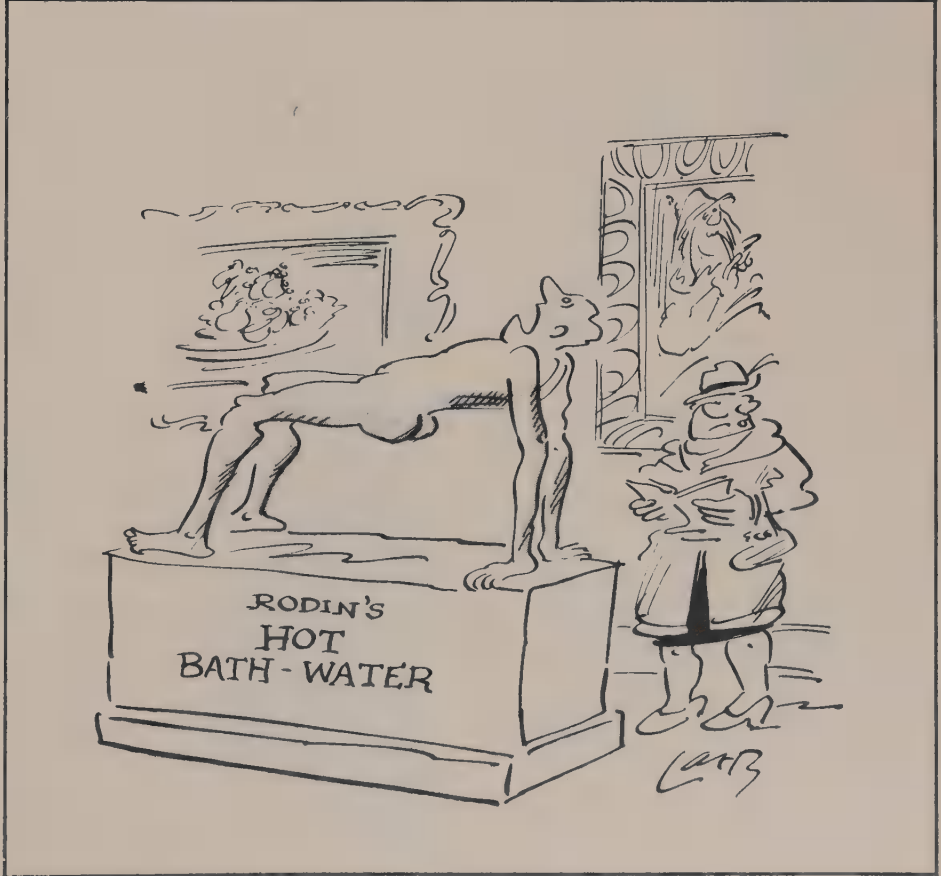
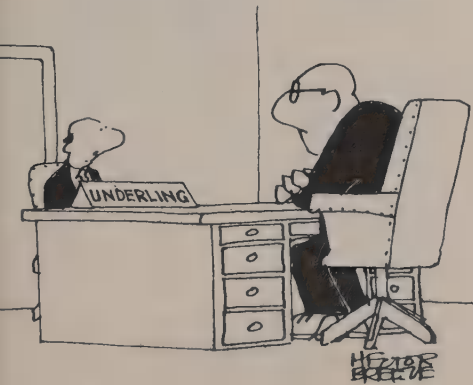
The young nobleman smiled generously.

"I shall be guided entirely by you," he said. "I have just returned from exile with His Majesty Edward IV, and have in consequence little notion of current fashion trends."

"With Edward IV you've been?" cried Master Rappaport. "So Saturday week you're fighting at Barnet?"

The Duke nodded.

"Problems, Sam?" enquired Nat,





"She's not back from lunch yet."

catching his master's sudden furrow.

"Eight days," murmured his master. "It's not long. At least three fittings he'll need."

"Perhaps, in that case," said the Duke, "I ought to try —"

"We'll manage!" cried Sam Rappaport hastily, "We'll manage! Nat, the tape!"

And, lowering his eyes respectfully, the master tailor, tape in hand, approached the comely crotch.

The senior assistant looked at the morning delivery. He shook his head.

"We shouldn't send the greaves out for making," he said. "They're a good two inches short. Also the cuisses."

Master Rappaport stared dismally out of the little window.

"Maybe he'll agree to crouch a bit," he said, at last. "Look, Nat, he's been abroad, you heard him say he was out of touch. So we'll tell him all the smart crowd are crouching a bit this season. Who knows, maybe we could set a whole new —"

The bell jangled. The two tailors bowed.

"I can't get on the leg pieces without crouching," said the young Duke, after a while, panting.

"Wonderful!" cried Sam Rappaport. "Look at His Grace, Nat!"

"Perfect!" shouted the senior assistant. "It fits you like the paper on the wall. This year, everybody's crouching."

"You're sure?" enquired the anxious young man, hobbling uncomfortably before the pier-glass.

"Would I lie?" said Sam Rappaport. "Tuesday, please God, we'll have the breastplate and pauldrons."

"Tuesdays," muttered the senior assistant, "I never liked."

They stared at the breastplate. for the

tenth time. Then they measured the two shoulder pieces again.

"So we'll tell him everybody's wearing one shoulder lower this year," said the master tailor. "He's young, he's green, what does he know?"

"Here he is," said Nat.

"It hurts my shoulder," complained the Duke of Gloucester, after a minute or two. His left hand hung six inches lower than his right, his neck was strangely twisted, his legs crouched in the agonizing constrictions of the ill-made greaves and cuisses.

"Listen," said Master Rappaport gently. "To be fashionable, you have to suffer a bit. Is His Grace smart, Nat, or is he smart?"

"Fantastic!" cried the senior assistant, looking at the wall. "Take my word for it, he'll be the envy of the Court."

"When will the backplate and gorget be ready?" gasped the Duke.

"Friday," said Master Rappaport. "On Friday, you get the whole deal."

"On second thoughts," murmured the senior assistant, "Tuesdays are a lot better than Fridays."

"We're working under pressure!" shouted his master. "Miracles you expect suddenly?"

He held up the backplate. It was strangely bowed, like a turtle's carapace.

"Well, gentlemen?"

They spun around. The door having been open, they had not heard the Duke come in.

"We were just admiring the backplate!" cried Master Rappaport. "What cutting! What burnishing!"

"And what a wonderful curvature!" exclaimed Nat.

"Curvature?" enquired the Duke of Gloucester.

"It's what everybody's talking about," said Sam.

"This time next month," said Nat, "everybody will be bent. I promise."

The Duke took the finished suit to the fitting room.

Time passed. The two tailors looked at their shoes, arranged their patterns silently, cleared their throats, looked at the ceiling.

After a few minutes, the fitting-room curtains parted, and the Duke of Gloucester slouched through, dragging his leg, swinging his long left arm, his head screwed round and pointing diagonally up.

"It looks — as though — I have — a — hump," he managed to croak, at last, through his tortured neck.

"Thank God for that!" cried Master Rappaport. "We were worrying, weren't we, Nat?"

"Definitely," said the senior assistant. "We said to ourselves: suppose the suit comes out without a fashionable hump?"

"It's killing me!" cried the Duke.

"Good!" shouted Sam.

"Wonderful!" shouted Nat.

"You're sure it's fashionable?" gasped the Duke.

"You could be a — a — king!" cried Master Rappaport.

So the young Duke of Gloucester paid his bill, and, wearing his new armour, lurched horribly out into the street. And, as he walked, so the pain burned through his body; and, before very long, an unfamiliar darkness spread across his sunny face, and a new sourness entered his disposition, and angers he had never known, and rages he had never believed possible, racked the flesh beneath the steel.

And, suddenly, strangely, the world began to look a different place altogether; until, penetrating to the very innermost recesses of his soul, there fell across him on that soft spring day, a deep, black discontent, like winter.

ON OUR METAL

Copenhagen cargo-boat from distant

Denmark,

Sneaking in a secret load of precious steel,

With a blast of irony

From Bill Sirs' union,

Wrath and raillery from Sidney Weighell.

Overdue consignments held at

Wolverhampton,

Ordered to be shifted by a High Court judge,

With a convoy of lorries,

Juggernauts, hand-carts,

Turned back by strikers who refused to budge.

B.S. Corporation with a king-size headache,
Pressing for a ballot in the mad March days,
With a pile of lost orders
For cars and girders,
Oil-rigs, battleships and Woolworth trays.

Roger Woddie

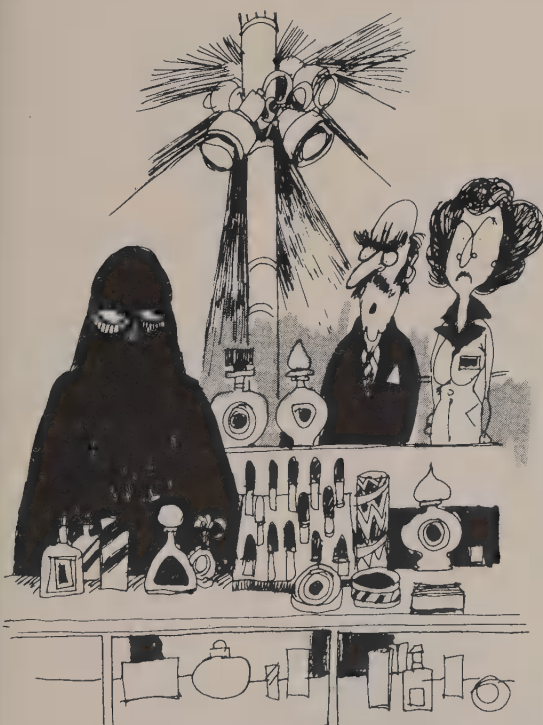
BBRITISH HOME STORES was yesterday ordered to change its rules on female staff uniforms within 28 days, so that the stores would be able to employ women whose religion required them to wear trousers.

—Daily Telegraph

DICKINSON: Service With a Style



"I've never had all this fuss before when paying by credit card."



"I don't care if she is a friend of Mrs Khashoggi—get her off the cosmetics counter."



"Take no notice—it's only the Masons coming into the open at last."

"You see, there's one law for the counter staff and another for the jewellery buyer."



"It's the fifth time today I've tried to get some service."

METROPOLIS



ALAN BRIEN's Cork

CORK, pronounced "Kark", is the Republic's second city—a walkable, talkable, close-knit town of 130,000 character actors where foreign visitors keep feeling they have been caught in a spiralling time-warp, and are seeing everything twice. A seaport since the sixth century, at the end of a dreamlike wandering inlet, it spans the two reaches of the River Lee, and wherever you turn there appears ahead another quay, a second towpath, a bridge too near, giving the *déjà vu* illusion of a Hibernian Amsterdam. Much invaded, often besieged, always—as its inhabitants proudly proclaim—on the wrong side in every Irish war, last burned down not sixty years ago, it still jauntily sprouts a fresh top dressing on each earlier foundation, welcoming in the steely cliffs of ocean-going vessels almost to the city centre.

The heart of the place is a central island, like a beached raft barnacled with red brick and limestone public buildings, moored by gangways between the gently rolling ascent towards the demotic southland and the precipitous climb up a tidal wave of terraces to the posh northern suburbs of Montenotte and Summerhill. To the outsider, it all looks odd and individual but deliberate, like an *art nouveau* soap dish. And to Corkians, there

are not just three parts, but five, or maybe ten, each with its own frontiers based on the rooted traditions of the separate tribes of this ancient, invisibly-cemented, little empire.

Between "Cork" and "Kark", I was assured by one observer, there are seven distinct shades of pronunciation with an accent which varies subtly, but revealingly, according to whether its speaker grew up along its windy, echoing alleys, around its cosmopolitan docks, beside its spreading plains of water, or among its crowded, half-doored, eavesdropping warrens.

When Christie Ring, the great Cork hurler, "Ireland's Babe Ruth", died in March this year, his funeral procession, or "removal" as they say here, was described to me as "the greatest since MacCurtain". In Catholic countries, but above all in Ireland, the dead go still half-alive on their journey to another place, and remain half-heard, like voices in another room. Outsiders, especially the Anglo-Saxons, ignore this semi-mortality at their peril. Thomas MacCurtain was the first Republican Mayor of Cork killed, like his successor Terence MacSwiney, by the English. The first was gunned down here by imperial assassins in blackface before his wife and children, while the second died after a hunger strike lasting seventy-four days in a London prison.

Ring, "the King", was the victim of a non-sectarian fate, but mourned with equal dedication. He was laid out and taken to burial on the south side of the city, and his loyal followers from the north side felt deeply and passionately the sacrilege of a ceremony in the alien air of a far country, a mile from the native heath.

"REBEL Cork" still feels the presence of MacCurtain and MacSwiney, as of Michael Collins, and even of Daniel O'Connell, "the Liberator", whose shade hovers near because he went to school at Cobh, fifteen miles down the estuary. Slightly less in evidence today ("NO SCARCITY OF DRUNK DRIVERS" ran the front-page lead headline in *The Cork Examiner* reporting the opening of a special courtroom to handle the increase) is another of Cork's sons, Father Mathew, the Savonarola of Temperance, recalled by many a memorial.

But he too is by no means forgotten.

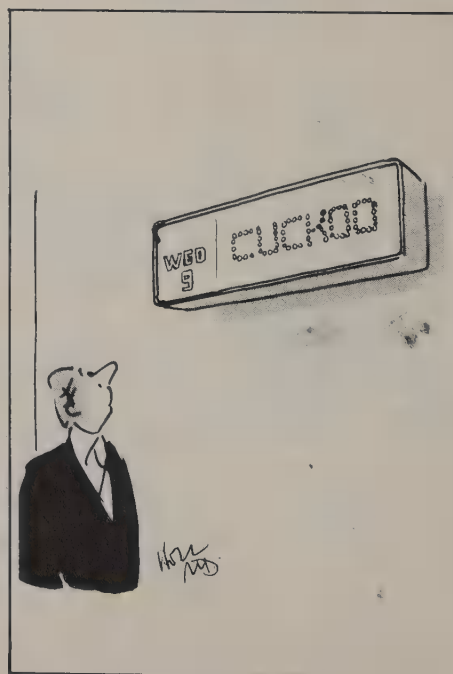
"Walking on water is one thing," said one whiskered fellow, resting at the foot of Father Mat's statue. "But existing on it is quite another. Why your man there nearly died looking after the cholera victims that time" (actually 1832) "and not a drop of anything else passing his lips."

Another term for Cork, as many inhabitants assured me, the phrase forged on their lips as if new-minted, is "the biggest pub in Ireland". Words, as I have often had occasion to note, are the alcohol of the Irish, but then so is alcohol. "Bigod, you're right," I recall Brendan Behan shouting, "Dubliners haven't got a drink problem, they've got a talk problem."

In Cork pubs, they seem to have solved both with the same slap on the bar. It is the drinking haven for the thinking man. No wonder, though its name means "marshy place", it is difficult for the Anglo-Saxon visitor to associate the name Cork with anything but a stopper in a bottle, giving an odd twist to the way you enunciate its favourite paper, *The Cork Examiner*. The Cork Select Bar and Lounge—typically only one room about the size, and often with the decor, of a council house front parlour—is an institution hard to match anywhere.

My previous visits to Cork had been only wing-dipping swoops on the way to the ferry home, usually hurrying to catch the boat after long, lazing, procrastinatory stop-overs at as many as possible of the thousand hamlets which dot the many-fingered Western coastline stretching, like ragged lace, into the Gulf Stream-warmed Atlantic. This time I carved out a week to coincide with Cork's 24th Annual Film Festival. And as I combed the side alleys along its busiest thoroughfare, the confusingly curving Patrick Street, I began to think that drinking and talking had been entirely superseded by eating.

"It may be the worst result of the Great Famine," said a sweating head waiter. "The Irish never stop filling up for the lean days that never come. They may not be the best-fed race in Europe, but they must be the best-stuffed."



STILL, I knew the true Cork S.L. & B. must exist somewhere, and at a venture, just opposite the G.P.O., I turned up a dark stairway, following a faded sign "To the Hi-B", and pushed through a blank door. It was the sort of entrance more likely to give onto a Dickensian of a solicitor or seed merchant. Instead, I found myself enrolled in the Hibernian—a first-floor tavern which operates during the dull, crepuscular hours of the working day as an informal club for mutual entertainment and education.

Most of the space seemed occupied by a noble, belling counter, like the beam end of a galleon, on the poop of which paraded Bryan, your genuine scholar-landlord. Later he gave me his formula for a select lounge and bar—"First, space for the stores, full crates coming in, empties going out. Then a corner for a Ladies and a Gents. Then walking and thinking room for the barman so he doesn't feel penned up. What's left is for the customers."

But our opening encounter could not have been better staged by the tourist board, the Bord Failte.

"I don't get much time for reading in this job," he observed, spotting my copy of *The Riddle of the Sands*. "I used to have a great fancy for Edmund Wilson. And Lionel Trilling's *The Liberal Imagination*—what did you make of that? In my opinion, Trilling was wrong when he said..."

One drinker quoted entire a poem by Edward Lear, another supplied an almost verbatim extract from Mark Twain. There was a dispute about Evelyn Waugh. Bryan having told me George III may have slept in the room next door, his patrons poured scorn on to the legend.

"Wasn't it Voltaire?" asked one, not waiting for an answer. "Didn't he count up all the holy relics of the crucifixion authenticated by the Church and come to the conclusion the Romans must have used two tons of nails? George III was like Elizabeth in England and Bonnie Prince Charlie in Scotland—they spent their lives on a perpetual, peripatetic sleeping tour."

Perhaps the Hibernian was a fluke, so I crossed the road to Coughins—a country-style ale house, swallowed up by the town, with a crackling fire and dozing drinkers.

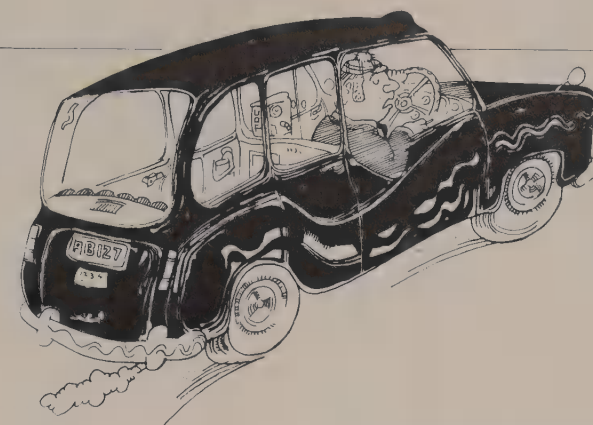
"How'd you like last night's film?" asked the landlord, "I really enjoyed Van der Deyden's *Kasper in the Underworld*. Quite poetic now, wasn't it?"

I said I thought it moderately pretentious.

"Well now, maybe there was a touch of the Franz Kafkas about it," he allowed, "but no worse to my mind for all that."

IN Paris they gossip about chefs, in Liverpool about bouncers, in New York about publishers, in LA about agents, in London about journalists and politicians, and in Cork about publicans, with a sideline in surgeons. Many of the more bizarre and hilarious anecdotes were told me by Noel Waddy who runs another single-chamber bar, The Shelbourne, next

"Sorry, mate, I'm on my way back home to Clapham."



door to my hotel. There were too many to print, and most of them now impossible to transcribe from my notebook. But I liked the tale of old Nottadge, who married a middle-aged widow with a family at seventeen, and ran her tavern for eighty years at a West Cork village.

When knocked up by thirsty travellers at what he considered an inconvenient hour, he would lean out of the upstairs window and shout—"Bugger off. If you want a drink, why don't you do what I did and get your own pub?" It was also said that he claimed to be so poor that for the first six years of his life he sat at home staring at the wall because he had no clothes—then his mother bought him a hat and he could look out of the window.

Cork people love talking about themselves—they are kindly but shrewd, cunning and cute, with a kind of bright, sharp-edged charm which carefully switches off just this side of altruism.

"They're a fascinating 'study,'" said a long-time Dublin exile, "they're our Aberdonian Jews. They can't wait to get a United Ireland so that they can do down the Protestants."

THE Film Festival Club, though held in Connolly Hall, the headquarters of the Irish TGWU, under the rubric "The Cause of Labour is the Cause of Ireland and the Cause of Ireland is the Cause of Labour", nevertheless insists on its members wearing dinner jackets. And in the early hours the city transforms itself into a kind of pastiche Oxbridge Commem Ball as the streets flood with black-and-white penguin figures arguing, singing, necking, even relieving themselves in *cul-de-sacs*, piling into large cars or small vans, the moonlight from the omnipresent, snaking canals and waterways reflecting silvery sequins on many a solid, plebeian face, last seen decked out in antique tweeds or shiny suits at the supermarket or on the buses.

There are 400 Film Festivals throughout the world every year, eight per week, and for Cork's quarter-century in 1980 something more seems required than

films which will be seen within months at almost any local cinema.

I canvassed the idea that Rebel Cork, whose citizens had been so prominent in the struggle for Ireland's unity and independence, should host a display of films devoted to nations following her lead in the advance towards freedom and identity. It met with a mixed response as a political hot potato, likely to worry a Government afraid the world might see Ireland as the heirs and abettors of the IRA. But as I left, the seed appeared to be sprouting in slightly devious Corkian directions—"Could we not say just 'emerging peoples' or 'young countries' or 'The Third World'?" they said, pondering. "Well, it would get us Vanessa Redgrave and Jane Fonda and we're hellish short of star names."

An Irish Arts Council executive seemed most sympathetic. "But remember," he warned, "if it does happen, it won't be your idea. Ten men in Cork and five in Dublin will have thought it up a year ago."

ONE signal achievement in the modernising of an old craft can be found here at *The Cork Examiner*. Not only are its staff paid salaries up to fifty per cent more than those on comparable British local papers, such as those in Nottingham or Sheffield, and often equalling those in Manchester or London, but it has moved from top to bottom into the new technology.

Admittedly, the *Examiner* is the Crosbie family business, one of the oldest surviving privately-owned papers anywhere. And one journalist I met could boast 140 years on the staff without break from great-grandfather onwards. The NGA have been operating the machines, and the journalists writing and subbing the copy, since 1976 without a hitch. All of them I met stressed that the process had broken down, rather than strengthened, demarcation lines and now printers, management and contributors all felt an increased understanding of each other's talents and difficulties.

ROGUE'S GALLERY

Little is really known about the activities of Blunt and his friends. Art historian **MAHOOD** has been examining the Queen's pictures for clues





Under Plain Cover

The Central Intelligence Agency has come out of the cold and into the warm glow of Madison Avenue prose.

In strikingly unspooklike language, the Agency, whose 30-year history has been cloaked in secrecy, has begun advertising campaigns in 12 large newspapers, seeking people who want a "spirit of adventure" and can make "on-the-spot decisions."

The Guardian

IN response to your advt in the Sits Vac Column for spies no exp. needed, I am wondering whether you are contemplating opening a branch of the CIA in Croydon. If so, would like to apply for position. Can claim to have requisite managerial qualifications for running a sub-office, and am quite used to making "on-the-spot decisions" as required. I possess a spirit of adventure.

I note that remuneration offered is \$14,414-\$19,263 per annum, no mention of annual increments, company car or index-linked pension, but can always take these up with your personnel mgr or at staff association level, if granted favour of interview.

Aged 45, married with two kiddies, I possess GCE certificates in English and Maths, and am at present employed in an under-managerial capacity at the Croydon branch of the Eyeglass & General Assurance Co. Whilst I have no professional experience of espionage, I have the onerous responsibility of weeding out "dodgy" insurance claims and reporting same to my superior, Mr Yarmby. This involves "relying on one's wits" as specified in your advt. Case in point: a certain client who shall be nameless recently claimed £24.75 in respect of shag hearthrug supposedly burned by flying cinders. Shaky handwriting, plus fact that my sister lives in same block of flats so I happen to know they are centrally-heated by gas radiator, suggested to me that subject was lying. Such was case. Investigation by Eyeglass & General "plumbers" (i.e., fraud investigators) proved that he had tapped out pipe on hearthrug while in middle of heavy drinking bout (vodka & lime), thus enabling us to deny liability under Act of God clause. Saving to company: £24.75p.

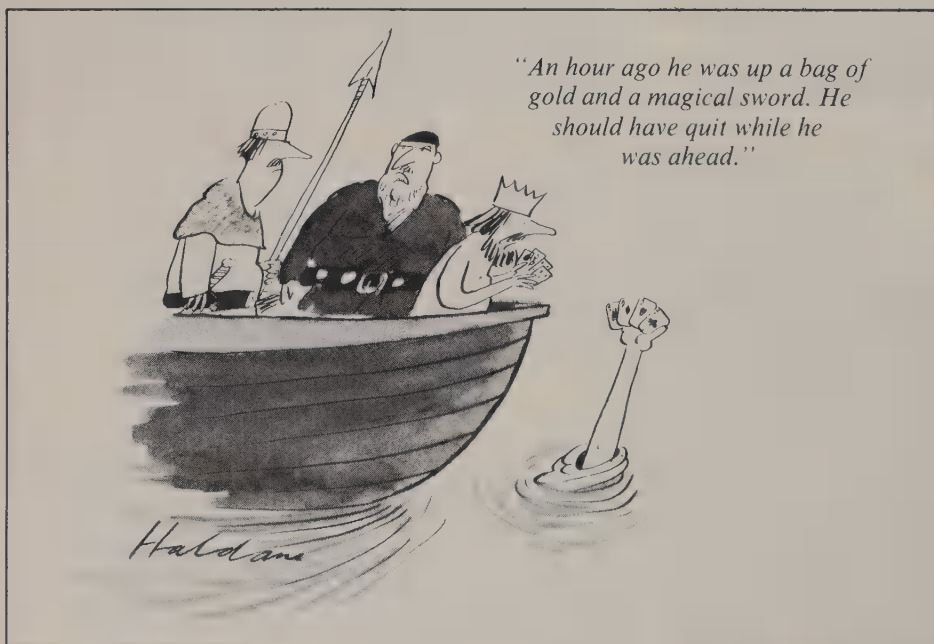
With Bay of Pigs etc to your credit, above incident will seem small beer to you, but take it from me it is only the tip of the iceberg as regards Croydon, as any secret agent opening a branch office in said borough would quickly discover. We have communists and subversives without number, as well as sexual deviates if these interest you at all. Appreciate that your advt specifies "overseas assignments", but assume this means overseas as regards "our colonial cousins" as we call you Americans on this side of pond. I would

definitely not wish to move out of Croydon, where I have strong family ties. I mention this only so that we do not get in farcical situation of your man in Moscow being posted to Croydon, while at same time I am being posted to Moscow. In any case, I do not speak any foreign languages, including Russian.

Should you wish to consider my suggestion of opening a CIA Croydon branch, there are excellent shop-fronted premises available on Begonia Avenue Parade, between Dibbs the Estate Agent's and the Eyeglass & General district office. If successful in my application to become CIA branch manager, I assume I would be authorised to wear false beard and dark glasses as otherwise would be recognised by Mr Yarmby and other erstwhile colleagues next door. Before interview with your personnel mgr I will give some thought as to what the CIA's "front" should be in Croydon. Besides Dibbs and the Eyeglass & General, there are already a fishmonger's, chemist's, do-it-yourself shop, dry cleaner's and heel bar, plus the Tolpuddle Building Society, so it could not be any of these. The parade does not have a sub post-office—we have petitioned for one for many years—but I imagine this would meaning taking the Brit. govt. into your confidence. Whether you wish to do this or not is for you to decide when you have consulted your files on Mrs Thatcher (I think she is quite reliable for what it is worth), but should you reject the sub-post office subterfuge for any reason, the businessmen and secretaries in this area are crying out for a really good take-away sandwich bar. This is assuming that the CIA would provide funds for stocking up same, as well as facilities for sending me on sandwich-making course, either to your training school in Washington or to the Croydon Tech. I think this would be a justifiable expense as it would be pity to "blow my cover" by inexpertly slicing liver sausage or not having faintest idea what to charge for potato salad.

(NB: Would I be expected to re-order bread & sandwich fillings through Head Office, or should I use my initiative and make own arrangements with local tradesmen, receipts of course to be provided? If latter course, there is an excellent delicatessen-cum-baker not far away, but the owner hails from Poland I believe. Would he have to be "screened"?)

One further point on assumption we go ahead with sandwich bar idea. It would NOT be advisable to store poison capsules, typhoid-infected darts and similar toxic materials on the premises, as our local health inspector is a stickler for "going by the book" so far as food-handling is concerned. I have a high shelf in my bathroom at home which would be admirable for the purpose, provided I am able to inform my wife why they are there and who issued them (otherwise they will finish up in dustbin as she has a horror of hoarding anything in the pill line in case



the kiddies think they are sweeties). For present, however, I have told my wife nothing, so should your personnel mgr ring up for an appointment and she answers, I would appreciate it if he would not say that he is the United States Central Intelligence Agency. If he wants a "cover" he could pretend to be telephoning me in regard to a with-profits endowment insurance policy, and I could reply that I will prepare a proposal form for his perusal and signature and meet him under some mutually convenient tree.

Referring once again to your advt, I note that it states, "In these times of meaningless jobs, here's a career where you can make a difference." If I may say so, above sentiment, together with previously-mentioned qualification of making "on-the-spot decisions", is why I finally decided to make this application after carefully weighing up the many pros and cons of changing employment at an age when most people are looking forward to retirement in twenty years' time.

For some years I have felt that I am getting nowhere in my meaningless job. Mr Yarmby, my so-called "superior" mentioned earlier in this letter, has no better qualifications than I, yet he is district manager at age 41. My belief is that it is because he is a Freemason. I think Croydon Lodge of the Order of Water Bison, of which Yarmby is leading light, is certainly worthy of investigation by CIA. It should be easy to infiltrate by using false beard mentioned earlier. Also, Mrs

Bleekman, Yarmby's "secretary" as she has cheek to call herself (cannot even type), is almost certainly a Communist agent. She certainly has Labour leanings, which is why she got job instead of my wife, who can type 65 wpm. I will not trouble you with list of sex perverts at present but my sister has these. Owner of burned shag hearthrug is No. 1 on her list.

As to my new career "making a difference", I am enclosing estate agents' circulars showing how following up my suggestion of taking shop on Begonia Avenue Parade would save £2 per foot over conventional office space in "downtown Croydon" as you would call our main shopping centre. I would effect other economies by employing wife and sister as "sidekicks", provided there are establishment vacancies for part-time spies.

Finally, it has always been understood that my two kiddies Melvin (10) and Stephanie (8) would follow me into insurance business as clerk and typist respectively. As Yarmby and Mrs Bleekman will have to believe I have died from heart attack so that I can keep them under surveillance in false beard without arousing suspicion, this will mean I no longer have "contacts" in insurance world. Is there any opening for kiddies in espionage? If so, please send leaflets re training schemes, number of 'O' and 'A' levels required etc. The boy is particularly excited at idea of becoming spy, provided there are adequate pension provisions and luncheon voucher allowance.

LET'S PARLER FRANÇAIS!

Où est la Plume de ma Tante?

Lui: Où est la plume de ma tante?

Elle: C'est une joke, ou quoi?

Lui: Non, c'est for real. Tante Betty, qui vient manger notre TV dinner ce soir, m'a donné une plume à Noël. Un superslim exécutive fountain pen avec bleep.

Elle: Et ça marche?

Lui: Non. C'est un ornamental fountain pen. Mais si Tante Betty vient nous voir, reste assurée qu'elle vient aussi voir sa plume. Donc, je demande: où est la plume de ma tante?

Elle: Je parie que c'est la première fois dans l'histoire du monde que cette question ait été sérieusement posée.

Lui: Ah, non! Vous vous souvenez de Tante Beryl? Tante Beryl était dans showbiz. En 1950 elle était une Bluebell girl.

Elle: Vraiment? J'adore les chemins de fer miniatures.

Lui: Non, c'était à Paris. Elle était une danseuse très glam, très leggy, très ooh-la-la.

Elle: Une strippeuse, en effet.

Lui: Oui. Elle avait cet acte sensationnel avec un ostrich feather.

Elle: Comme Rod Hull et Emu, quoi?

Lui: Oui, mais moins intellectuel. Anyway, mon holiday job à Paris en 1950 était comme dresseur de Tante Beryl. C'était facile; elle portait *seulement* cette queue d'ostrich. Pendant le jour je soignais le feather: je lui donnais du grooming, du dry cleaning, de la maintenance, des running repairs, etc. Et puis, un jour affreux, le feather était missing! Un stage-door Johnny l'avait volé comme souvenir! Ma tante allait être *nue!*

Elle: Et tu as crié partout dans le théâtre: "Où est la plume de ma tante?"

Lui: Ah. Vous connaissez cette histoire déjà?

Elle: Non, pas du tout. Dis-moi, c'est vrai?

Lui: Non, pas du tout. Une fabrication totale.

Elle: Ah! Un moment! Ta plume! Maintenant je me souviens. A la weekend, chez Oncle Richard, j'admirais ses roses, et il m'a donné l'adresse de son nurseryman . . .

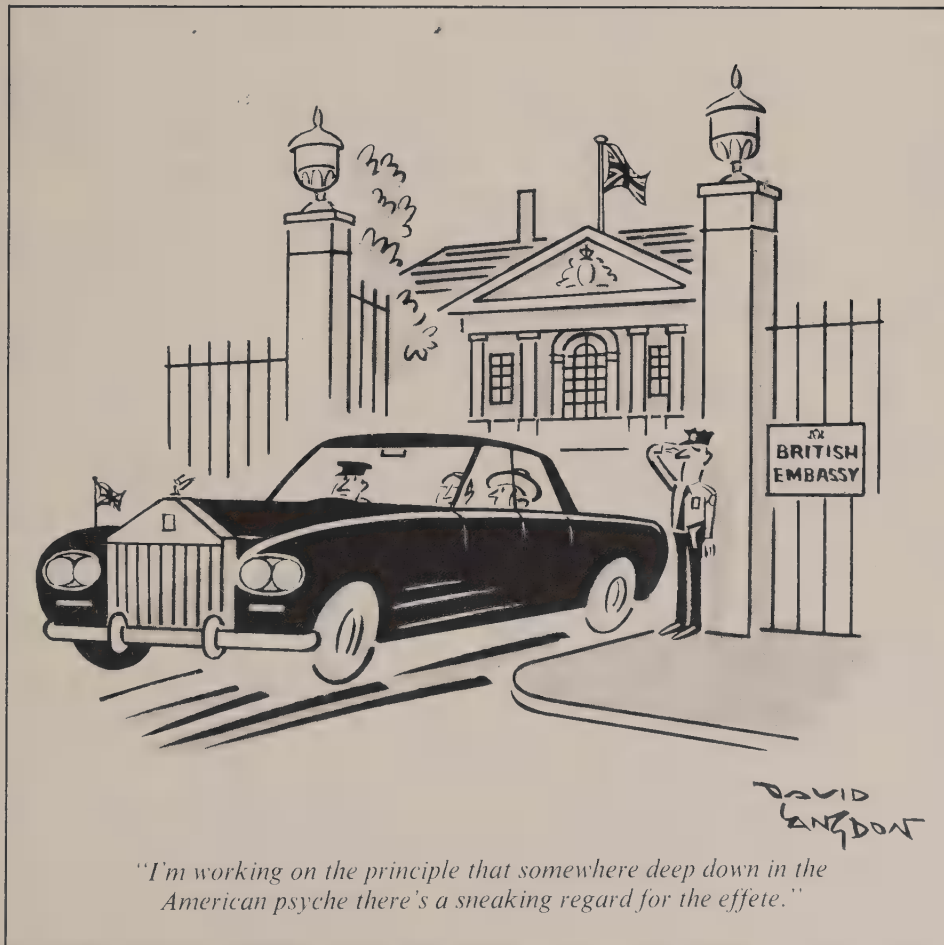
Lui: Oui?

Elle: . . . et je t'ai dit: "Donne-moi ta plume et je vais l'écrire . . ." Je l'ai laissée derrière l'oreille de son gnome.

Lui: C'est à dire: la plume de ma tante est dans le jardin de mon oncle.

Elle: Je parie que c'est la première fois dans l'histoire de l'univers que cette remarque ait été faite.

Lui: Mais non! Vous vous souvenez de mon oncle Benjamin? Qui est retiré à Kendal pour fabriquer un Kendal mint cake liqueur, 90% proof? Eh bien, en 1948 il était à Damascus . . .



"I'm working on the principle that somewhere deep down in the American psyche there's a sneaking regard for the effete."

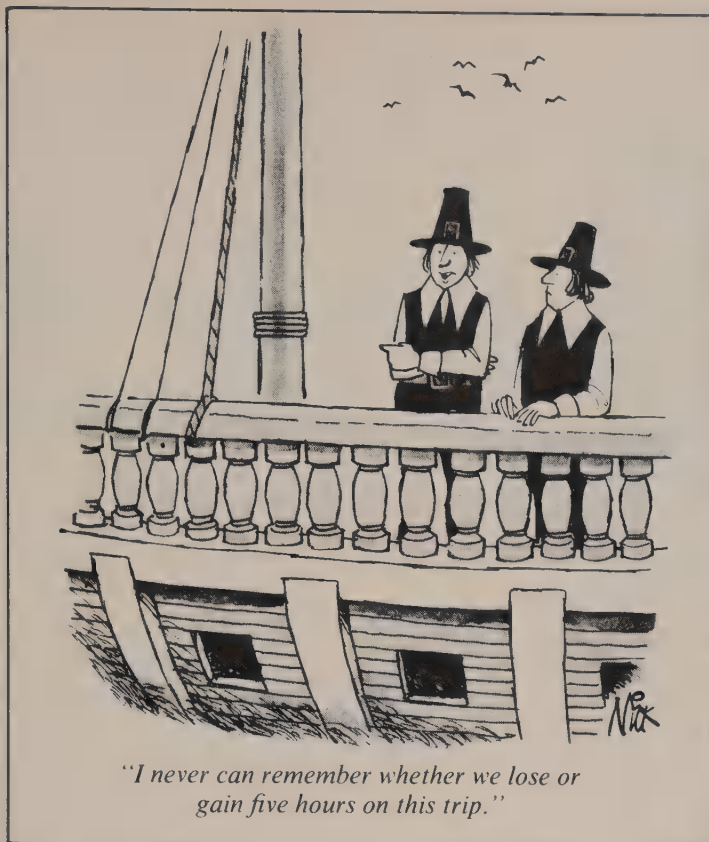


In response to the Vatican's support for Latin as *the* European language, here is MILES KINGTON's

LATIN TOURIST PHRASE BOOK

Quid pro quo
Post hoc propter hoc
Ad hoc
Adsum
Exempli gratia
Infra dig
Primus inter pares
Compos mentis
Carpe diem
Non anglii, sed angeli
Curriculum
Casus belli
Sic transit gloria mundi
O tempora! o mores!
Quis custodiet custodes ipsos?
Post meridiem
Fiat lux
Rara avis
Volenti non fit injuria
Reductio ad absurdum
Nil obstat
Nil desperandum
De minimis non curat lex
Terminus ad quem
Caeteris paribus
Post mortem
Expostfacto
Sub rosa
Sal volatile
Gloria in excelsis
Noli me tangere
Ars longa, vita brevis
Hic jacet
Ecce homo
Timeo Danaos et Dona Ferentes
Mens sana
Ex libris
Ex cathedra
Inter alia
Summa cum laude
In loco parentis
Quondam
Dum spiro
Festina lente
Aut Caesar aut nihil
Tertium quid

the sterling exchange rate
 a little more white wine wouldn't hurt us
 wine not included
 small extras on the bill
 token tip
 terrible accommodation
 the stove has fallen in the fire
 mint sauce
 fish frying tonight
 fishing absolutely prohibited
 Indian restaurant
 gastro-enteritis
 the nausea will pass away, and you'll be fine by Monday
The Times is no more, alas!
 do you keep the *Guardian*?
 the *Mail* does not arrive until midday
 car wash
 no car hire available
 the accident was caused by a badly fitted steering-wheel
 road narrows
 River Nile impassable
 River Nile overflowing
 Lex garages cannot undertake to service small cars
 bus station for Quem (small Romanian town)
 restaurant facilities are available on the Paris coach
 mail strike
 not known at this address
 a rather unattractive Italian girl
 a rather attractive Italian girl
 a very attractive Italian girl
 I do not wish to dance with you
 unsuitable bathing costume (literally: big bottom, small briefs)
 old-fashioned coat
 gay bar
 that nice couple we met in Portugal
 male massage parlour
 dirty books
 ruined church
 an Italian airline
 peak holiday period
 railway family compartment
 part of Holland reclaimed from the sea
 stupid Greek person
 shops shut on Continent (literally: Lenten holiday)
 an Italian football result
 33p



JONATHAN SALE:

Lesser Degrees

SAD news for anyone wishing to further his education during the next academic year. If he writes to the Universal Ecclesiastical University, at an address somewhat lacking in universality and without many ecclesiastic resonances, that is, 375 Manchester Road, Denton, Manchester, something very interesting takes place. His letter comes back. A green stamp now decorates it, bearing the words: "Undelivered for reason stated." And the reason is stated in blue Biro: simply, and finally, "Demolished."

Oxford is still there. Last time I examined Cambridge, it was still in business. But the Campus, Administrative Block, Student Union, playing fields and Rag Day Organising Committee Headquarters, or whatever 375 Manchester Road contained, is now laid beneath the bulldozer tracks, and universally ecclesiastical studies can never be the same again.

However, there are more where that came from. Where that did come from, incidentally, was my list of colleges, institutes, universities, even, which are *not* recognised by the Department of Education and Science. To put it another way, they are recognised by the DES as being organisations which, while taking students' money, may not exactly bring them up to the level of Hugh Trevor-Roper, Albert Einstein and Dr Schweitzer in a couple of weeks.

It may well be that, given the current cutbacks in education, this

is the way that universities are heading. It could be that London University ends up in a prefabricated hut down the Fulham Road, that Oxford's one remaining lecturer can be heard in a packed punt and that a chipped blue plaque on a Kings Parade wall marks the spot where Cambridge used to keep its university.

Until that time, would-be students are advised to stick to orthodox forms of higher education, as opposed to Lincoln Open University, which may be contacted care of a Box Number in—oddly enough for an organisation with its title—London WC1. Readers of this piece may well include libel lawyers and I would like to point out that it is nowhere stated that I had in fact contacted Lincoln Open University. All I am saying is that it may be contacted in London or there again it may not. Certainly I had no luck. I would have gone to Lincolnshire if necessary, but instead I wrote, enclosing a stamped, addressed envelope in case the University's funds were a bit low, and have heard nothing.

Trinity Extension University also seems to be keeping its head down. Of which Trinity it is an extension I am not sure—Oxford, Cambridge, Dublin? Presumably none of those, since its site, described as "the Collegiate Institute of London", was to be found at 9 Heath Drive, London NW3. It is not, unfortunately, now to be found at that desirable address. 9 Heath Drive contains several flats, but none of them includes a campus, however extended; a few hopeful letters pop through the letterbox from time to time, but the Vice-Chancellor appears to have done a moonlight flit. And the London Institute of Applied Research is no longer on the fifth floor of 29/30 Warwick Street, London W1R 5FA, which is a warren of tiny, active offices, but none of them applying research so's you'd notice. Once again, the academics have left no forwarding address.

The Oxbridge of these under-the-counter educational establishments is the University of Coventry. This turned out, when Radio Four's excellent *Checkpoint* delved into the title, to be a Mr Duncan. Living as he did in a block of council flats from which a business could not be conducted, he gave his previous address—a private house—as the University's home, and asked the GPO to divert the mail to his new abode. The present occupants of the house were not best pleased when I telephoned last week and asked for the Vice-Chancellor, and we agreed that any degrees granted by the University of Coventry might not be all they are cracked up to be.

There is no doubt about Sussex College of Technology. It is based at "Highfield", Dane Hill, Haywards Heath, and is one of few educational establishments to send to potential students a sort of Government Health Warning to the effect that "the awards offered in this Curricula"—it means Curriculum, writes Our Long Word Correspondent—"are 'not Recognized' by the Educational Authorities in the United Kingdom, and therefore their use may be restricted to Non-Academic activities to which they may be put." Exactly how one can have a non-academic degree, or indeed how that last bit of the sentence hangs together, may not be clear to the general reader, but then he is probably not a graduate of the Sussex College. Yet it is a pity that whoever wrote the leaflet does not appear to have taken section 807 of the English Course: "Advanced Grammar".

The same scholar's work can be found in another leaflet, this one on the subject of fees. He spells "instalment" with a double "l", a practice generally confined to the USA, which is not usually considered to include Haywards Heath. By contrast, he gives "enrolling" only one "l"—presumably robbing Peter to pay Paul. He is not very good at commas, clearly being in need of a correspondence course in Advanced Punctuation. Sometimes he uses a dash instead, sometimes two full-stops; he appears to believe that a comma is positioned not at the end of the relevant word, but at the beginning of the next one. Possibly his most distinctive touch lies in the way in which he suggests that fees are paid: "quarterly".

No-one, you may retort, is perfect, and anyone involved in the glasshouse of magazine production should not start throwing stones. But, I reply, I am not running an educational establishment.

Bruce Copen is. On page three of the Prospectus he signs himself as Dean of Studies and admits to a Ph.D and D.Litt. On another page he becomes "Prof" and Dean of the College, but oddly enough for so distinguished a person with such qualifications, he does not appear in the 1979 *Who's Who*.

Even more oddly, neither does one single member of his Board of Regents, not even the Regent in charge of Science, a Ngai Luen

Once Round the Bloc

BILL TIDY conducts an orchestra's grand tour of Iron Curtain countries



"They've got us down as Grimsby 'It's a Knockout' team. Otherwise there's no beds!"



"The percussion's noisy, the woodwind's mellow but watch the first violinist!"



"Hello, he's wearing his false flower arm again."



"That was a dirty trick, Cheeseborough!"



"Plenty of work for musicians here. Back home that chap holding the palm 'ud be on the dole!"



"My God, Harry, how compromised can you get—in bed with a cello . . ."



"I don't think you appreciate the seriousness of the situation, Fletcher. Attending a dissidents' meeting with a tambourine!"



"Will you bloody stop that!"



"Come quickly, Stefan, they're playing your music!"



"Please, maestro, the audience is still rehearsing!"

Theatre of the Absurd

EVERYONE wants to be a surgeon. It is a job with the status of a disc jockey, the salary of an airline pilot and the sexiness of a ski instructor. Do not be deterred by the stuffy doctors' union, demanding you spend years and years studying such irrelevant and boring topics as biochemistry, microbiology, geriatrics, dermatology and psychoanalysis. You could be operating tomorrow!

Every year, real surgical enthusiasts—meat salesmen, hospital cleaners, young

clergymen, impatient medical students—take the direct route to the operating theatre. All you want is a Chester Barrie suit and a well typed reference. Offer yourself as a locum at a busy hospital in August, and nobody is going to risk losing your services by checking it.

HOW TO BE A BOGUS SURGEON

The only skill you need is at handling small pieces of greasy machinery in awkward corners under intolerable working conditions. Have you replaced the chain-drive of your motor mower, lying on the lawn in blazing sunshine? Then you can operate.

First, remove your suit in the surgeons' room, taking care to leave nothing of value in the pockets. Slip into anything clean and white lying about. Let a nurse dress you up in a green gown. Donning rubber gloves is the most difficult part of the operation. Entering the theatre with ten teats on your hands invites suspicion. If in serious trouble, hurl successive pairs to the floor, with increasingly loud complaints of punctures.

You will find the operating theatre overcrowded with anonymous masked figures in gowns. Those with bumps on their chests are likely to be nursing staff. Control them all with the cheery firmness of a captain his team, or producer his cast. Slyly play on their touchiness about their own importance over the others.

The one surrounded with pipes and glittering machinery is the anaesthetist. His presence is vital, to indicate which end of the heavily towelled patient is the head.

Principles of Surgery

There are two classes of operation—

(1) Cutting it off.

(2) Cutting it out.

The necessity for (1) is obvious through an inviting lump, gangrene, impaled gear lever etc. If a search of the area reveals nothing of this nature, proceed to (2).

The Incision

The cutlery provided may be confusing, but need cause no worse embarrassment than deciding how you should eat asparagus. Hold knife and forceps as though enjoying a tender, rare fillet steak.

If you pick from the display an instrument outrageously wrong, the nurse in charge may exclaim, "Surely you're not going to use a cleft palate knife on a haemorrhoidectomy?" Inspect the instrument for some seconds, replying, "I'm surprised you still sterilize these, sister—they went out in World War Two." Or simply drop it on the floor and bark, "Blunt!" Or fix her with your eye, rasping, "Hackenbusch's lithotriptoscope—quick!" When she says hastily she hasn't one sterile, snap over your outstretched palm, "Oh, it doesn't matter. I'll make do with the Wurtenburg-Mayo cholecystoduodenostomy anastomosis clamp instead." She will give no further trouble.

Surgical Anatomy

Make a large slit, as though opening a paper sack of cement. Do not worry about the bleeding. Someone will busy himself stopping it. At first glance, the inside may seem confusing. But the human abdomen contains only two organs of concern to the amateur operator.

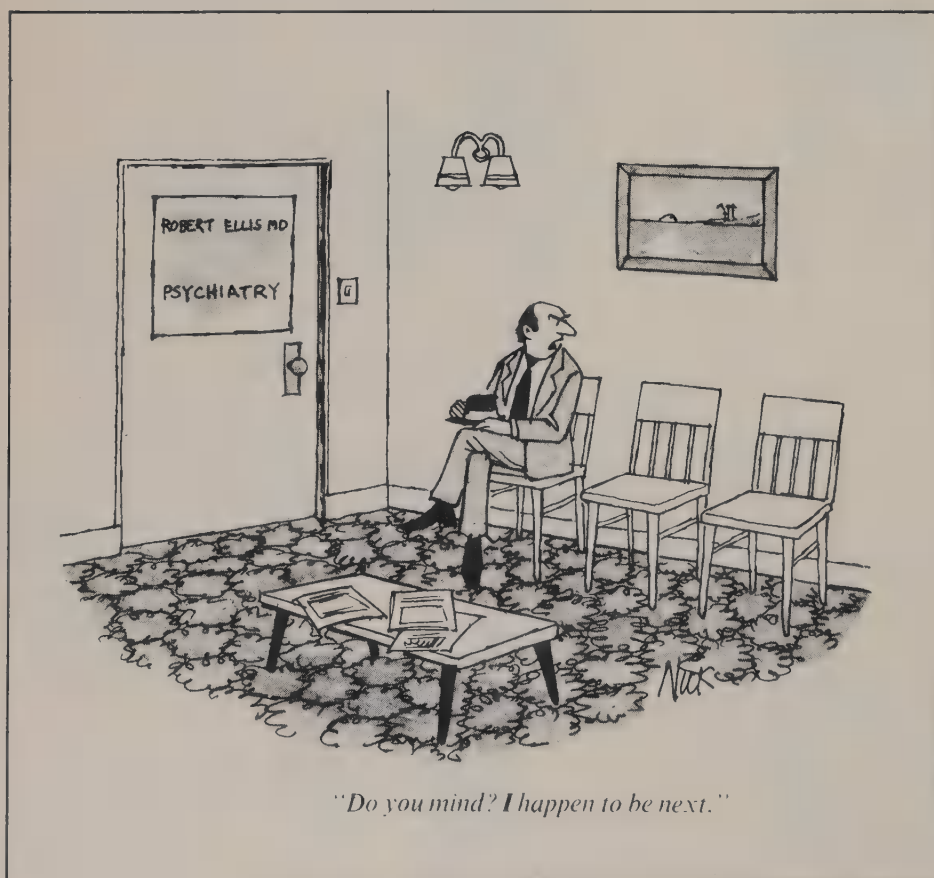
The stuff like pink bicycle inner tube sloshing about in the middle is the *gut*. At the top end, resembling the leather wine flask used by Spanish road workers, is the *stomach*. The gut is about 10 yards long. It does not matter how much of this you care to remove; humans can exist happily with hardly more than would make a good serving of *tripe à la mode de Caen*.

The liver is at the end nearer the anaesthetists, 8 pounds of it, looking like the stuff you fry up with bacon. With the pancreas, kidney, adrenals and other goodies deep in the abdominal bran tub, it is best left to the inquisitive fingers of the professionals.

Towards the end of the gut, under the right pocket of the jeans, is the star of surgical drama, the appendix. It resembles a four-inch worm, and like the Aldwych Tube leads nowhere. If a brisk rummage discovers nothing exciting enough to cut out, remove the appendix. This will cause no comment, the normal appendix being frequently removed in error.

Sewing Up

Stitching human tissues is no different from sewing on shirt buttons or darning socks, and the needles come ready threaded. Buy *The Vogue Sewing Book*. Practise gathering and shirring, French whipped seams, gusseting and mitering. Do not worry if you leave your patient



"Do you mind? I happen to be next."



branded like a Wild West steer. He will strip his sleeve and show his scars as proudly as a Crispin's day veteran. Without a good scar, he hardly feels he has had an operation. It is like the decent suntan which proclaims that he enjoyed his holiday.

X Rays

Inspection of the X-rays is useful when wondering what the devil to do next. X rays are easy to read, because their shadows invite as many contrasting opinions as the Turin shroud. If uncertain whether the picture represents a fractured rib or a swallowed four-inch nail, emit a low whistle and exclaim, "My word, that is a whopper, isn't it?" As you are the surgeon, everyone will nod in humble agreement.

Heart Transplants

This is the glamour surgery, attracting so much delightful and profitable publicity, the amateur is as desperate to perform it as the fully-qualified professor.

The operation is as simple as changing the wheel on your car. The difficulty is its necessitating, like sex, two people for its consummation. The recipient is no problem. Donors are difficult. There are innumerable healthy hearts in the country, but their processors seem loath to perform an organ voluntary at the enthusiastic surgeon's request. The best technique is buying a reliable portable life-support apparatus, and parking behind a hedge at a sign saying ACCIDENT BLACK SPOT. The Government are most creditably encouraging this exciting branch of surgery, by refusing to legislate the compulsory wearing of seat belts.

Orthopaedic Surgery

A firm favourite with d-i-y surgical buffs, because it is only warm carpentry. The chisels, hammers, saws, Black and Deckers etc are exactly the same in the operating

theatre as in the garage. *Home Woodworking* will see you right. Many professional orthopaedic surgeons exercise their skill with equal energy at home as at hospital, though patients do not qualify for a Government improvement grant.

Aftercare

The operation is but a single spectacular act in the programme of surgical treatment. Once you have knotted the last stitch, turn to your first assistant—the one so fussy about stopping the bleeding—and say condescendingly, "I leave the postoperative management wholly in your care, with the utmost confidence." His head will so swell, you need make no further contribution to the case beyond bellowing, "And where's the coffee, then?"

Forensic Medicine

Protagonists of the closed shop are as savage towards surgical amateurs—who perform valuable service by relieving the overworked surgeons of the NHS—as towards blacklegs in any other nationalized industry. Though it is a cherished principle of trade unionists that the law holds no sway in their activities, "cowboy" surgeons may find themselves involved in tedious legal wrangles.

If you do get put inside, why not study my companion work, *How To Be A Bogus Judge?* This job, too, allows dressing up and the psychological expression of infantile omnipotence. It is performed in greater comfort, sitting down, and you can call the tea breaks when you like. Less intelligence need be shown, there being twelve other people to reach all the painful decisions for you.

Carry on cutting! Remember—*If In Doubt Cut It Out*, and *ars longa vita brevis* was Hippocrates' way of saying that Vita walks nearer the ground since the plastic surgery on her bum.

Mr Reg Prentice, appointed by Mrs Thatcher as Minister of State for Health and Social Security, has special responsibility for the disabled and "scroungers".

GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT

Just for my honour I parted with Labour,
Just for a lurch to the left I withdrew,
Finding fulfilment in loving my neighbour,
Though he is missing a finger or two.

Call me a crawler, my sinecure sordid,
Only the mean would begrudge me a bone.

Those who are whipped shall be greatly rewarded—

Solomon's wisdom accords with my own.

I am a dog with a nose for the shiftless,
Sniffing out spongers who cadge off the State;
What I deplore are the strokes of the thriftless,
Lining their pockets is what I most hate.

Bad times are past: let us never go back to them.

Fiddles and diddles will all fall behind;
Now hear me cry, as I take my attack to them,

"Halt!" to the halt, and "Look out!" to the blind.

Conscience is mine as My Lady's
Anointed,

When it commands me I have to obey;
Changing once more, I could be re-appointed,

Serving my time as the Vicar of Bray.

Roger Woddis



THE MAKING OF BRIAN

TERRY JONES, director of the Monty Python epic, on the secrets behind the filming



LOOK, I don't want to overdo all this, but quite seriously the more I think about it, the more I wonder whether I'm doing the right thing. I mean, I have to ask myself: how would I feel, if John Cleese suddenly revealed to the *Daily Mirror* what I said to him in a fit of unguarded friendship on the night of Sept 16th 1978 in the tent? Or if Michael Palin were to tell *The Star* what I did with his shoes at the beginning of November? In fact, Michael is the big worry, because he keeps a diary, so there's no knowing what he might blurt out.

Of course, I realise that this magazine is a far cry from the *Daily Mirror* or *The Star*, but just suppose that Rupert Murdoch were to buy it while this article was going to press. I might wake up, Wednesday morning, to find Alan Brien all over the front page and a circulation of three million reading my strictly confidential reminiscences of my experiences directing *Monty Python's Life of Brian*.

No... the more I think about it, the less I like the whole exercise. Take Eric Idle, for example; if he found out what Tanya and I were really doing behind the sofa, he'd never brush his teeth again—not with his electric toothbrush, anyway. And in any case, what's the point of it all? I mean does it really do anyone any good to know what happens behind the camera as well as in front of it? Would we enjoy *King Lear* any more if we knew that Shakespeare never used an electric toothbrush all his life? Or would the construction of the Eiffel Tower be any more beautiful to us if we knew that Alexandre Eiffel was really more interested in building bridges? Of course, we do know these things—they are incontrovertible facts—but that doesn't alter the argument. It simply means I haven't picked the best

examples to illustrate it, that's all.

The point I'm trying to make is this: What Does It Matter? Even if Shakespeare had used an electric toothbrush, would it help us to know how he wrote such wonderful plays for the Royal Shakespeare Company? Of course it might suggest the remote possibility that he may also have had access to an electric typewriter as well, but that still wouldn't help us to understand how he arrived at such sublime lines as:

Why, I am going with my pigeons to the tribunal plebs...

(*Titus Andronicus* IV iii)

or

... And I, tough senior, as an appertinent title to your old time, which we may name tough.

(*Love's Labour's Lost* I ii)

Although, I suppose it might explain something if he wasn't really used to using an electric typewriter—I mean it's dead easy to hit the wrong keys by accident and get into a hell of a mess... Where was I? Oh yes—Truth. All this behind-the-scenes stuff—what's it all about? What purpose does it serve to know about Terry Gilliam's personality problems? Or how does it help the cause of humanity to learn about Graham Chapman's new friend? Instead, shouldn't we be examining our own motives for indulging in this sort of muck-raking exercise?

Well, let me get this clear right from the start—I don't think there's anything wrong with my motives for writing this. After all, as the Prime Minister never tires of reminding us, we all of us have a moral duty to seek profits, and to refute the constant, unscrupulous Left-wing attack on the profit-motive, that has done so much damage to Britain's prestige in World Trade and which

has sapped the intellectual and moral fibre of our management class to the extent that even the massive tax incentives so recently introduced are scarcely sufficient to help them reassert their rightful position vis-à-vis the common manual worker whose only thought is to make more money for himself.

On the other hand, to be quite honest with you, I am appalled that the cheap catch-penny title used for this article should have lured anyone into reading it. What are you hoping for? Some juicy little nugget about John Cleese's hair transplant? Yet more sordid details about Michael Palin's teeth? (Incidentally, he's not allowed to use an electric toothbrush—so much for his chances of writing *Coriolanus*!)

No, I'm afraid, that if you are typical of the sort of reader this magazine is not attracting, all I can say is that the soon Rupert Murdoch takes it over the better. Then at least we'll know where we stand. God! It makes me sick! When I think of the hypocritical, two-faced so-called non-intellectuals who claim they buy magazines like this for the cartoons! They're no better than those despicable wretches who pretend they're just buying *Playboy* for the nudes or *Penthouse* for the details of female anatomy that are normally sat on by our repressed society, and then as soon as they get the home start reading the articles by Norman Mailer! Let's have a bit more honesty around—that's all I can say!

To return to the subject. When the Editor asked me to reveal some of the startling behind-the-scenes secrets of the *Life of Brian*, I was naturally shocked. Did you really expect me to betray the confidences of my dearest friends and closest associates, some of whom even owe me money? Clearly he did not know the kind of man he was



dealing with—a man who would never betray a trust except for financial gain—a man who *only* buys *Encounter* for the rude bits and who, like the swan of Avon, has never used an electric toothbrush.

And what, I asked myself, was *his* motive? Could he seriously believe that he could prop up the circulation of a mid-Victorian humour magazine by filling out its pages with the personal problems of a quasi-fashionable troupe of late twentieth-century *farceurs*? Of course not. There was only one possible explanation: he has been caught up in the Left-wing subversive plot to undermine serious political debate with cheesecake and titillation. We've seen it happen in the *News of the World* where nearly the editorial staff have been infiltrated by Left-wingers, determined to make in salacious stories under the guise of moral indignation.

It's even happening—heaven preserve us—in *The Sun*, where perfectly respectable editorials in support of the Prime Minister are confronted with the bare nipples and open mouths of unblushing hoydens, intent on arousing lubricity and prurience in the intellects of its readers! And on the BBC a former Right-wing Prime Minister is persuaded to desport himself in an unseemly manner on a late-night chat show! If that isn't proof-positive of the Socialist-anarchist machinations within our midst, I don't know what is!

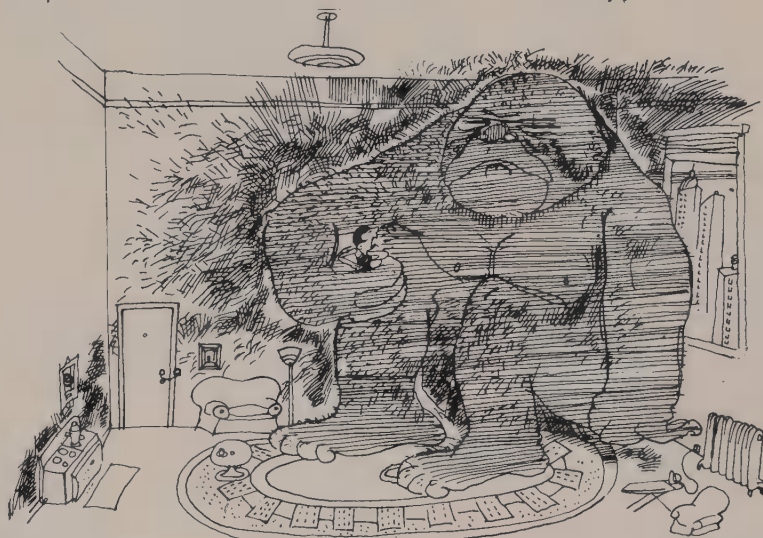
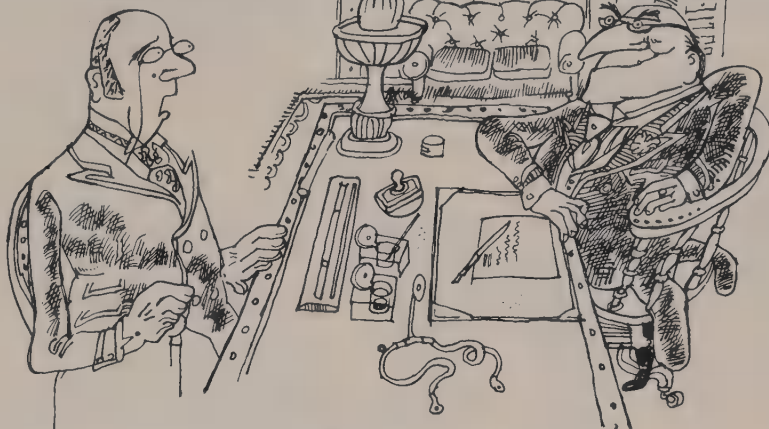
And now I find myself writing for a magazine which is hell-bent on the same course. Well, let me warn the Editor to look around his staff and seek out the Fifth Columnists and Fellow Travellers who have suggested this article to him. Before it's too late, he should cleanse his pages of this Leftist libertinage—which may start innocently enough with my startling behind-the-scenes secrets, but which soon leads to exposed bottoms and the full horror of syndicalism and the free-statist rantings of an untrammelled press! Sex is Anarchy! And those who fail to clamp down upon its incipient manifestations will discover Clive Jenkins and his cohorts hammering down their doors sooner than they think!

And to those of you who have turned to this article about behind-the-scenes secrets in the hopes of being startled, I say: think again. Could Margaret Thatcher have got where she is today, if she'd let sex dictate her actions, except in cases of the most extreme necessity? Could Sir Keith Joseph have arrived at his present heights of intellectual profundity if he'd addled his mind with thoughts about ladies' underwear or human needs? Could Michael Heseltine have rocketed to stardom if he had practised constant self-abuse or, indeed, if he had wasted precious minutes of the day reading articles such as this?

The answer is stark, staringly obvious. And all I can hope is that, having embarked upon this course which you may now bitterly regret, you will do your utmost never to read this again.

Novel Relationships

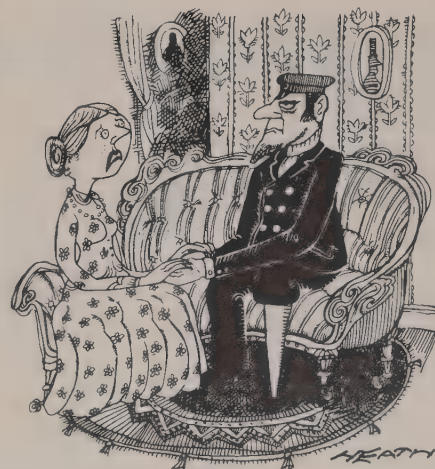
"You amaze me, Jekyll. If I lived alone, I think I'd go mad."



"I don't know why I married you, you've had no work since King Kong."



"God! Moriarty, you've got a way with you!"



"Tell me, Captain Ahab, is there someone else?"

DID YOU KNOW?

DID YOU KNOW THAT EVERY YEAR ABOUT THIS TIME HUNDREDS OF DID YOU KNOW BOOKS START APPEARING IN BOOKSHOPS?

DID YOU KNOW THEY WERE COBBLINGS OF BORING OLD RUBBISH DESIGNED TO MAKE CHRISTMAS A NIGHTMARE FOR PARENTS?

DID YOU KNOW THAT ANYONE CAN DO THEM?

ORVILLE WRIGHT HAD THE SAME DRESSING GOWN FOR SIX YEARS!



THE POPULAR NAME FOR BELLADONNA IS NOT LUPIN!



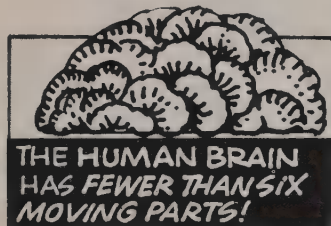
THE AVERAGE WEIGHT OF AN ENGLISH CLOCK IS 4.2 LBS!

THE ASHTRAY WAS DISCOVERED BY THE GERMAN, GOTTFRIED ENG!



KING GEORGE II ALMOST GAVE HIS NAME TO A SPECIES OF CARROT!

THE SURFACE AREA OF THE MODERN TELEPHONE IS 131.64 SQUARE INCHES!



THE HUMAN BRAIN HAS FEWER THAN SIX MOVING PARTS!

DURING THE MIDDLE AGES THE SOLOMON ISLANDERS WORSHIPPED THE PLUM!



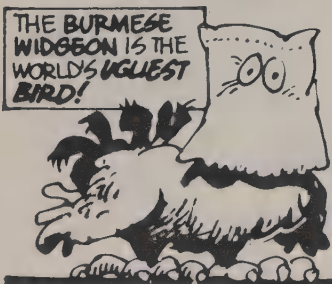
IN THE FOUR VOLUMES OF THE LONDON TELEPHONE DIRECTORY THERE IS NOBODY CALLED SNOLE!



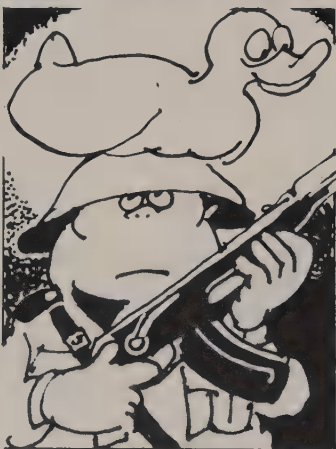
THE BIRTHPLACE OF FEDERICO THE MUNIFICENT IS NOW A DELICATESSEN!

ON PRESENT ESTIMATES, WORLD SUPPLIES OF WOLF FAT WILL RUN OUT IN LESS THAN THREE HUNDRED YEARS!

THE BURMESE WIDGEON IS THE WORLD'S UGLIEST BIRD!



THE DUCK IS ONE OF THE LARGEST BIRDS IN POLAND!



THE PENGUIN IS SO CALLED BECAUSE OF ITS TEMPERAMENT!

THERE IS NO WORD FOR RADIATOR IN FLEMISH!



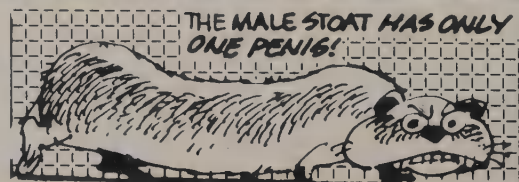
IN FINLAND THE MAJORITY OF DOORS OPEN OUTWARDS!



WILLIAM CAXTON (1422-1491) LOOKED SHORTER THAN HE ACTUALLY WAS!



THE MALE STOAT HAS ONLY ONE PENIS!

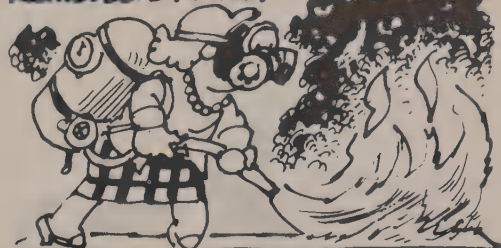


MOTHS COMMUNICATE BY BREAKING WIND!



SHOES ARE NO LONGER CURRENCY ANYWHERE!

MOST HOUSEHOLD STAINS CAN BE REMOVED BY FIRE!



THE USHUNGI TRIBE OF WHAT WAS FORMERLY THE FRENCH CAMEROONS BELIEVE PENCILS TO BE APHRODISIAC!

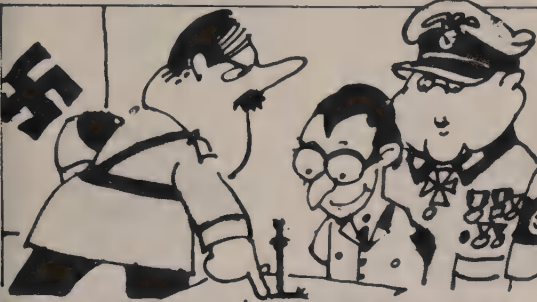


MOUNT EVEREST (29,002 FT.) IS HEAVIER THAN CARDIFF!

ROCHDALE

OUT OF EIGHTEEN NORTHERN TOWNS ONLY ROCHDALE HAS THAT NAME!

IN SURINAM, IT IS CONSIDERED GOOD LUCK TO WALK INTO A COW!



DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR, THE NATIONAL GALLERY WAS BELIEVED BY MANY GERMANS TO BE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF TRAFALGAR SQUARE!

THE RUKKA IS THE DIRTIEST RIVER IN TURKEY!



SIR HENRY STAPLE (1835-1908) NEVER LEARNED TO SHAVE!



LAPP PUNCTUATION CONTAINS NO SEMI-COLON!

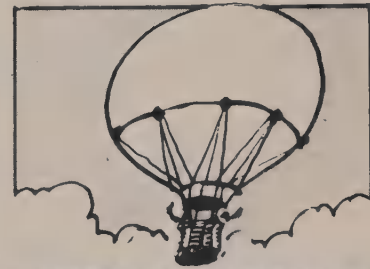


COD HAVE A VERY SOPHISTICATED FORM OF RADAR, BUT HAVE NEVER WORKED OUT HOW TO USE IT!

THE INDIAN OCEAN IS ENTIRELY WITHOUT CORNERS!

THE SMALLEST DIAMOND EVER DISCOVERED WAS THE BLOEMFONTEIN SPECK! (ENLARGED 50 TIMES)

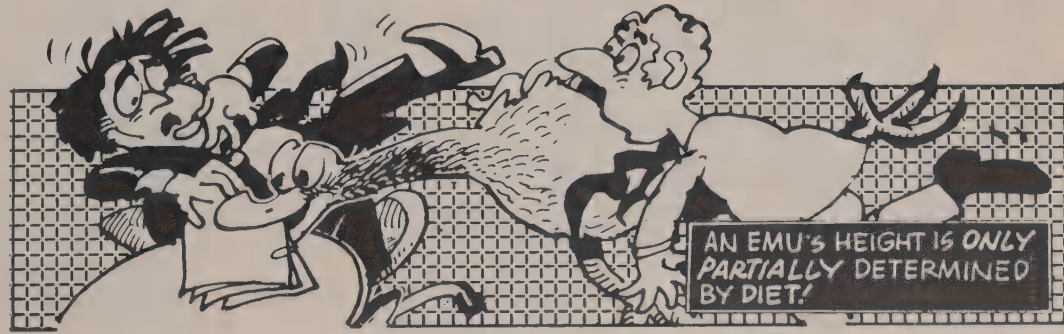
THE EDICT OF STUTTGART (1342) WAS SIGNED BY NO FEWER THAN ELEVEN COOPERS!



ONLY FOUR BALLOONS HAVE EVER FLOWN OVER SUBURBAN CARACAS!



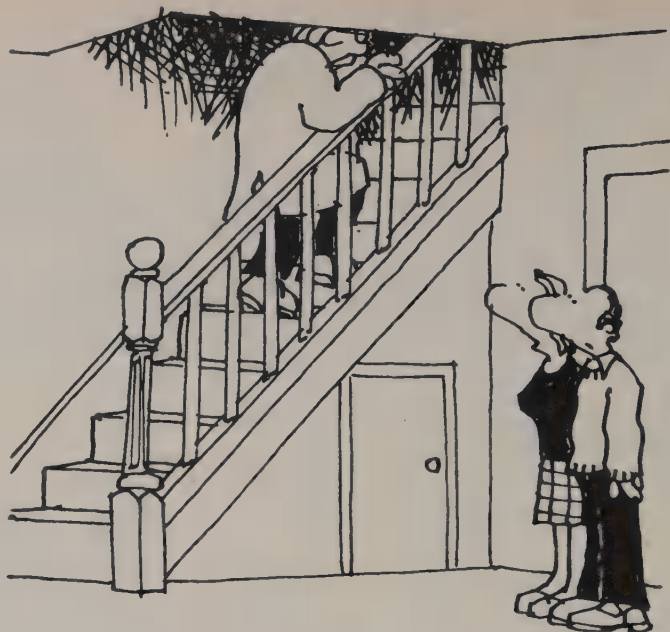
A REFECTORY TABLE THAT ONCE BELONGED TO POPE URBAN VI - HAS NOW DISAPPEARED!



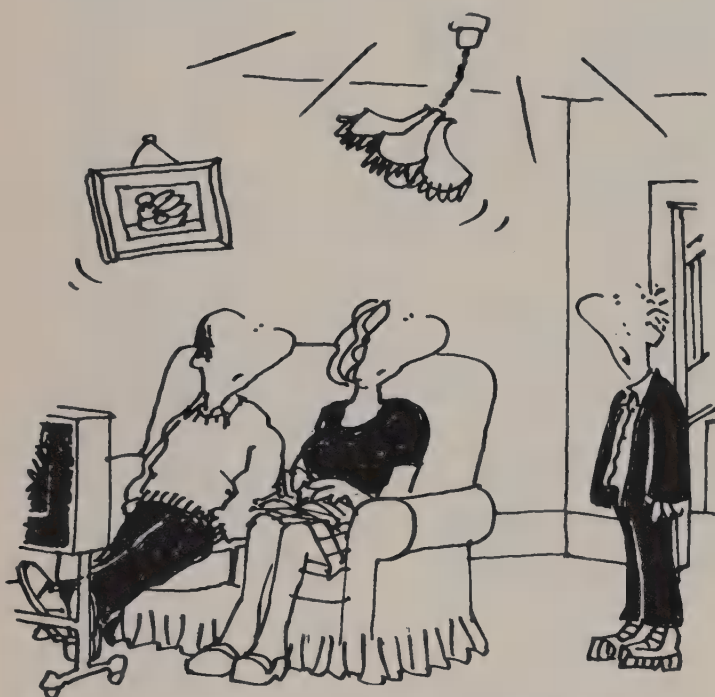
AN EMU'S HEIGHT IS ONLY PARTIALLY DETERMINED BY DIET!

HECTOR BREEZE:

LIVING WITH FATHER



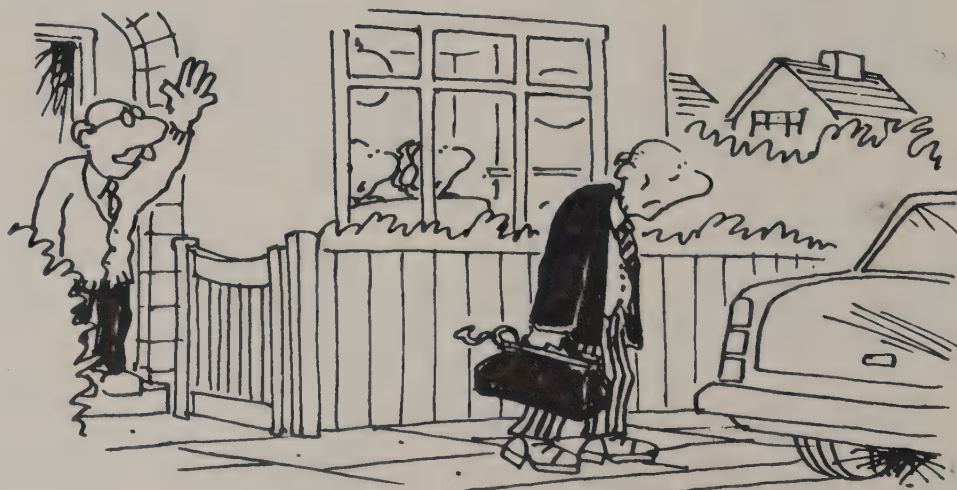
"He says he didn't get that Father Christmas job because they were looking for a younger man."



"The worst thing about him is the way he plays those Harry Champion records all day long!"



"What I can't stand is his lack of concern over the silicon chip."



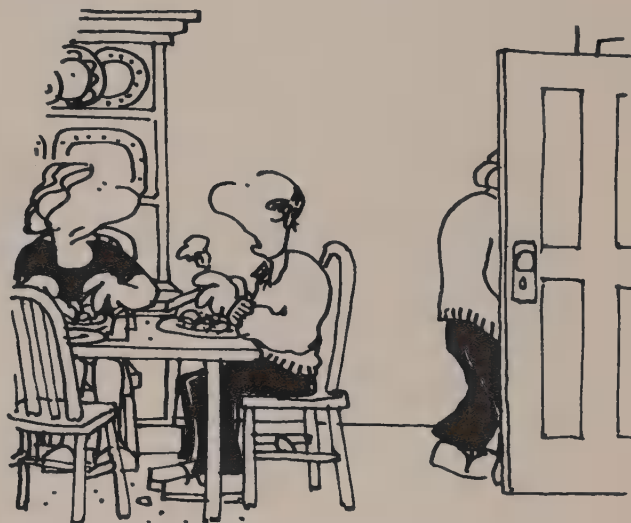
"Have you noticed that these days the geriatricians look older than the patients?"



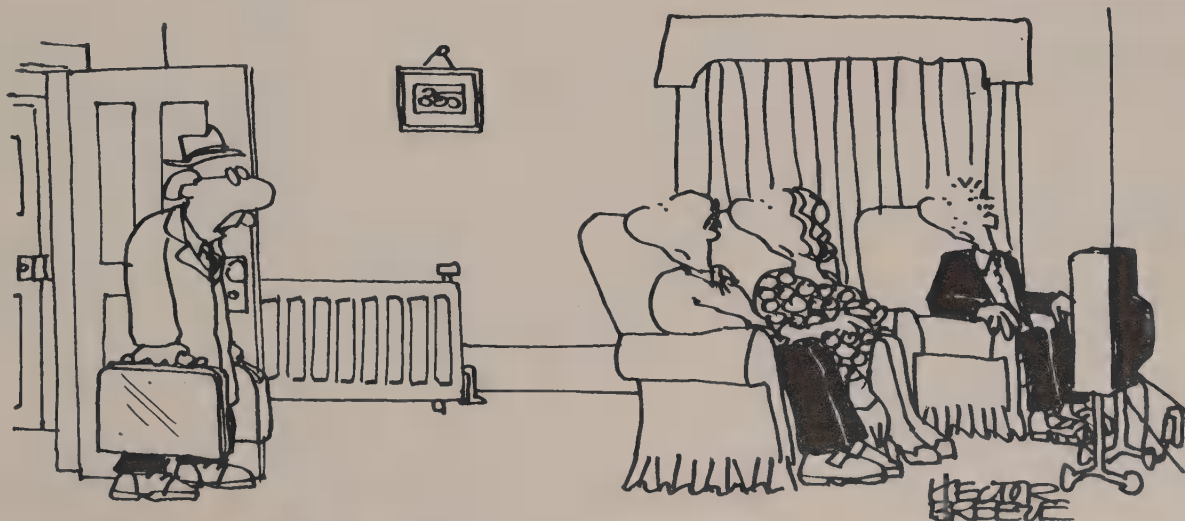
"Well, he must keep his pension somewhere!"



"I got it out of the library this morning—why?"



"Your father? I always thought he was my father!"



"There was a mistake in the rota. I'm not due at Fred and Laura's till 1982."

MORE SEX ON TV URGED BY VIEWERS

By **RICHARD LAST**
Television Staff

SOME viewers of independent television would like programmes to contain more sex and violence and nearly all daytime viewers, especially elderly men, feel that afternoon programmes should be more "adult."

YOUR CHOICE OF ADULT ITV 2

SUNDAY

9.5 The Bubbles

Cuthbert fancies a mixed Sauna

More explicit cartoon fun in amongst the busty belles of Bubbles Bodega as "Cautious" Cuthbert blows the lid off Bangkok's Bubble Brook.

9.55 The Little Whorehouse on the Prairie Service Not Included

Adventures with the Dingbats, a close-knit Las Vegas group of masseuses hell-raising in Nevada at the turn of the century. Laura finds a saucy message under her pom-pom and is determined to have it out with the sender...

Charlie Dingbat	Saul Raymond
Dolores Dingbat	Zsa Zsa Furore
Laura 'Hot Lips' Dingbat	Mary Fontayne
Marilyn Dingbat	Janine Collins
Emanuelle Dingbat	Pam Bush
Nathaniel Arkwright	Norman Crawford

11.10 Jamie and his Magic Torch

The sparks really fly when young Jamie switches his torch on to go window-cleaning with Wanda, his faithful sheep. The stories by the Marchesa de Sade are accompanied by top-selling lesbian mouth-organist Shirlene who was recently tortured in Chile.

12.0 Wicked World

BRIAN WARDEN takes a look at drug-smuggling inside Pentonville, how a limbless Moslem stripper fought her way back into the limelight and, as the world prepares for war, demonstrates how thermonuclear dum-dums take out insurgents.

1.0 New Series

Numbers at Work

NIPPER HARRIS

First of 13 programmes dealing with mathematics related to everyday jobs. Today, presenter Nipper Harris goes through adding, subtracting and estimating the accounts of a corner tobacconist's, explaining just how VAT is applied to imported porn, how to "lose" back-handers to the Obscene Publications Squad and devises an ingenious method of cutting up a 9" x 4" brick of heroin into 3,000 portions.

For details of the work book which accompanies the series, write to Dept. 69, *Flesh Gordon's Extension College*, 44 *Plungengracht, Amsterdam X*.

2.45 The Big Match

Join **DICKIE MOORE** for highlights of the week-end's sport, including:

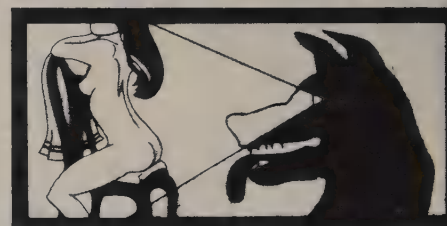
WRESTLING on the terraces during yesterday's FA Cup ties

INTERNATIONAL DARTS with a top team of thoracic surgeons working on nobbled coppers

ICE HOCKEY with action highlights from the British Columbia-Lapland clash in which seven died and two coachloads of supporters were carried off concussed

TRACK AND FIELD events, live from the Kabul Hippodrome, with Bulldog Boscik of Hindu Kush going for a direct hit on Russia's Rollerball Vedeneeva in the Women's Hammer-Throwing

4.45 Sunday Matinee



Pert Janaway and Madeline Millington star in an explosive double-bill that shocked Hamburg:

WORZEL GUMMIDGE AND THE SHE-VIXENS

plus

CONFESSIONS OF A PSYCHOPATH

(Now Banned in Denmark!)



World of Sport's popular **SPOT THE BALL** feature today takes a candid look at seaside soccer in steamy Brazil.

FTERNOON VIEWING ON —



Crunk the Insatiable Gorilla is Mandy Rice-Parkinson's special guest tomorrow on *After Noon Plus*.

MONDAY

9.30 The Adventures of Rupert Bear

Rupert buys a super new blouse

Another palpitating puppet adventure for Rupert and his friends Cedric, Adrian and Jeremy in Nutwood. What surprises—expected and, honestly, like a bolt from the blue—await them this week as they dress up

For Schools:

THE SPRING TERM ON ITV 2

Starting later this week, ITV 2 presents a new season of informative and instructive programmes aimed at today's aware youngsters and at grown-ups with a mental age of 4 to 11. Amongst the highlights: **FINDING OUT** takes a look at life in France—back-stage at the Folies Bergère and a detailed study of the guillotine works. **HOW WE USED TO LIVE** probes ancient sacrificial rites of the Satanites who once roamed the Amazon. **STARTING OUT** helps pupils understand the moral undertones of mugging or knocking off a sub post-office. **EXPERIMENTS FOR TODAY** takes the lid off advanced biology and shows how an autopsy is done. **STOP, LOOK, LISTEN** encourages teenagers to organise gang wars on a professional basis and **BELIEVE IT OR NOT** reconstructs the incredible scenes of rape and pillage when the Romans entered Carthage.

for a protest march against prejudice in the firefighting service?

10.15 Starsky and Crutch

Today's Episode:

WHO KILLED COCK ROBIN?

A tough case for the beaten-up crime-busting duo from Harlem as they race against time and a megalomaniacal pervert inside City Hall to track down an unrequited flaggelist who gets his kicks taking out nuns with a bacon-slicer.

1.0 Nudes at One

ANGIE FJORD

1.30 Crown Court

Games People Play

by PORCHESTER GARGOYLE

Hired assassin Ron Dewhurst took his Malaysian girlfriend into a pub car-park for a kiss and a cuddle. Moments later, police find 22 cars in flames, a headless torso in the off-licence and a blood-stained set of peek-a-boo lingerie . . .

This week's cast:

Mr Justice Bulge
Jeremy Parsnip QC
Tracey Dickson
Ron Dewhurst
Tik Tak To
Clerk of the Court
Jury Foreman
Court Reporter

Hugo Hefner
Nat Hammer
Lurleen Chambers
Roger Connery
Bangkok Barbra
Bruce Hindsight
The Incredible Hulk
H. R. Haldeman

4.45

New Series

Emmerdale Massage Parlour

Scorching new series that probes behind closed doors amongst a farming community in Yorkshire's Vale of Sin. It's winter-time and Annie Surrogate finds herself dreaming of sun-kissed private beaches where hot hands caress away the strains of milking with a facial, pedicure and plunge into the Jacuzzi. But there's a surprise in store when Mutt Skulback lumbers into the barn and sets about the Rev. Jerome with a length of hose-pipe . . .

This week's cast:

Annie Surrogate
Joe Surrogate
Mutt Skulback
Rev. Jerome

Jaclyn Hack
Kelly Savalas
George Mellie
Albert Lowe

5.15 The Spotty Show

The loveable octogenarian glove-puppet is knocked senseless for his gas money by a gang of excitable youngsters.

6.45 This is Your Death

Someone, somewhere is in for a super surprise as the subject of tonight's killing show before an invited audience of rebarbative sadists.

6.55 Help!

The action-line show that aims to help you find an uninhibited mate or a set of reliable wheels for that important job . . .

STANLEY REYNOLDS:

ILL MET BY MOON- LIGHT

STROLLING into my local newsagents the other morning to ask about the possible whereabouts of my monthly supplies of *Household Beautiful* and *Tidy Home*, the little old lady, a most mumsie looking apparition with an electric blue rinsed head of hair and zircon encrusted goggles, was standing neath the usual line-up of barely clad doxies on the main magazine display shelf, bemoaning the state of the world. I don't know what channel this newsagent lady can receive on her telly but I never seem to see the same shows. Apparently there had been a sex education film on during the children's hour the afternoon previous. Feeling a bit salty, I said, "Sex education films, aren't there any street corners any more?"

This brought a laugh from one of the ancients who was thumbing through a glossy mag full of naked jades. But the newsagent lady was not amused. "That's very satirical, I'm sure, bighead," she said, "but just look at this." She then thrust a copy of that morning's *Daily Mirror* at me. Under the headline **SEX LESSONS FOR RAPISTS** I read the following intelligence from New York:

"Rapists are being cured of their criminal urges," I read aloud, "by being taught the art of seduction."

"Not so much with the mouth, mush," the lady newsagent snapped, for the venerables who had been casting nostalgic, amorous glances at the girlie mags had turned all ears. Unable to resist an audience I nevertheless continued the public reading.

"The amazing lessons in love are given at a New York clinic in a test scheme paid for by the American Government."

A few of the old fellows interrupted me there and started complaining about how they failed to emigrate to the States back in '28 when they had the chance to get in on the ground floor of civil aviation or talking pictures; America, they said, was truly the land of opportunity whereas here they had to queue for a simple hernia operation.

"Treatment," I went on, "is based on the theory that rapists have never understood how to seduce women and therefore become frustrated and angry. So volunteers are shown how to chat up girls, and woo them."

The old boys grumbled about having been born too soon, tossed aside the girlie mags, purchased *Fishing Times*, *Today's Angler*, *Field and Stream* and other such outdoors mags, and shuffled out and round the corner to the tea-shop which passes for European sidewalk cafe life in the grey, pebble-dashed Liverpool suburb we live in. I picked up *Household Beautiful* and headed home, and the reader has perhaps already grasped that I am the domestic sort; I suppose I am what you could call a grass widower, an unmarried father, the head of a one-parent family, and no longer a lady's man.

Leading a quiet sort of life and not getting out much any more, I had thought that rape in this permissive age was a thing of the past. But just after reading that item in the *Mirror* about the seduction school in New York I was taking a taxi into the heart of downtown Liverpool to see yet another wholesome, Easter Holiday family type picture, when I noticed a large sign painted on the side of a wall. "Women," it said, "Reclaim the Night." Puzzled, I asked the cab driver what this meant.

"The ladies," he said, "don't like gettin' raped when they are staggerin' home after not bein' able to pick up a guy in one of de drinkin' clubs dat are all around here." This area we were passing through was the twilight area.

Since then I have been puzzling over the whole business of rape, wooing, seduction and sex education. In the old days, in my boyhood in America, my sex education, like all other boy's sex education, was conducted on street corners. My first afternoon seminars were held outside the Highland Fruit and Soda Fountain at the corner of Hampden and Nonotuck Streets in Holyoke, Mass., and I later did an advanced level course on the street corner outside the Wayland Drug Store at the corner of

Wayland Square and Weybossett Street in Providence, Rhode Island. These were given by older boys, some of whom were so mature and worldly wise they were forced to shave twice and sometimes even three times a week.

In their essence the whole of these tutorials could be boiled down to one simple rule of thumb which was "When they say, 'No' what they really mean is 'Yes.'" Later, of course, one learned that there were more sophisticated girls who had to be wooed. "Listen, honey," the would-be seducer would have to whisper, "you had a hamburger, you saw a show."

I suppose any warm words are better than a sock on the jaw, and as my own sex life as a sex life is practically null and void, I thought perhaps I should try the gift of golden speech on some young lady rather than simply drag her down to the boozier and ask the barman to fill her up. With this in mind I borrowed a clean shirt, a fiver, and a telephone number from my 18-year-old son and bracing myself with several fingers of Old Vulturine Genuine Japanese Scotch Whisky type drinking fluid, given to me by a seafaring man who obviously harboured some secret grudge against me, I telephoned the bimbo, who I had met casually a couple of times.

Putting on my best Charles Boyer voice I coo-ed, "Why, hello, there, Brenda, you remember me, Ambrose's dad? Yeah, that's right, the one with the cold sore and the little crinkly eyes with the red rims. Well, the strangest thing has been happening—in all my dreams I search for you, but I do not find even the echo of your footsteps, my darling."

"You bin smokin' them funny cigarettes?" she said. "And since when are you French?"

"I got a frog in my throat," I explained. "But forget the little details. They are as nothing to what has been going on inside me. Where have you been hiding, thief of my heart?"

"I bin to Manchester last week," she said, "to see Iggy Pop, but I haven't been



going out too much recently me self."

"Well," I said, "there is no rest for me, sleep has left my bed. I blink into the darkness wondering how I can steal the beauty from your face."

As ill fate would have it this Brenda agreed to meet me at a bistro in town—"Me Mam," she explained, "might not understand me goin' out with a fella old enough to be me Dad, if we had one, a Dad, I mean." Luckily the bistro was badly lighted and the girl, who was 26 and had been playing the older woman with my eighteen-year-old, sort of screwed up her eyes and paid me the compliment of saying I didn't look quite as old as I obviously was and that I did, indeed, look something like my eldest son in the dusk with the light behind me, only I was more sort of fallen apart at the seams.

Over a few demi-jugs of what such young gents as my eldest boy call "leg openers", I attempted to ply her with honeyed words while the tape recorder in the bistro blared out a song the entire lyric of which seemed to be six nasal adolescents screaming, "We don't want no aggrovation!" I did not allow this to hinder my research.

"O my sinner," I whispered, "let us spend this night together."

"Ya what?" she asked.

I filled her glass and went on, "My mind whispers, 'Come, let us run away,' but I am afraid, my Brenda, of that long journey."

"Yeah," she said, "I went to Newcastle to see the Ded Byrds play last month and the car broke down on the M62. Shockin' it was."

"I look at you, Brenda, and long to live with you for ever."

At this point the punk rockers on the tape stopped singing and that last line of mine was bellowed to a silent room. The waitress sniggered. Brenda kept beating time to the rock music which, evidently, was still playing inside her own head.

"But at least, my beautiful sinner," I said, "we will spend tonight together. Stay a night until our enemy the cock shall crow." I do not wish to appear immodest but when I delivered that line I had to hand it to myself. "Roll over Charles Boyer," I

said, "and tell Errol Flynn the news."

"Hey!" Brenda said, coming to life, "I don't like that sort of talk. I can't stand no smut of any kind."

She had already whipped through a bit of the red ink they were selling in this place, and wishing to avoid a drunken scene with a young harridan I hastily explained the poetic nature of the farmyard reference. "Aw!" she said, "I hate the country. There's nothin' to do there and the TV reception is usually somethin' shockin'." But then her eyes lighted up. "Say," she said, "the way you talk, it's kind of queer. I suppose that's why at your age you ain't got a wife."

"I got three sons."

"Yeah," she said scornfully, "I always heard they were the worst kind. Not that I got anything against you guys, except you talk funny. And me Mam says they can be real good friends with a woman."

Seeing how the evening had progressed and seeing how I was down to my last quid and a handful of small change, I said, "Speaking as strictly as a pal, Mizz Brenda, you think you might cough up for the next round?"

"Say," she said, "what kind of a fag is a fag like you anyway, comin' out practising all that dirty queer talk on a girl and then tryin' to borrow money from her. A real man never would borrow money from a girl but then we sort of know what kind of a man a man like you is."

There were a few more minutes of a fairly hairy time between Mizz Brenda and my goodself and in the end I lent her my last quid for a taxi home. I had just enough for a half pint at the pub next door with a long walk home to the suburbs the only thing standing between a sadder and wiser man's good night's sleep. Inside the pub there were a couple of leering oafs discussing their success with women. They looked like the types who would have to pull a sawn-off shotgun on a girl to get so much as a goodnight kiss, but from what they were saying they had mastered the new art of seduction which they are teaching nowadays in New York.

One thug, who looked incapable of human speech, pointed a dirty thumb at what looked like a respectable enough young lady sitting in a corner. He had picked her up the night before, he told his mate.

"How's it go?" the lout with him asked.

"Do I ever miss?" the punk asked, leering. "I just walked up to her, right in here it was, and I says, 'Hey, babe, you go?'"

"An' what did she say?" the other asked.

"She said, 'I do now, you smooth talkin' sonofagun.'"

Walking home through Liverpool's twilight zone I was feeling a bit nervous, wishing they'd hurry up and reclaim the night for both men and women alike, but then my friend the taxi driver pulled up and offered me a free ride home. "What's money?" he asked philosophically. "Can money buy you happiness? Can money buy you the love of a good woman?"

"Yes," I said.

"Yeah," he said, "I always thought so too."

LET'S PARLER FRANÇAIS!

Dans le Health Food Shop

Client: Bonjour. Je cherche un plain strong white flour.

Assistant: Ne cherchez pas ici, monsieur. White flour ets toxique et deadly. Nous sommes un magasin sérieux.

Client: Oh. Quelle sorte de farine vous avez?

Assistant: Nous avons wholemeal, wheatmeal, mealwhole, 110% fullwheat, 120% wheat-of-the-loom ou 150% millstone grit.

Client: Et la différence?

Assistant: Nulle. Elles sont toutes organically grown avec real dung et hand ground dans notre mill à Buckminster Fuller. Elles sont transportées ici dans un organically built farm wagon.

Client: Et les sacs sont rangés sur les shelves ici par ruddy-cheeked yokels dans smocks traditionnels?

Assistant: Of course.

Client: Hmm. Je prends un 1 lb sac de 200% stonewheat.

Assistant: Ça fait £4.80.

Client: C'est cher.

Assistant: Health food est toujours cher. C'est le wholepoint. Nous ne voulons pas avoir chaque Tom, Dick and Harry dans le shop.

Client: Hmm. Et je veux acheter un carrier bag.

Assistant: Quelle sorte de carrier?

Client: Il y a différentes sortes?

Assistant: Oui, bien sûr. Wholeweave, brownbag recycle, Third Worldweave, Arty Dartington ou Jethrotwill.

Client: On peut les manger?

Assistant: Non. On peut manger les Chinese rice paper bags, mais ils ne sont pas très forts.

Client: OK. Un sac de stonewheat et un Chinese paper bag.

Assistant: Un moment, je vais calculer sur mon abacus. £4.80 + 60p, c'est... c'est...

Client: £5.40.

Assistant: £5.80.

Client: Votre abacus est sur le blink.

Assistant: Un abacus ne va jamais sur le blink. J'ai simplement ajouté 40p pour le save the Honeybee Appeal.

Client: Le honeybee est en danger?

Assistant: Non. Pas encore. Mais il faut anticiper. Sauvons le honeybee maintenant pendant qu'il est sauf! Plus tard, il sera trop tard!!

Client: OK, OK. Voici £5.80. Merci et au revoir.



"I can't remember whether I endorse products on television because I'm famous or the other way round."

MARTIN:

American Graffiti



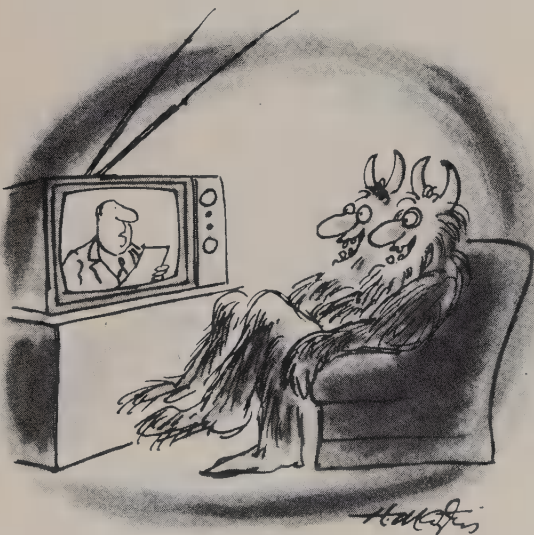
"Do you, therapy group A, take thee, therapy group B, to relate to and empathise with through trauma and depression . . ."



"Funny, I always pictured Judgement Day with the Lord in majestic robes standing on a promontory high above a valley undulating with all those cringing, frightened peoples of the earth."



"He recoiled at something I said, Dr Momfret, and refuses to come out."



"... and here's another bulletin on the furry monsters who have invaded suburbia."



"Twitter, twitter, twitter." "Chirp, chirp, chirp." "Tweet, tweet, tweet." "Yak, yak, yak."

Straw Poles

by WILLIAM DAVIS

Warsaw

THE City may not think much of the dollar these days, but it still rules the Communist world.

"PSST," a long-haired young man said on my first day in Poland, just like the Arab purveyor of pornography in *Punch* cartoons. "Do you have any dollars?"

It is a question I was first asked on a Leningrad street twelve years ago. I pretended not to understand, because someone had warned me that KGB agents made a habit of trapping foreigners by offering twice as many roubles as one could get at official exchange counters. It sounded a bit like one of Len Deighton's tall stories, but I thought it best not to take any risks.

The young man in Warsaw didn't look like a KGB agent, but how do you tell what an agent looks like? Michael Caine? Edward G. Robinson? Sophia Loren? So I said sorry, I couldn't help.

The reason why everyone is so keen on dollars and other Western currencies is, quite simply, that they open the door to everything.

In Poland, as in other Communist countries, there are special shops at which one can buy goods which are either not available elsewhere or which are so outrageously priced that no-one can afford them. Cars are the outstanding example. With hard currency one can buy a car at short notice. Without it, one has to wait two or three years—and then pay considerably more.

If you have dollars, pounds or marks you can also travel to Western countries. The Polish Government is willing enough to let people go (in this respect, as in many others, it is more liberal than the Russians or Bulgarians) but the official allocation of foreign currency is only \$150 every three years.

The guide who had been showing me around proudly told me, ten minutes after we met, that he was one of the fortunate people with a "dollar account". Several others have said the same thing since. A dollar account, clearly, not only has practical advantages but also confers status.

Anyone can walk into the Polish State

Bank and open such an account, apparently without having to explain where the money has come from.

Some, undoubtedly, is derived from illegal currency deals with tourists. Some comes from other Black Market transactions, and some is sent by understanding relatives abroad. Guides solicit foreign currency tips, and at night taxi drivers give priority to visitors who agree to pay them in Western money. (A Polish friend who accompanied me to my hotel after an evening out told me the next day that, although there were half a dozen taxis outside, he had been forced to walk home because they only wanted to do business with foreigners.)

But there is another dodge which has become increasingly popular. You take your \$150 and add whatever other currency you have managed to scrape together and apply for a visa to the United States or Britain.

Once there you get yourself a temporary job. You are not supposed to do that, of course, but everyone knows that there are all sorts of firms which will employ you without bothering about work permits. My guide worked for two months as a dishwasher in a Southend restaurant. You save as much as you can, and bring your precious currency back to Poland.

The British embassy here says it gets 35,000 visa applications a year. Everyone has to go through a personal interview and the final decision is made in London (it takes up to six weeks to get a British visa) but trying to eliminate all the currency hunters is an impossible task.

I dare say that the Polish Government—like the Kremlin—recognises how ironic it is that capitalist currencies should be the principal status symbols. But this has gone one for so long that to find it odd—no-one,

no-one, that is, except bewildered peasants who come to the big city and discover that they are second-class citizens.

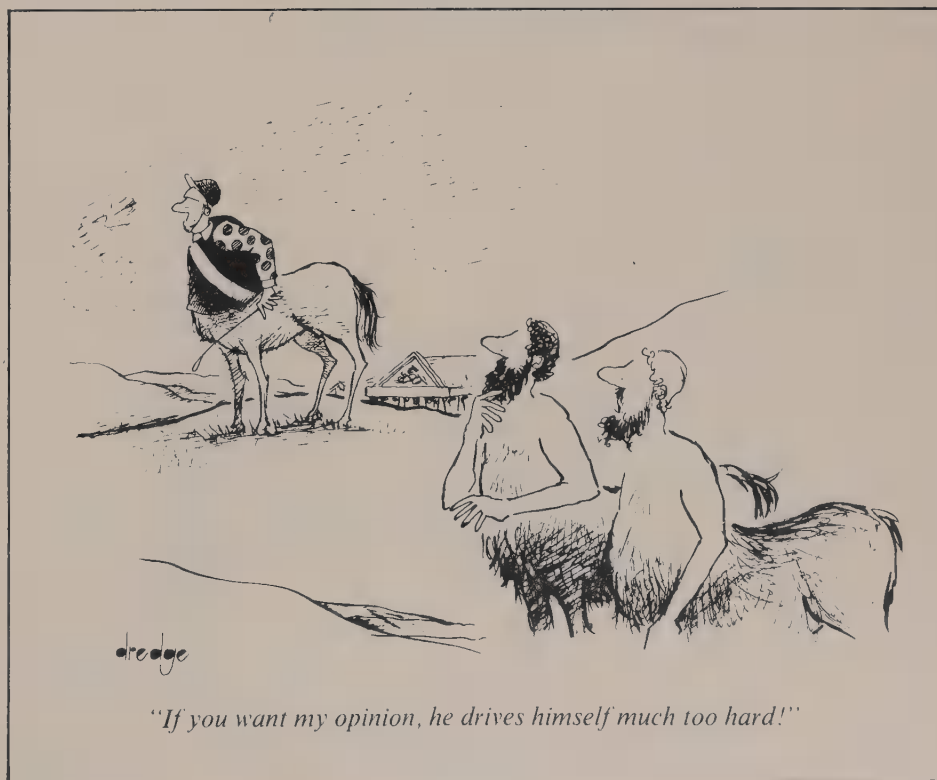
Virtually all Communist countries have been chasing hard currencies for years. They are needed to acquire Western technology, and that counts for more than other considerations. Poland is deeply in debt to the West, so the Government's efforts even extend to selling most of the country's meat production abroad; the shortage of meat in cities like Warsaw is a constant talking point.

There is no reason to suppose that any of this will change in the foreseeable future. But the Poles are a resourceful lot, skilled at adapting themselves to every kind of situation. They certainly don't object to a bit of private enterprise; indeed it flourishes in all sorts of areas. Many shops are privately owned. So are some of the restaurants. And more than 80 per cent of agricultural land belongs to individual farmers rather than the state.

When the Communists took over, the large estates were split up. Farmers were given parcels of land, and they promised to become loyal party followers. But now the Government finds that they are dedicated mini-capitalists and it doesn't know what to do about it. Any attempt to grab that land would spark off riots, if not a revolution.

It seems equally powerless to prevent the private ownership of houses and flats. There is a long waiting list for Government-built homes (eight to ten years is common) but if you have the necessary cash you can buy one tomorrow.

I don't know what Marx would make of it all, but I can guess. He'd probably be busy writing articles for foreign newspapers and putting the proceeds into his dollar account.





START THE YEAR

WITH RICHARD BAKER

Baker: Good morning, and welcome to 1980. The theme of today's programme is beginnings—starting things again, making resolutions—and what better time than the start of a new year to talk about, uh, that sort of thing. In the studio we have Derek Robinson and we'll be asking him if British Leyland will be getting a good first-time start in this new decade. Fritz Spiegl will be looking at the opening bars of some famous musical works. Kenneth Robinson has been to the National Underwear Show at Olympia and where better to start than with foundation garments? And though he's not here yet, Anthony Blunt will be along to tell us what it's like starting a new life as Mister after so many days as a knight. (Laughter.) Mavis?

Mavis Nicholson: Goodness, I don't think we've ever had a traitor on the programme before.

Baker: No, quite. Now, Derek Robinson, I believe you're the author of a new book out today called *Sack Edwardes and Save British Leyland*. How did you spend New Year's Eve?

Blunt: Actually, I'm Anthony Blunt.

Baker: Oh. Then which one of us is Derek Robinson?

Kenneth Robinson: Not me. I've often been confused with Robert Robinson, but never with Derek. I was once, though, mistaken for Heath Robinson when I was touring with ENSA in 1943...

Baker: Quite. Well, it seems that Derek Robinson is not here yet. Obviously he'll have to make a resolution to be punctual this year! Anthony Blunt, you're a traitor and author of a new book entitled *New Light on Eighteenth Century Italian Architecture*. How did you spend New Year's Eve?

Mavis: I wonder if I might butt in there, Richard...

Baker: Mavis Nicholson...

Mavis: ... and say, gosh, I wonder if I would have the courage to betray my friends if it was a choice between them and my paintings, would I have the inner strength, I just don't know.

Baker: Quite. Sir Anthony?

Blunt: Professor.

Baker: Quite. Mr Blunt?

Blunt: I spent New Year's Eve quietly with a few close paintings.

Baker: It's a curious idea, isn't it, to spend New Year's Eve as if it were some ritual? Kenneth?

Kenneth: I stayed up all evening writing my spontaneous contribution to this programme.

Baker: Time now to hear from Fritz Spiegl on musical beginnings.

Spiegl: We all know the famous unfinished works, but what about the unstarted ones? Did you know that Brunswick left the first movement of his 8th Symphony till last and then never wrote it? Here are the first few bars. (Silence.) And have you noticed how seldom we hear Wagner's overture to *Furtwängler*? That's because he wrote the opera but not the overture. Here it is in its entirety. (Silence.) But I could go on like this endlessly.

Baker: Quite so. Incidentally, Fritz, have you made any resolutions?

Kenneth: Fritz isn't here, Richard. That was just a recording. Anyway, I've been to the National Underwear Show at Olympia...

Baker: Which reminds me, Kenneth—you've been to the National Underwear Show at Olympia, haven't you?

Kenneth: I certainly have.

Mavis: My goodness, that certainly shows we have come on a long way. I mean, ten years ago, can you imagine men and women sitting in the same BBC studio and discussing underwear?

Kenneth: We're not discussing it, Mavis. I'm reading my script about it. Anyway, I've been to the National Underwear Show at Olympia and the first thing that struck my eye was a stand labelled "Briefs for All Professions", and I wondered if lawyers would be interested. (Silence.) And I wondered if lawyers would be interested. (Laughter.) That's better. I also noticed that long coms are coming back, and I suppose this is because Vest is Vest and Pant is Pant and never the twain shall meet.

Baker: Thank you, Kenneth. Incidentally, Kenneth, have you made any resolutions for the New Year?

Kenneth: Another stand which drew my attention was mistakenly labelled "Underwear for the Lager Man", though I suppose if you drank enough lager you *would* become a larger man.

Baker: Thanks, Kenneth. Now, as you were speaking, Derek Robinson has at last joined us. Derek, you're known as something of a trouble-maker and labour agitator. Did you in fact get many Christmas cards from Russia this year?

Studio Manager: I'm the studio manager actually, Richard—just crept in to tell you that Robinson can't make it. But we've had clearance from up top and it's all right to ask you-know-who about being a traitor.

Baker: Good. Kenneth, what have you to say about being a traitor?

Kenneth: The most curious thing I saw was a note in the catalogue to the effect that many titled ladies no longer wear bras. "Topless Oblige", you might say.

Baker: Quite.

S/M: No, not him. Blunt.

Mavis: As a traitor and a famous art critic, Mr Blunt—and I may say that despite your being gay I find you terribly sexy—I wonder if you made any resolutions this year?

Blunt: My new book is called *New Light on Eighteenth Century Architecture* and it's published by Hamish Hutchinson, price £10.50.

Mavis: I've made a firm resolution in the New Year not to interrupt simply because I feel left out.

Baker: Thank you, Mavis. As a matter of interest, although you're just the studio manager, have you made any resolutions this year or indeed betrayed us to the Russians?

S/M: Not really. I've just filed an application to be transferred to some other programme, that's all.

Baker: Quite so. Well, that just about wraps it up. Remember, if you've got a book coming out in the near future and would like to come on the programme and answer questions about something completely different, just write to the producer. Meanwhile, it's goodbye from all of us and from Derek Robinson who's just come in the studio...

Derek Robinson: Hi, Anthony...

Blunt: Ciao, Robbo...

Baker: And from me, Richard Baker.

Mavis: And from me, Mavis Nicholson.

Baker: Quite.

ALEXANDER FRATER:

Currying favour

The Queen's grocers, Robert Jackson & Co of Piccadilly, are closing down their shop after 130 years of elegant trade.

The Guardian

ONLY ten minutes to go, Mrs Patel reflected, and then they could shut the shop and hang up the Closed sign presented by Mr Witherspoon, the frozen sprouts rep with the pendulous chin and the wet lips who always contrived to peer down her cleavage as he bent to do his dockets. But then, as she sat there at her great cast-iron cash register, idly tripping the silver through her fingers, a stray sunbeam suddenly emerged from the lambent glow of dusk and lit up the front of their shoddy little supermarket. Mrs Patel saw it reflected in the window of the laundrette opposite, a divine spotlight gilding the broken sign and lending the special offer stickers the lustre of stained glass.

She gave an involuntary shiver, sensing that they had been singled out for a special purpose, but her sense of anticipation was forgotten as Mr Patel, killing boll-weevils in the storeroom with his broom, began hiccuping with a truly explosive ferocity. She wondered whether he had been at the bottle of sink scourer or, even worse, chewing Duraglit again.

"Patel!"

"Yis?" he called.

"Show us your face here. And smile at me, man."

He grinned obediently at her from the doorway and she noted, with relief, that his teeth lacked the blinding brassy radiance that was the usual sign of his little weakness. "As you was," she said and he returned, swaying, to his duties. A moment later, however, she called him back. A yacht-sized car, black, sleek and shiny, had pulled up outside. Where the number plate should have been was a funny gold crown and, behind the uniformed chauffeur, sat a single woman. "Look, look," hissed Mrs Patel. "What this?"

Apart from sending a pyramid display of spaghetti hoops crashing to the floor, her husband arrived without incident and, while focusing with difficulty, managed a long, hard look at their visitor. "Probably she new Harpic rep," he said. "I hear they making major push this summer."

Mrs Patel was not convinced. "Big car for Harpic rep," she said. "That sure as hell is no Cortina."

Just then the woman, her manner un-

certain, entered the shop. "Good evening," she said.

"Us close in five minutes," said Mrs Patel, pointing to the Hours of Opening sign donated by Mr Fogarty, the nice brush salesman who, tragically, had slipped off his saucer just as his company was about to expand and diversify into rakes. "No time to look at samples."

"All I want," said the stranger, "is a pot of honey."

"Ah," said Mr Patel, allowing his eye to wander across the shelves, travelling up from the base of bottled cordials, catfood and breakfast cereals, past the slopes of pickles and beans to the glittering display of tinned fruits at the summit. "Is you partial to a nice bit of Grik?" he asked.

"A nice bit of what?" said the lady.

Mrs Patel closed her eyes and prayed for patience. "You know," she said. "Wine dark sea, man, and other well-known phrases stolen from Hindu classics. Honey from *Gris*."

"Of course," said the lady. "Yes, I'll have some of that."

Mr Patel, who had indeed drunk half a cup of Jif and was feeling rather mellow, handed her a jar and remarked, "Us haven't seen you around before. You just move into area?"

"Not exactly," said the lady. "I live up the Mall, but the shop I normally go to has just closed down."

Mr Patel sighed and sucked noisily at his threadbare moustache. "This is troubled times for small men like we," he observed, adroitly seizing her proffered pound before his wife could take charge of it. He held it, as was his habit, up to the light and flicked it absently with a plump forefinger. "Hmm," he said. "Suppose will do."

Mrs Patel, absently buffing her nails with an old ice lolly stick, read the joke stamped on it and frowned. "Patel, what kind of fly got laryngitis?" she said.

Then, deep in Mr Patel's subconscious, a tumbler clicked and unlocked a buried memory. His eyes, still fixed suspiciously on the pound note, suddenly widened. "God blimey, madam," he cried. "Is you."

"Horse fly," muttered Mrs Patel, pondering the answer on the ice lolly stick. "What? Patel, what this all about, this horse fly whatnot?"

"Woman, woman, this you-know-who!" shouted Mr Patel, beside himself with excitement. "Open tin of Fanta! Put Mantovani tape on Grundig! Bring plate



"There, dear! I think we've left the world a better place than we found it!"

of macaroons at once!"

As the lady, looking alarmed, seized her honey and ran, Mr Patel executed a small, triumphant dance beside the baked beans. "We is made!" He whooped. "Now we has royal warrant to hang outside, man, purveyors of groceries and dry goods to jolly old House of Windsor."

"Will she knight we?" said Mrs Patel, crossing to the big display freezer and decorously re-arranging the sausages so that the light didn't catch the mould.

"Me, probably; not you. Sir Hari Patel, or maybe she go whole hog and ennoble self. Then I must find name appropriate; Lord Chutney of Putney, maybe, and naturally little Wassim will be made Honourable."

"Honourable?" said Mrs Patel. "Honourable how? How honourable, man?"

"Oh, little Honourable," said Mr Patel, smiling to himself, rocking on his heels, taking a surreptitious swig from a tin of Brasso that happened to be to hand. "Ah, that hit spot," he said. "Smack on. Make blood chug around veins like nobody's business. No, as us was saying, he will be Honourable Wassim, Bart, and few letters after name as is custom."

"He will need haircut," Mrs Patel observed. "Also new school blazer and beagles."

"Beagles what?" Mr Patel stared at her. "What beagles?"

"Upper class pastime," said Mrs Patel, banging a packet of almonds briskly against the wall to kill the small black beetles that were dining inside. "Every morning they chase cats with this beagles then go off to House of Lords coffee shop for breakfast."



"Please, God, help me to be satisfied with the tranquillizers I've got."

"Then us will need beagles too," said Mr Patel. "Obvious."

Mrs Patel allowed herself a brief mirthless laugh. "Some hunter you, man," she said. "Last week next door's rat lean on your foot and you scream and jump onto box of Swiss rolls. Squash whole lot flat; us have to say slightly flood-damage and take 1p off price. No beagles for you,

but Wassim's beagles can have broken biscuits and stale cake from shop. Cost us nothing."

"They have this beagles at Eton?" asked Mr Patel, who still looked faintly delirious. "For your sake us hope so because, I tell you, soon he go there. You see."

"He go to Eton?" said Mrs Patel. "Little Wassim?"

"Bound to. Sons of all her shopkeepers go there. Little Fortnum's boy is there and little Masons also, little Maples boy, little Rumbelows boy, all the Derrys and Toms, even young Interflora."

Mrs Patel nodded. "His old man the one who do cut flowers, pot plants, weed killer, deck chairs, thrip poison and so forth, do he?"

"Fruit and vegetable too, as I recall," said Mr Patel. "Italians very big on fruit and veg—which remind we, us running short of bananas."

They extinguished the lights, locked the door behind them and climbed into the ancient Allegro. Mr Patel drove home with uncharacteristic verve and, watching him covertly, his wife felt that, finally, he had the aura of success about him. As they howled through Wandsworth she snuggled up to him and murmured, "Patel, tell me, what this business with horse fly, this thing on ice lolly stick?"

Mr Patel, cornering on two wheels while the loose exhaust pealed beneath him like a bell, gave her a judicious glance. "Fly with flu," he said. "They groaning and sneezing all over place. Very rare here; in Belgium, quite common."

She smiled at him. "Patel, you know everything."

He shrugged. "Man in my position," he said. "He got to."

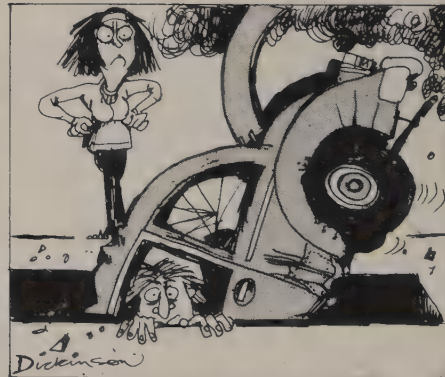
HANDYMAN PUNCH



Some d-i-y motorists find hydraulic hoists as handy as spanners, but they can cause roofing problems when operated in a confined space. A simple answer is to set aside an afternoon for construction of a garage pit, excavated so as to allow "eye-level" work on the car's underside without re-routing sewers, gas mains, cables, etc.



Routine under-car maintenance, such as recalibrating anti-drive steering geometry, torque-wrenching the semi-trailing wishbone sub-frame bolts, sluicing out a sump or gungum 'n' bandaging "blown" silencers, is a major cause of backache and limb injuries when the motor has to be chocked, jacked up and supported on bricks.



Use chalk or laundry-marker for template on existing surface, hack away to sub-soil, then hire a JCB from your local plant office to make light work of trench clearance. Mix up 6-7 tons reinforced concrete and line, chasing in power supply, grease terminals, airline, industrial drain conduits etc as you go. Quarry-tile when gone off.

SMOKE SIGNALS

THOSE WHO ARE LOOKING for signs that the return of Mrs THATCHER's Government marks the dawn of a new era of liberty in which freeborn Englishmen will once again assert their rights, not only against the State but against all manner of bullies and philanthropists, will take heart from the formation of a new society called FOREST — the Freedom Organisation for the Right to Enjoy Smoking Tobacco.

Daily Telegraph

LET FREEDOM RING!



"Of course, we at WIDDLE could not have been more delighted when Mrs Thatcher pulled it off!" Thus the President of the West One Dogs Doings Liberation Executive, expressing his organisation's excitement that the new era of Tory freedom will give them the chance they've all been waiting for to strike back at the penalties levelled against pets in Central London.

"It is iniquitous that these so-called do-gooding Grundies of the Hygiene Left should have had it all their own way for so long," shrieked another spokesman. "In Dr Johnson's day, curly turds were what gave this great city of ours its special flavour. Today, it is all becoming sterile, concretised, lifeless, simply because a handful of unrepresentative radicals wish to keep their appalling shoes clean for their doubtless homosexual trysts, or have some vested interest in preventing infant blindness. Personally, I blame the welfare state; when I was a boy, we had to learn to keep our own eyes open if we wanted to avoid treading in poo-poo. Today, these people want everything done for them. They seem to have forgotten that eternal vigilance is the price of freedom."



"If we learned anything from the last wossname, election, it was that Conservatism is now a working-class movement, too," declared the Hon. Secretary of the Society for the Protection of Underprivileged Travellers and Unrepresented Mendicants. "For many of my members, the only pleasure they have is getting on a bus, going upstairs, and having a spit. As the law now stands, they are faced not only with the humiliation of having a Paki tell 'em to get off at the lights, but also with heavy fines etcetera and so forth. But here at SPUTUM, we

are now fighting on their behalf, and working towards Mrs Thatcher's bright new tomorrow where a man will be free to get on a bus bound for them broad sunny uplands and gob to his heart's content."



"THANK GOD FOR MAGGIE!" reporters were told at the first meeting of CRASH, the Conservative Radicals Against Sound Harrassment, who are campaigning to bring back the individual's freedom to make as much noise as he likes, "THOSE MINCING BLOODY TROTS AT THE NOISE ABATEMENT SOCIETY ARE EMASCULATING OUR ISLAND RACE INTO A FLOCK OF TIPTOEING BLOODY SOPRANO MILKSOPS! NOBODY COMPLAINED ABOUT THOUSAND BOMBER RAIDS PASSING OVER THEIR GARDENS WHEN THEY WENT OFF TO PASTE THE HUN WHEN I WAS A LAD! AND WHAT KIND OF A PARTY IS IT IF YOU CAN'T COME OUT AT THREE IN THE MORNING AND BANG YOUR CAR DOORS AND HONK YOUR HORN AND GENERALLY CARRY ON LIKE SOMEONE WHO'S PROUD HE'S A MAN AND AN ENGLISH ONE AT THAT? IF I'M AT THE THEATRE AND I THINK IT'S A BLOODY LOAD OF OLD TOSH, I CLAIM MY INALIENABLE RIGHT TO TELL EVERYBODY WHAT I THINK. THAT'S WHAT FREEDOM OF SPEECH IS ALL ABOUT! GIVE US MORE BRASS BANDS PLAYING LAND OF HOPE AND GLORY, GIVE US MORE PACKS IN FULL CRY AND MORE CHAPS CHUCKING BREAD ROLLS IN FROGGIE RESTAURANTS AND MORE GUNS GOING OFF ON THE GLORIOUS TWELFTH AND WE'LL SOON HAVE THIS COUNTRY BACK ON ITS FEET!"



"I think that when the Commies started putting salmon back in our dear old Thames, it was the last bloody straw!"

Temper is heated at the headquarters of PHEW, the campaign committed to Popularising Honest English Waste. As their attractive Chairperson put it: "When I was a girl, you felt the Thames was, I don't know, call me silly, but, well, *yours*. England, Our England, I suppose. We had a King, then, and Stanley Baldwin, and you could go down to Kew and throw old mattresses in, or gin bottles, and feel, well, part of our heritage. Is that terribly terribly soppy? I know it's unfashionable, but there we are! And the fires we had when I was young! Daddy would burn anything, old tyres, dead cats, creosote, most people did, and there was this lovely patina on everything, St. Paul's, Nelson, Mummy. We had fogs, too, thick *British* pea-soupers where people you never even knew grabbed your bottom in South Molton Street, it was *the* most enormous fun! And suddenly it was all over, there were notices up everywhere, don't do this, don't do that, and everybody worrying about whether things were *good* for them—well, all I can say is it hasn't been much good for the *country*, has it? It doesn't seem to have got us India back, does it?"



THE DEER HUNTER

GEORGE DZUNDZA, CHRISTOPHER WALKEN, ROBERT De NIRO, CHUCK ASPERGREN and JOHN CAZALE

ffolkes-cinema



SUNBURN

CHARLES GRODIN, FARRAH FAWCETT-MAJORS and ART CARNEY



MEETINGS WITH REMARKABLE MEN
DRAGAN MAKŠINOVIC



THE CHESS PLAYERS
SANJEEV KUMAR, RICHARD
ATTENBOROUGH and SAEED JAFFREY

BASIL BOOTHROYD:

AQFALT-IQ-SQH, LOST PALACE OF PQEUQ



Remembrance of a gilded time long past when rich-attired emissaries of trade and spices from afar sought audience with the Priest-Fish-King of Aqfalt-Iq-Sqh, the visitor can in his mind's eye re-create the glories of Pqueuqian civilisation in this skilfully-wrought gate-post (Goppel) or ritual obelisk (Stöckl) guarding the entrance to the bath-house/fort.

Guide to the Site

It is with ease for the tourist to miss this important scene of a palatial BC residence, once housing Fish-King Tuq of Pqueuqians in the opinion of Dr Hans Goppel. He is well advised to accompany the guided parties visiting by bus at fixed times. The entrance fee is 100 Qrn, with capability of reduction for students by arraignment.

Discovery

It was by accident in 1937 that Dr Hans Goppel was excavating at nearby Talbidiq and stretching his legs placed one of them in an unforeseen post-hole. Then seeking others and encountering hollows probably filled by baked clay loom weights he sent his now famous telegraph to Herr Hitler, "I have gazed on the palace of King Tuq," and received no reply.

Further examination revealed possible rafter nails or splinters of door sills, well hiding beneath vegetation and arranged in the letter Q, known to have been worshipped by the ancient people of here, and the first letter of their Qualphabet.

General Description

Centred in a green plain with commanding aspect of surrounding mountains from which needed water ran, the site is noted for few traces of original splendour and magnificence, the whole area demarked by wire fence now showing boundaries.

Seen with bigger advantage from the air, when pilots will draw attention to suspected wall-footing remains defining the palace environs expanding to above 2 hectares, the ground visitor will benefit from prior excursion to National Archaeologic Museum at Talbidiq.

There is displayed reconstruction of vast palace by Dr Goppel to a smaller scale, designed in rough form of letter Q, and leading in from the containing "tail" of perhaps royal ante-rooms to throne room, etc., where chief feature would have been colonnaded walks and brightly painted walls, where richly attired merchants and emissaries from afar sought audience, of which none remains. We can recreate in our mind's eye the scenes of splendour where now vegetation reigns unchallenged over man's handiwork.

In the museum are also reconstructed some huge pots from small fragments as big only as thumbs. Detailed drawings of culverts are also to be seen as envisioned by Dr Goppel.

The Tour

Guided parties on entering via a modern addition of the Curator's office, postcards, refreshments and souvenirs, will of first interest pass, with coachpark and toilets on left, heaps of masonry assembled from various parts of the site, entering the space given the name Qua, where other rubbish has been thrown down by tourists. From what were once tall windows with wreathed face-masks between the volutes may be seen the Sacred Lake. It has the miraculous powers to come and go according to rainfall. Healing properties are put forward. Bones seen at dry periods suggest humane sacrifice. Others may have been carried off by bone-robbers.

Probable Bathroom

Proceeding north we follow clearly-discerned impressions of countless old feet to the "Stöckl Bathroom" so claimed by Dr H. H. Stöckl, assistant to Hans Goppel and based on discovery of ■



In the surrounding green plain, cheerful peasant girls of whom the ancestors long ago afforded a trade in copper, mint, sisal and heavily-scented flora used in worship, gather bouquets which **■** to visitors and crush to form **■** an aromatic bodywash with **■** subtle hint of Cola.

supposed stone spout relic. In our mind's eye we pass between ornate vanished pilasters bearing inscriptions in the ancient Pqueuian tongue for the reading pleasure of waiting bathers of the Court whose rich towels are long dust. Weathering and destruction would render the carvings illegible now.

This area of **■** smaller space once reached, it is dismissed by Dr Goppel as kitchens in his paper to The Antiquity Club of Stuttgart, "Misconceptions of Pre-History". A central indentation may have held a mincing-bench or trivet, **■** fire burning day and night fuelled by indigenous trees of the region.

No cooking smells survive.

King Tuq's Apartments

Entering these wide chambers there is reason to presume great

MUSEUMS WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE

ROYAL PALACE. Morning-room. 11-12, 7-8. Closed Tuesday, Sunday. Public holidays. Some saints' days. All Feb. Mar. 24, unless it falls on Thurs. Royal busts, things made from shells.

ROMAN BATHS. No fixed hours. Admission on presentation of exhibit. Mainly decorated shoes. Warm clothing essential.

THE MRS DWIGHT HERKENHEIMER COLLECTION. Near Hilton. Admission on presentation of letter of recommendation. 48 hrs. notice. Donor conducts tours in person.

NATIONAL GALLERY. 11-2.45. 5-8. Even dates in odd years and *vice versa*. Closed holiday months. Admission by tokens sold at most stalls in market. Shop around for best buy. Vast collection of pots attributed to leading artists. Sauna closed.

THE FACULTY OF MEDICINE. Rather decayed medieval building contains notable collection of Renaissance portraits, reputedly unredeemed pledges by patients unable to settle bills. Faculty insist that medical museum should be housed with art collection. Strong stomach needed for Titian Room.

ANAI'S ■ SERIF. 7 bus from outside American Express to terminus. Then 31b to Pets' Cemetery. Then short walk, c. ¼ m. Shut on morning of Oct. 18. Gallery of modern art. Wire sculpture, some helmets.

CINEMA PLAZA. Gauguins in Circle foyer. See press for times.

GROTTO ASTOR. Site of famous episcopal duel, 1693. Now Municipal Horror-Museum. Evolution of the Rack. Record blood-clot. Tableaux of Gang Rapes—Holland, Scotland, Mexico, Vatican City etc. Ghost Pullman. Waiters have eczema. Charnel soup, pie, possibly pork, etc.

—RGGP

original loftiness. Though now open to the wind and sky, as with all parts of the palace, they are thought to have been roofed with a single span, its weight born on lavishly ornamented and vividly coloured walls whose signs may remain to below the level of the floor. A pause for photographs may be granted by visitor's request, capturing panoramas of the countryside of **■** typical pastoral nature. Small parts of possible effigies are called to one's interest, and likely position of containing alcoves, representing the Priest-Fish-King.

Queen's Apartments (or Boathouse)

We enter the supposed location of these 2 or 11 chambers at a point our guide shall indicate, no above-ground evidence being visible. Concerning their number and function is also an expert clash of opinion. In his pamphlet, "Wrong Thinking on the Palace of Pqueu", H. H. Stöckl sees 2 chambers as preparation and launching place for Ship Burials, based on a partial ceremonial oar dug up. Goppel deduces 11, and the oar **■** sculpting prop. From it, with interesting stone particles, he has restored, now in earlier mention Museum, lifelike mud statue of Fish Queen Tiq-Toq, **■** lady of high standing more than two metres in flowing robe of mullet-motif embroiding. It is thought to be one of many, seen by Dr Goppel in hollows denoting the past presence of plinths.

Other Rooms

The many other rooms complete the tour of the site, 2¼ hrs, often containing large boulders with inscriptions, e.g. "Stan Watson, Beaconsfield". Tour members have choice to return at any point and wait in bus.

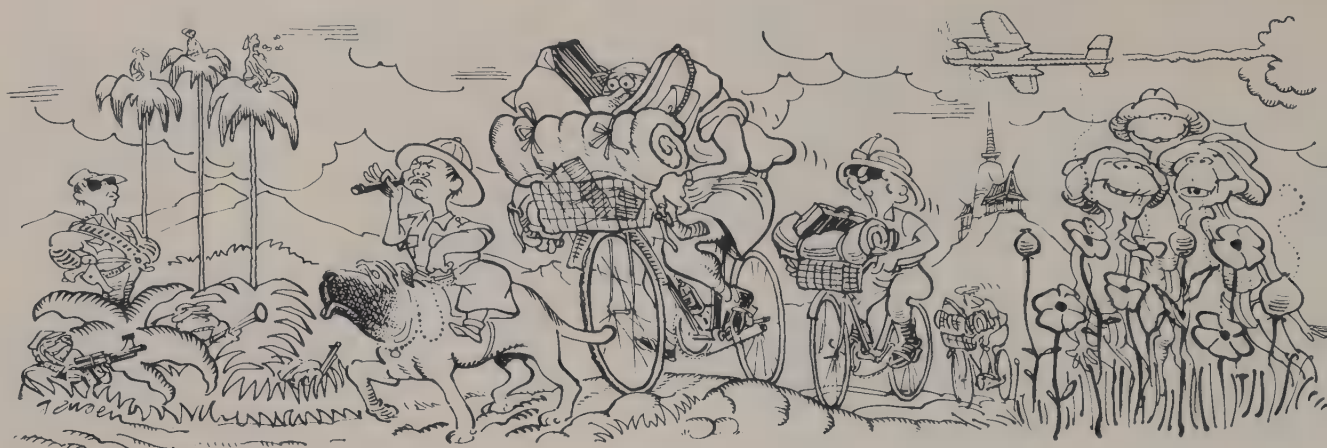


The victim of piracy, earth movement and infestation by concrete-eating larvae, Bolacia's former Hotel Paramarimbo-Plaza (pictured above) now affords visitors every comfort from its modern-style **■** annex, located by overnight train in neighbouring Urlabad. Here Bonaparte once played whist.

History

Little evidence of Pqueuian civilisation survives the disastrous fire and earthquake (Goppel) or tidal wave and stone-robbing (Stöckl) which may have destroyed wide areas of Aqfalt-Iq-Sqh at an unknown date, bringing down the palace of the powerful Fish-King to a mere tourist attraction of immense interest and speculation on bygone eras of antiquity. Contributions above and beyond entrance fee are lavishly welcomed for further excavations, when it is thought objects may be found.

Produce of National Tourist Department of Bolacia, English translation by Q. Inquiq Querty, Qh.D., Q.P.R.



ALEXANDER FRATER:

BY BICYCLE DOWN THE OPIUM ROUTE

THE fabled Opium Route which winds through the forested hills of northern Burma has changed little since Marco Polo, overtaking an ox on a hump-backed bridge, was involved in one of history's first recorded traffic accidents. The road, poor then, is even worse today, and attempts by successive administrations to carry out improvements have been fiercely resisted by the warlords and bandits whose territory it passes through. The installation of traffic lights several years ago at a spot where subsidence had caused it to fall into a coal mine provoked the heaviest artillery barrage seen in the area since the Japanese Fourth Infantry tried to steal General Slim's Morris Camper. But for the hardy traveller with a keen sense of adventure it offers a unique holiday, and a chance to acquire some unusual souvenirs and one or two wounds as well. Applicants for guided tours should be inoculated against blackwater fever, and carry adequate supplies of blood plasma and snake-bite serum.

The starting point for the journey is the picturesque little town of Komb, reached by the monthly Dornier bomber from Mandalay which, if no executions are in progress, lands on the main square. Rooms are usually available at Murphy's, a British-founded hotel now run by a consortium of heroin smugglers, though guests should avoid the East Wing, which has no roof. Since the waiters are surly and the service poor, it is advisable to take a revolver into dinner. Credit cards should *not* be offered when settling the account. They are unlikely to be returned and, instead, will be stuck in bamboo handles and used as fly swats.

Komb boasts only one travel agent, a Mr Dhat, who may be found in the covered market, behind the melon stall. He is the accredited organiser of tours down the Opium Route and will require a deposit of 1,000 dong.

There is little to see in Komb, apart from the limestone caves in which dwell swarms of great horned bats, and the visitor need not dally. Mr Dhat will provide each member of the party with a sleeping bag and a Viet Cong surplus bicycle. They are simple, robust machines, and the commodious wire baskets on the handlebars, designed for transporting heat-seeking missiles down



Your guide through the Burmese forests, Mr Dhat.

the Ho Chi-Minh Trail, will comfortably accommodate your personal effects, including suitcases.

The first leg of the journey winds through fields of nodding crimson poppies, tended by smiling peasants who are so stoned they can hardly stand up, and into the forests where, at dusk, the party will enter the territory of a ferocious, Sorbonne-educated warlord named Sang. A close personal friend of President Giscard d'Estaing, Sang suffers from a severe personal disability—he is a midget—and is widely feared for his eccentric and unpredictable behaviour.

Since accommodation is not available locally, the party will pass

A black and white photograph of a small, single-story building with a dark roof. Two people are standing near the entrance. A wooden post is visible in the foreground on the left.

Next day the road passes close to a spectacular ruined temple which is well worth a visit, specially if the custodian can be persuaded to show you the exquisite gilded chair on which Buddha is said to have sat and meditated. The fact that it has castors and an adjustable back should not be commented on as the custodian, who responds instantly and violently to criticism, once worked as a Datsun salesman in Sarawak and his knowledge of English is excellent. Donations should be placed in the old hub cap by the door.

For visitors eager to explore further afield, Red Army surplus motor-bikes may be hired from the former US Army PX at Fa'ang and, provided local goatherds can be bribed to part with 2-Star, may be ridden through the breathtaking scenery of Bhutan, Nepal and the Punjab to the rent-it-here, leave-it-there station on the Afghan border where they were melted down for ammunition.

A black and white photograph showing a line of rickshaws pulled by men in a city street. The rickshaws are arranged in a diagonal line, receding into the distance. Each rickshaw has a large, dark, curved canopy supported by a frame. The pullers are men, some wearing light-colored shirts and dark trousers, others in darker clothing. They are holding long poles that connect to the front of the rickshaws. The street is paved, and there are some buildings and other figures visible in the background, though they are out of focus. The overall scene suggests a busy urban environment, likely in a developing country.

With cholera, hepatitis, brucellosis and Rangoon 'flu now largely dormant between mid-April and early May, taking a taxi trip to the mountains of Ponnyadaung, west of Mandalay, is a rewarding experience. It is the custom to tip "cabbies" with a half-bottle of the locally-brewed bamboo gin and linger awhile to hear their colourful complaints about the new one-way system in Chittagong.



ANTHONY HOLDEN:

TRANSATLANTIC CABLES

ONE of the pleasures of living in America is the constant flow of visitors from Blighty. For that, as for so much else, we expatriates must bend the knee to Sir Freddie Laker.

They arrive elated by their jet-lag, and bearing gifts: the few things we have had to learn, reluctantly, to live without. *The Spectator*. Eyewitness accounts of the Prudential Series. Twiglets. Real Benson and Hedges (I tend to break down at the sight of those solid gold cartons). Ribena.

They stay a few days, so you see more of them than you would in London. (You can stay up late at night, talking, just as if you were all at the Varsity again.) They take you out to dinner by way of returning your hospitality, which not all of them would have done in London. They even say thank-you when they leave.

In return they are treated by your correspondent to a long, self-indulgent monologue on the delights of living in the great society. They are taken down to the supermarket to see how big everything is. They are taken for rides in the gas-guzzler, and allowed to play with the electric windows.

They watch Johnny Carson with the benefit of an expert commentary. They marvel at push-button telephones, home computers, ice-making machines, valet parking, Wimbledon with background music (NBC thinks it makes it more exciting). They are lulled to sleep by the sound-of-the-ocean simulator beside the guest bed.

By the time they leave, they vow to return and become permanent neighbours. They envy you living here. Having at first been surprised, they accept your contention that there is nothing to miss about England—apart from Test cricket and themselves. They would all like to join us three and a half thousand miles away from Mrs Thatcher.

Of late, however, something seems to have been going wrong. It all began last weekend, when we had two especially lovely lady friends staying—one a writer, the other a doctor. (It was an ill omen when the Ribena bottle broke in the lady doctor's suitcase, staining all her summer clothes.) Neither had been to Washington before, so it was unfortunate we couldn't take them for a ride round to see the

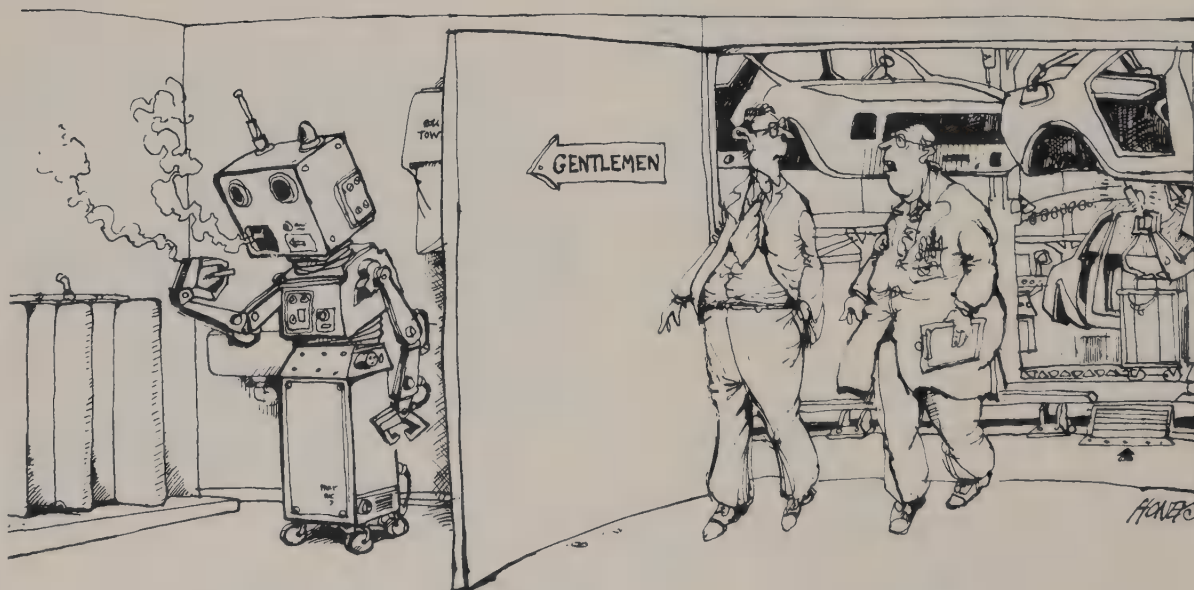
sights. Both the cars were fresh out of gasoline.

After sitting around all day telling them what a wonderful place it is if only you had enough gas to go and look at it, I decided to take a major risk. We went out to friends for tea. The needle hovered on empty all the way, but we made it—even taking in a brief peek at the White House garden en route. Our host (whose work many of you will admire each day in the *Daily Mail*) kindly escorted us back home in his rented car, which boasted a highly enviable tankful of gas.

We scraped back, and shared a well-earned drink. But wait one little minute... a hire car? When was he returning it? Tomorrow? Did he need the gasoline? Exit Holden, a man possessed, to return several minutes later bearing an immaculately severed length of hosepipe.

The doctor caught on. "You can't syphon petrol through that," she said. "It's wet. No petrol in tank better than water in petrol tank." Her argument had some force, but Holden was not to be deterred. The hosepipe went into the microwave oven.

We hovered around the Plexiglass see-through door, watching for signs of melting hose. Doc whipped it out in the nick of



"Even with the fully automated assembly line, we've still got some of the old problems."

time. It was warm, and I fondled it lovingly, the prospect of the needle edging away from Empty had me quivering, thrilling with anticipation. There is no more beautiful and coveted sight in Washington right now than a needle thrusting proudly towards its F marker. I ordered the party out into the darkening street.

The Lady Writer, to my momentary distraction, appeared to be taking notes.

Mr Winchester (for it was he) sighed only slightly as I brusquely had him turn his car round and reverse it onto a rather dangerous gradient, so its petrol cap was nuzzling next to mine. In went the hose, and your hero (well, mine, anyway) began to suck.

Those of you who have ever had to syphon petrol will know it is not a pleasant experience. A gust of dank fumes indicates that the system may be about to work. The dread prospect of a mouthful of high octane—even if, as in God's own America, lead-free—then leads the sucker to employ more caution, with the result that the gasoline returns abruptly whence it came.

My companions tired of my pathetic, cowardly efforts. The Doc manfully seized the pipe from me. A quick tug, and she was gagging on a mouthwash of Atlantic Richfield's finest. "Southern slopes, I think," she quipped before retiring rather gruffly from the scene.

The mouthful was running down the street, and I pursued it with spoon and ladle. Neighbours came to their doors with buckets in the hope of further pickings. But the stream had turned to a trickle. The hose pipe, what's more, wouldn't fit into the mouth of my gas tank, specifically narrowed (by federal law) for the receipt of unleaded gas only.

The Lady Writer heroically took a few tugs, but I called on her to desist. It might have spoiled her memories of a pleasant weekend. Winchester understandably

thought he'd done his stuff, and had been rather upset by the ugly fate of the lady doctor. I made a few more pathetic attempts before we called it a day.

Back in the house, fixing more drinks, making out it was all part of the action-packed life of the New World, I took out a cigarette. There were shrieks from the assembled company. Now I couldn't even smoke.

We sat for a while in slightly uncomfortable silence, coughing petrol fumes at each other, before turning to a brief discussion of SALT 2. Winchester sloped off home, crowing about his quarter-full tank.

I gave the Doc some more brandy to drown out the taste of Arco, and then the thunderstorm began. It was a biggie. The kind it's fun to watch through the sun-room windows. The kind, I said, it's fun to hear on the roof as you settle down to a cosy evening indoors, with good food, good wine, soft lighting, perhaps a little music, which was when the power failed.

"They're calling it an Outrage," I said to cheer everyone up after telephoning the power company. "Won't be long." Four hours later, we decided to go to bed.

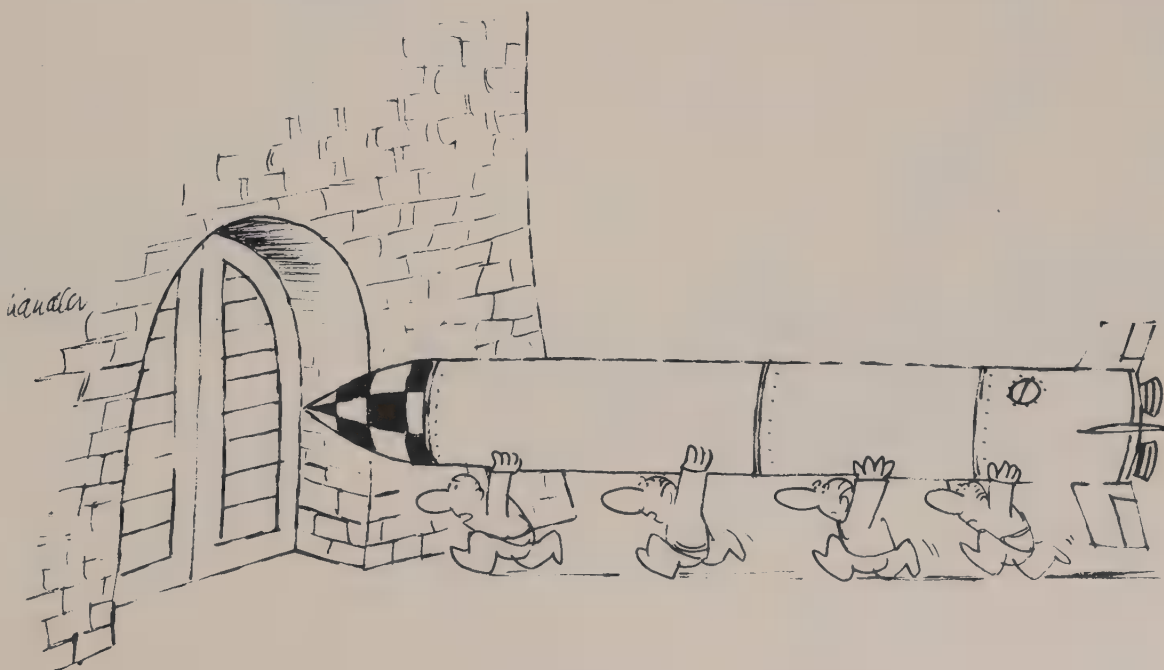
Next morning, both ladies had to depart early, but we kept them cheerful as they waited half an hour for the taxi. (Normally, I'd have driven them to the airport, but the cars were out of . . .) They put a brave face on the farewells.

If they are reading this now, I'd just like to say that we got both cars filled that morning, and have been absolutely fine—give or take a few hours in petrol queues—ever since. The lights are working, really they are, and Jimmy Carter's back from Vienna, Tokyo and Korea to make sure it doesn't all happen again. Hey, I'd love to show you my new miniaturised digital slimline short wave radio-watch-calculator-alarm clock.

Please, girls, come and stay again soon.



"Goodness knows I've tried, Deborah, but somehow I can never think of the one graffito that every vandal's supposed to have inside him."



SHOPTALK



JACKY
GILLOTT
on
Saddlers

"I'M looking for a pelham." The woman leaning on the counter to make her request seems to be wearing very ancient army camouflage clothes.

"Cob size? Full size? With ■ port . . . without? Vulcanite mouthpiece or steel? And what sort of chain—double linked?"

"Well, I was thinking of a Kimblewick—with two slots in the rings."

"Very severe, a Kimblewick. Can break a horse's jaw badly used. Have you considered ■ Scamperdale or a Banbury?"

And this is just the tip of a conversation on biting overheard at the saddlers. It goes on to lament the number of small girls who, made insensible by the sight of Eddie Macken riding in a hackamore, are now clamouring for bitless bridles to put on their own truculent ponies.

"You've got to have beautiful hands for a hackamore . . ." the saddler's customer sighs mistily. "Eddie's got a lovely pair of hands."

We all silently think of Eddie's divine hands and wonderful seat.

"Perfect balance!" muses one of us. It could have been me. I am easily carried away by the language and lore of the horse world. A shop window in some high street crammed with curry combs, poultice boots, saddle soap, sweat scrapers and spurs and I'm in there, turning over all the small items within easy reach—rein stops, rectal thermometers, stock pins, plaiting thread, hoofpicks. The smell of leather and neat's-foot oil is intoxicating. The conversation, its special vocabulary is stimulating beyond anything at a gowned High Table.

"You need a springtree model with cut-back pommel to avoid pinching that animal's withers," advises my favourite saddler, "and a saddle flap that will set off its shoulder to advantage." He must be six foot four, an ex-Life Guard from London who makes his own saddles in a wooden loft above ■ barn. He has Radio Four on the entire time he stitches. The sound of Robin Day's voice hectoring some luckless civil servant is oddly freakish in this room whose shelves spill over with equine remedies for which all horse owners have an hypochondriac passion.

Liniments for this and that, powdered seaweed, wormers of all kinds (guaranteed to rid the horse of bots, ascarids, strongyles), Vitamin E to promote fertility and ■ amazing conditioner called

Spectrum-14, one of whose mystery ingredients is dried *Irish* grass. As used by Eddie Macken, is the claim, so many a dazed lady rider spends £15 on a tub of the stuff although how *much* Irish grass (albeit dried) it is possible to fit into so modest a container is almost a theological question in this strange and hallowed world.

Do people who consider buying a horse fully realise that the creature's wardrobe must needs be far more extensive and expensive than their own?

Your horse must have a day rug, a night rug, a travelling rug, a sweat rug, and a New Zealand rug. It requires stable bandages, tail guards, over-reach boots, hock boots, running martingales, standing martingales, Balding girths, numnahs, Grakle nosebands, drop nosebands . . . I could go on. And on. The litany enchants me.

Although Mac, my other favourite saddler—a Scot who once patrolled a London beat—stocks jodhpurs and crash hats and is a moderately clothes conscious man himself, insisting on the kilt at Hogmanay and secretly donning a Masonic apron on other undisclosed nights of the year, he knows very well that horse owners clothe themselves only either at second hand or in desperation.

For this reason he does rather less well in the human dress department than the stallholders who, balaclavaed to the nose, where a single droplet swings, position themselves at various horse events round the country. These events are always held in punishingly exposed places like Salisbury

Plain at fiendishly unseasonable times of the year. The anorak tents bulge with blue-lipped people lagging themselves like water tanks with one layer upon another. Over the second Guernsey sweater goes a quilted waistcoat followed by a sort of duvet with armholes topped by a thornproof, a wholly weather resistant garment with a waxed surface which—as you drive home in your warm car—begins to melt unpleasantly and gums you to your seat.

Shoes are the horse owner's other major expense. Not his own, you understand. For his own feet green gumboots make a perfectly adequate home.

Once upon a time Mac did horses' shoes too until ■ succession of brutish animals did for his back. Freddy, who now does my shoeing, was at one time (like Mac) a London policeman. He was on mounted patrol in Richmond Park but all he ever came across was people up to things in the back of their cars and he didn't feel like dismounting himself just to discourage them. So now he taps on a set of shoes once every three weeks for £8 plus VAT, plus travel, with hoof cushions to prevent bruised soles as an extra. While he hammers and trims away he has me listen to his latest tapes—every weekend he goes up to London for singing lessons so that he can be the vocalist with his brother-in-law's band. So, above the blast of his portable furnace, I bend an ear to his latest Mario Lanza rendering and shout that he's coming on just fine.

His assistant is a champion disco dancer and bangs the anvil with a nice rhythm.

The hoof burns, the hammers ring, *Santa Lucia* swells intermittently above the din and we talk of contracted heels or possibly feathering the shoe to reduce the risk of brushing. Darkly, we condemn other blacksmiths who dump the toe.

There is the sharpest possible pleasure in this exchange of special language. And at the end, when the last clench is secured and Freddy stretches his aching back, he'll say: If you haven't got the cash today, next time will do. They say it at the saddler's too. Oh, put it down, they say. Any time. After the enjoyment we've had from mulling over such matters as healthy frogs, slipped stifles and coronets, money can only be a mere incidental.

That Stoppard concurred to ■ painting by the modern Mondrian hanging in a typical English country house, visited by some senior officials for ■ shoot, where Mr Greene rather doubt, though it comes aptly hung ■ Ben Nicholson I into his text to illustrate the separation of agents into "boxes." A zoo visit being vulgarised by ■ monkey-house allusion is also surely not Mr Stoppard's lapse?

—from review of *The Human Factor*,
Daily Telegraph

PAUL JENNINGS:

Random Sample

WELL it's not ■ lapse if surely doubt it isn't only Mr the fact is all of us Stoppard, not to mention are now being subjected Grahame Greene's essential quiver of doubt to a the current vogue for spy so that is matched by ambivalence of in which clear moral right of ambivalence values of plot does not attach to either side. There are no longer clear-cut and the curious fascination of "moles" goodies and baddies which Le suddenly ■ word you see everywhere expressing this moral Carré is the practitioner-in is reflected in a corresponding development of ambivalent-in-chief, so that moral "boundaries" no longer of language also.

When *Tinker Tailor*, for instance, uneasy feeling that to seek *Soldier Spy* were perplexed by this ambiguity many people were as if it were ■ kind of moral crossword luminous clarity of the photography to which there is no solution as it contrasted all the for people hopelessly with the moral ambiguity, caught in ■ network confusion of plot which parallels it of intrigue. which is

to ask "who is?" It is no more possible who?" than "who is how?" or "why is who?" parallels it of intrigue. In the old-fashioned we cannot be sure whether Smiley plot the beginning, middle and or Karla participate, or by how much and end sequence is perfectly clear, as is in guilt in the old-fashioned clearly attributable to one side is paralleled by ■ clear moral guilt is ■ general climate.

This is the crucial literary Graham Greene did not choose the description of judgement of our time "entertainment" lightly. Its moral neutrality of our time.

with a novelist of great moral in ■ famous broadcast thirty years ago sensibility seemed perfectly adapted to portraying human behaviour declared "I was only fourteen when I discovered that the world is not western civilisation's values are being black and white, but grey" deeply questioned. Yet there is no question that Greene On the other hand Le Carré, though perceptibly found ■ crystal-clear style more self-



"To be honest, Mr Grand, this isn't at all what I expected."



"Is this your first manhunt, Potts?"

consciously opaque and allusive as befits regarded the purely *stylistic* problem of dealing ■ man so exclusively interested in the spy novel as ■ paradigm was not being experimental of our time. Nor, it may be said, was Le Carré.

Much has been written an Austrian by origin but long resident about the role of Otto Preminger, who directed the film chance in art. The name of William it is very evident that he does not know, or perhaps Burroughs springs to mind, with his by now well-known London, in which *The Human Factor* technique of cutting pages at random is set, with its action alternating between giving a fortuitous meaning (or "non-meaning") the clubland of St James's and Africa.

it may be said, was Le Carré.

Of course in the film medium there from, for example, ■ scene of a man in ■ pub are jumps of purely visual logic, the logic of the cut throwing a dart to ■ missile or the mere surrealistic coincidence in flight of things that just happen to be there. There is no obligation gives film its peculiar vitality on Preminger to *explain* in ■ country house today anyway just as likely why there may be a Mondrian why there is ■ Mondrian.

goodies and baddies which Le suddenly why there is ■ Mondrian.

and to interpret this literally any more than to blame Tom Stoppard, himself well aware as representing the separation of agents of the random associative possibilities of words into "boxes" instead of ■ Ben Nicholson or for that is to ignore modern techniques matter ■ Constable or Bonington for expressing our fragmented "I discovered

that the world is consciousness.

an Austrian by origin but long same reasons to suggest that Greene's story there can be a clear-cut scale of vulgarity any more Stoppard, by the monkey-house allusion (if indeed it was his and than a clear-cut scale of moral values an Austrian by origin and not Preminger's) It is thus illogical

The fact is that writers as popular as either are still obliged to write about Greene

or Le Carré may be said in ■ clear indeed grammatical and coherent ■ modern consciousness which is very unclear prose style accessible to all. William Burroughs is not for the general goes back at least to Marcel Duchamp's famous reader it goes without *Nude Descending a Staircase* There are parallels in painting saying, and we have already seen that film but people still expect prose can express the modern ambivalence to be perfectly clear and understandable and the curious fascination of "moles".

to experience several feelings *simultaneously*, moral feelings included traditional discipline of the printing-house has broken down. There is a curious aptness, therefore, now that a long apprenticeship from printer's devil to skilled typesetter in passages we read every day which achieve (by accident) what Burroughs is meaningless in the age of computerised and mistakes could mean reprimand or even photostetting by a highly self-conscious, not to say instant dismissal technique is no longer necessary.

If there is no longer good and evil of course Le suddenly there is a Mondrian and *The Human Factor* keeps a purely logical there is no grammatical or ungrammatical "entertainment" plot sequence, complete with either, so perhaps social comment (the first traitor suspect, wrongly as it turns in the old-fashioned prose is the only non-Oxbridge man out). Perhaps the printers have and Preminger's ignorance of London for so long the servants of writers and Tom Stoppard's seeming have now reversed the roles acquiescence don't matter, any more.

Perhaps it is the printers who have as easy as it looks developed the perfect but I can tell you writing like this, on a typewriter may be a new tool for, and without Burroughs's scissors but straight expressing our modern complex ambiguity but it isn't as

and the curious fascination easy as it looks.



"I poison all my own slugs."

YOURS, FAITHFULLY REPRODUCED

Fed up with routine mail and unnecessary letters? Now MILES KINGTON does 90% of your correspondence for you! Simply cut out the relevant reply and send it off.

Dear Sir,

Thank you for letting me study your product in the privacy of my own home for ten days. After nine and a half days, I am now convinced of its durability, quality and splendid craftsmanship. I am only sorry that I am already the possessor of a similar product, of even higher quality. I therefore return yours under separate cover, and hope very much it reaches you intact, if at all. Yours sincerely

Dear Sir,

I am puzzled by the slip I have received from you stating that you are unable to use my contribution in your magazine. I am puzzled chiefly by the fact that I have never sent you a contribution. I am puzzled to a much lesser extent by the fact that you enclose an article written by a Mr Bernard Levin, as I can see why you would not wish to print it. I have consigned it to the usual, as I suppose this is what you wish. Yours faithfully,

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your final reminder. It appears from my records that you have not yet acknowledged receipt of my payment by cheque of the amount you request. If you have not done so within seven days, I shall be obliged to place the matter in the hands of my solicitors. Yours faithfully,

Dear Sir,

The person to whom you send mail at this address no longer lives here. I do not have his forwarding address. I enclose a bill for 80p (10p postage, 5p writing materials, 65p labour and travel) to cover the cost of my reply to you, and trust this charge will be agreeable, now and on each subsequent occasion that you write. Yours in anticipation of an early settlement,

Dear Sir,

With reference to your letter published recently in the *New Statesman*, *TLS*, *Observer*, etc, requesting information concerning your forthcoming biography. I regret that I never met the author in question, nor indeed had ever heard of him, but you may be able to make use of an incident concerning me and Dylan Thomas that occurred in 1951, though as several persons still living emerge from the incident with bruised reputations I think that is as much as I ought to reveal. Yours faithfully,

Dear Sir,

I am grateful for your repeated offers to mend my plumbing at any hour of day or night and am only sorry that I have so far been unable to avail myself. I have similarly been forced to let down a book club in Swindon which frequently invites me to join. I now see a way in which I can be of service to both of you and have accordingly forwarded your card to them asking for you to be enrolled as a member. Good reading! Yours faithfully,

Dear Sirs,

With the aid of a microscope I have ascertained that your product is able to join together wood, china, plastic, metal, fibreglass, rubber, paper, wool, leather, felt, glass, canvas, rope, vinyl, stone and sawdust. May I ask, then, why it is unable to join together the two objects I enclose? I certify that I followed the instructions provided by you in one of the seventeen languages in which you provide them.

Dear Sir,

Much as I feel I ought to take advantage of your reduced subscription offer to your magazine, I do think that half the fun in reading it is going to the book stall and buying it over the counter, when you can find it, that is, our local newsagent Mr Hamley of Purcaster being of the opinion that there is no call for your magazine, you're the third bleeder that's asked for it this year were his words and I have enough trouble stacking NOW!, thought you would like to know this, I remain,

Dear Sir,

Someone in your insurance company had by mistake left this form in a paperback which I bought this morning, and which dropped out into, I'm afraid, a puddle. I now return it to you and hope you will be able to use it again unless the mud is too difficult to remove. Yours faithfully,

Dear Sir,

I refer to the special offer and coupon printed on the side of your Giant Economy pack. I cut it out prior to sending it off. Unfortunately your product fell out through the hole caused. Please send me a replacement pack free of charge. Yours faithfully,

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your invitation to become one of the proud owners of your credit card. This has come at a good time for me, as I am recently released from prison on false charges of embezzlement and fraud, and you know how difficult it is for people in my position to get started again. Thank you again for your interest and I look forward to receiving the card as soon as possible. Yours faithfully,

ALAN COREN:

THE UNNATURAL HISTORY OF SELBORNE

Letter I

TO THE LATE REV. GILBERT WHITE, MA

Dear Sir,

Let me, at the outset of what must, sadly, be a somewhat monological correspondence (you having passed, these two centuries gone, beneath the lucky sod), say that no greater admirer exists of your work than I. During the harsh brickbound years of my urban life, I have turned on occasions without number towards the green solace of *The Natural History of Selborne*; gleaning therefrom, in your meticulous chronicling of moth and toad, stoat and minnow, not merely those moments of peace that go with rural things, but also the thrills that must accompany the observations of your incomparable eye and the wondrously informed speculations of your remarkable brain.

For I have long dreamed of myself becoming a naturalist; and last year the opportunity was afforded me, after nigh on forty London summers, of following your shade a little way along those paths which you so bravely beat two hundred years ago. Employing that shrewd trading sense which is perhaps the only legacy of an urban upbringing, I purchased one of the few tracts of genuine swamp in the New Forest, together with the small cottage sinking picturesquely into it, not so very far from your own beloved Selborne; and it was here that I determined to acquaint myself as intimately as you had done with the flora and fauna of my little square of Matto Grosso.

Since the past few months have been occupied with stopping the property from falling on me, I have only just begun my observations; my first impression is that there are several million species of tree out there, all indistinguishable from one another. They are full of penguins.

I am, etc.

Letter II

Dear Sir,

Or magpies. Upon my small son's having pointed out that penguins do not fly, I purchased an agreeable little volume, *The Observer's Book of Birds*. This gave me great hope of laying down a basis from which to work, since all I know of birds to this date is that sparrows are the ones which are not pigeons, and that neither of them is a starling.

Unfortunately, my hopes were soon dashed. Walking abroad last evening with my little book and a stout stick hewn from one of our English oaks, I found the birds whizzing past me like bullets, at a considerably faster rate than I could turn the pages. So far, I have managed to identify only a pigeon; being dead, it afforded me time to find the page, where I learned that it is larger than a dove. Unfortunately for my records, I had no dove to compare it with, so it may actually be a dove instead of a pigeon. Until I find a dead alternative, either larger or smaller, I shall, I am afraid, be none the wiser. It was covered with insects I was, I must confess, unable to identify, since I can recognise only ants.

A little later, I leaned upon my stout oaken stick to contemplate what might have been a fox, or dog, and it broke. I

have no way of knowing for certain, but I think it may not be oak at all. My son, who had been contemplating the book as I lay beneath him in the mire, pointed out that the birds could be identified by their song; thus, according to the book, the stonechat goes *wee-chat*, the redstart goes *wee-chit*, and the plover goes *oooi-oooi*. All one has to do, therefore, is listen for something going *wee-chit*, or *oooi-oooi*, or whatever, and pin it down instantly.

It is not easy. This evening, if the book is to be believed, we heard a hoopoe, two puffins, and a bar-tailed godwit. I happened to mention this in our local hostelry later, and an old cowman had to be carried bodily from the cribbage board and revived with quarts of foaming Campari.

I am, etc.

Letter III

Dear Sir,

According to *The Observer's Book of Trees* just purchased, what I had been leaning on was a stick hewn from the common juniper. This is odd, since the common juniper is a bush, whereas ours is ninety feet high and full of spoonbills. Or possibly bats. It may therefore be an uncommon juniper, which does not figure in the index. Could this, Sir, be my first breakthrough as a naturalist? My small daughter afforded me much relaxed laughter by insisting that the tree was a larch! I reminded her that the larch was a fish, but not sternly; she is but six, and easily upset by scorn.

I now know, you would be interested to hear were you not dead, that the animal I observed as I fell was neither fox nor dog, but a weasel. I identified it instantly from my new *Observer's Book of Wild Animals*. Ours is a large specimen, about the size of a child's tricycle, and I have advised the family to keep well away from it.

This evening, my son and I embarked upon a pleasant excursion to collect examples of the wild flowers with which this part of the forest is so abundantly blessed. We collected a daisy, and fifty-nine things that weren't.

I am, etc.

Letter IV

Dear Sir,

My mind is much exercised of late by droppings. In my life so far, spoor has not formed a major ratiocinative component, since in London it will be generally dog, and if it is not dog then little follows from further deliberation but unease. But in the country, the magic of droppings is all about us; sadly, however, one has to pick it up as one goes along, as it were, since—whether from editorial sensitivities or misguided commercial priorities, I know not—there is as yet no *Observer's Book of Droppings*. I have therefore been forced to glean what information I can from the conversation of countrymen, in particular the computer software executive up the hill and the literary agent who is his goodly live-in friendperson, and I am now fairly well versed in recognising the movements of forest animals from their track.

I am thus able to impart two pieces of remarkable information

that I could not have come by through any other means, viz., there have been sheep on the roof of my car, and the creature that nightly calls *yek-yek-yek* and bites through the wire mesh on the toolshed window is not, as I first thought, a golden eagle, but a bull.

By the by, the daisy turned out to be a wort of some kind, possibly bladder.

I am, etc.

Letter V

Dear Sir,

I strolled down to the Avon banks this morning, since I had heard ospreys in the night and wished to capture them on Polaroid. They had gone, however, and the only sign of life, apart from the odd owl paddling in the reeds, was a solitary fisherman. I pulled on my pipe and enquired in an equable manner whether or not the larch were biting, and he turned and stared at me for a long time.

There is much inbreeding in the country, of course, and I put it down to that.

Walking back to the cottage through the dew-bright fields, I was startled out of my wits by a rabbit which sprang up suddenly and blocked my path. It did not move! It was clearly poised to attack, but I kept my head and hurled my *Observer's Book of Pottery & Porcelain* at it, and it made off. I had purchased the volume in the hope of identifying a great hoard of blue and white fragments I had come upon while looking for my gumboot in our front bog, never imagining for a moment that it should prove so trusty a weapon *in extremis*!

But that, of course, is what one learns in the country: by our wits, by our improvisations, by sharpening our reflexes, do we survive.

I am, etc.

Letter VI

Dear Sir,

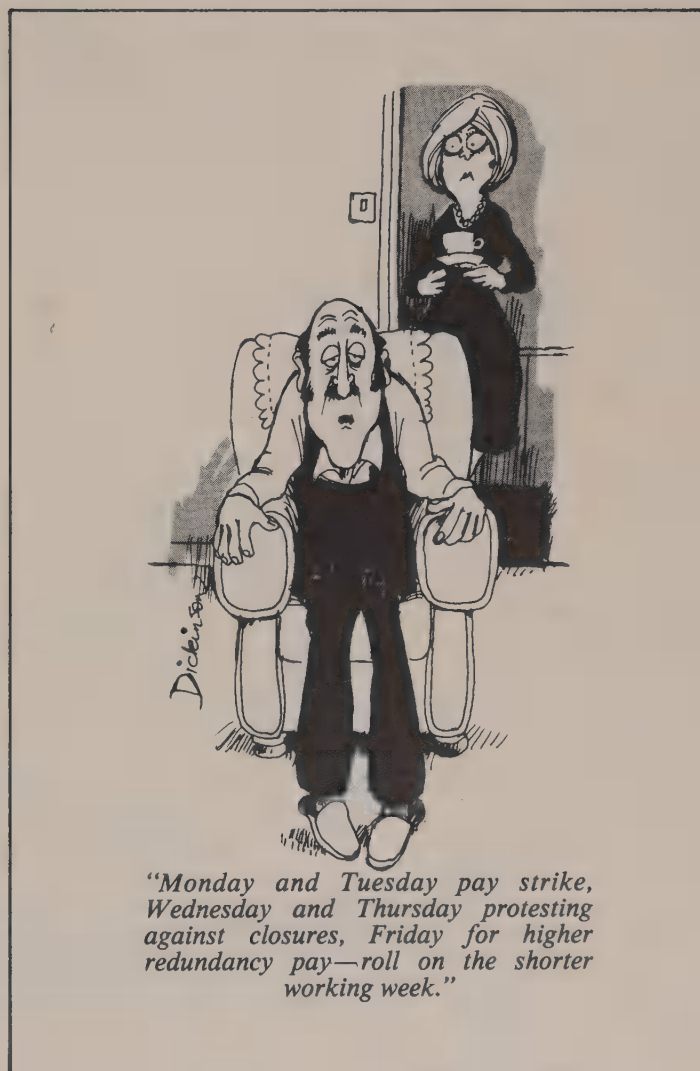
Good God, but the stream and the pond teem like no other part of the woodland with Dame Nature's arcane mysteries! You will note that I am uncharacteristically excited; yet why should I not be? For some weeks past, I have been closely observing the larva of the biting-midge *Ceratopogon* (*The Observer's Book of Pond Life*, plate 56), awaiting with almost the excitement of the father itself the final metamorphosis from minuscule egg into winging midge. Last evening, towards dusk, with all the landscape holding, it seemed to me, its breath, the final act of the great drama took the stage: the frail case shook, the thin skin split, and, as my son and I watched spellbound, what should burst from that tiny fecund pod but—a tortoiseshell butterfly!

Who can say what interventions brought on this bizarre genesis? I should deem it evidence of a Divine sense of humour, did the hard scientist in me not instantly cavil: for could it not, perhaps, be due instead to the curious, nay, unique vegetation of my little patch of ground? Diet, after all, can play strange tricks upon the growing insect foetus, and where else on this earth will you find a combination, as I have observed, of Horseshoe Vetch, Charlock, Sea Urchin, Hemlock Water-Dropwort, Mango, Cat's Ear, Wall Lettuce, Pineapple, Loon, Yam, Nettle-Leaved Selfheal, Cactus, Twayblade, Bougainvillea, Saxifrage, Breadfruit, and Tundra?

It would not surprise me if this part of the New Forest were capable of supporting anacondas and scorpions. Indeed, last night as I brushed my teeth, I clearly heard what could well have been a tapir rooting around behind the flymo, or vice-versa.

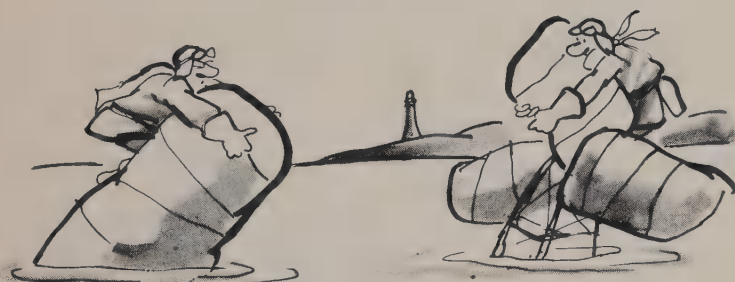
Tomorrow, I am determined to purchase *The Observer's Book of Fungi*. I have noticed, in my happy peregrinations, many delicious-looking examples of this nourishing genus; and I do firmly believe, Sir, that with a modicum of good fortune, my little family might well become self-sufficient.

I am, etc.



UP AND OVER

On the seventieth anniversary of Louis Blériot's first cross-Channel flight, **ALBERT** is cleared for take-off . . .



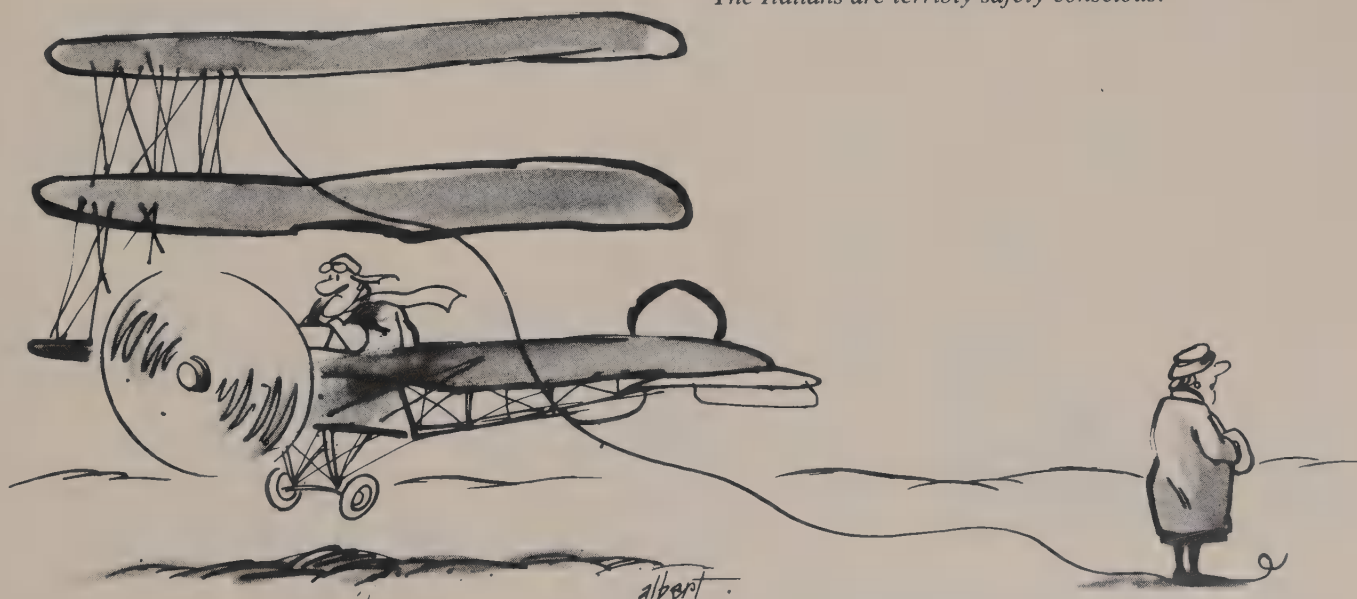
"Haven't you ever seen a bloody roundabout before?"



"Still no word about the Air Traffic Controllers?"



"The Italians are terribly safety conscious."



A NATION OF SHOPKEEPERS

55 BC Caesar lands in Britain, but it is closed for stocktaking.

54 BC Caesar's second expedition arrives, but meets no opposition, since the key is up the road with Mrs Hancock.

50 BC Migration to Britain of Commius and his followers. Serious skirmishes with native shopkeepers, since the Romans are prepared to stay open seven days a week, and native shopkeepers claim that the price you have to pay for that is rat droppings in the flour, also immigrant children behind the till who can't bloody add up and would anyway diddle you if they could.

44 BC Murder of Caesar. All British shops close for one week due to bereavement. All Roman shops stay open, immigrants do roaring trade, begin to open branches.

42 BC First Roman chain store, Waltonius, Hassellius and Portum, two shops in London, one in Chester, one in Cirencester. Branch in St. Albans invents paper bag, enabling eggs to be bought in twos. Native British shopkeepers predict end of world.

10 AD Cunobelinus controls all of south-east Britain from his base in Colchester, which has four floors including kitchen basement, food hall with cooked meats, and free horseparking.

60 Small shopkeepers finally rise up under Boadicea, demanding, among other things, the right to include the bone when weighing meat, to refuse to exchange eggs with beaks in, to charge twenty per cent for delivery outside the hundred-yard limit, and to allow the shop's cat to sleep on the cheddar. Revolt crushed by P. Flavius Tesco.

122 Hadrian opens first hypermarket precinct, a retail complex stretching from the Tyne to the Solway, protected by a system of high walls to stop the Scots breaking into the off-licences. A period of relative stability ensues, cruelly destroyed when in

455 Rome is pillaged by Vandals, who bang supermarket trolleys together, knock over dogfood displays, pocket anything they can shoplift, and switch the dates on all the perishables. The Romans leave Britain in order to return and set up Grand Closing Down Sales Due To Visigoth Hordes Unique Hun-Damaged Stock At Less Than Cost Everything Must Positively Go rearguard action, leaving Britain in disarray.

497 Arthur (Fruiterers To The Elite Since 476) sets up Tintagel Round Table, an association of small shopkeepers pledged to mutual self-help and weekly blue mime-shows in the upstairs room of the Dog & Maggot.



710 Venerable Bede draws up first work in English vernacular. It reads, in modern translation: "3lb carrots, two lge trnps, small chicken, pkt clthes pgs, pot paint, ½ doz. prawns, loaf, 2 jars strwb jam, tsting frk, see if boots bk frm cbbler". It revolutionises English culture, not only introducing hundreds of new idioms, such as "No call for it", "We're just closing", "Could be in any day now", "Pull this one, it's got bells on", "Do you mind?", "I think this lady was first", "What do you think I am, sodding Harrods?", "They'll be ready Thursday", and so on, but also creating an entire new range of facial expressions, shrugs, gasps, scornful laughs, eye-rolling, sniffs and oaths.

765 First Danish raids.

766 First sex shops.

c.800 Period of great national disunity, while country split into separate kingdoms: Wessex has early closing Wednesday, but late-night shopping alternate Fridays, Northumbria is closed Saturdays, but open for religious essentials on Sunday morning, Mercia will only deliver orders of five pence and above, except during Lent, and is open all night on the first Thursday in every month without an R in it, Kent closes for

lunch but remains open on Whit Monday for account customers only, Cornwall does not allow minors to purchase fish without written authority, East Anglia insists that horses may not be leant against the window, Wales refuses to offer facilities for trying on clothes, and Lindisfarne will not accept cheques during periods of high comet activity. All this changes when, in

878 King Alfred unifies England by incorporating all the assorted restrictions and prohibitions into a single charter, the famous *Caveat Emptor*, to which all British shopkeepers eagerly agree, enshrining as it does the hallowed principle of "If you have to ask for it, we haven't got it."

1066 First French Shopping Excursion Special Day Trip to Britain to take advantage of favourable knitwear situation ends in tragedy. Informed that goods once bought cannot be exchanged, the French panic, and begin lashing out. Harold of Sainsbury, President of Hastings Rotary and Overall Area Retail Manager (South-East), is killed, and his company is taken over by Normandy Holdings. A long period of French influence sets in, which English shopkeepers accept with typical enthusiasm, since it now means that by calling goods by French names—*lingerie*, *gateaux*, *haute couture*, *liqueurs*, *souvenirs*, etc—they can now charge twice as much for the same old rubbish.

VOILA! PEVENE SÆ MARKS ET SPARKS



1215 John (formerly John & Richard Ltd, formerly Richard & John Ltd, formerly Richard Ltd), having taken over the business while his brother is unsuccessfully trying to open up export markets, runs into trouble with a consortium of major wholesalers. A compromise is reached whereby the wholesalers agree to leave John alone provided he initiates the By Appointment principle; Magna Carta is signed, enabling them to charge four times as much for the same old rubbish.



1348 Black Death. Half the population dies, forcing prices up in the shops. Exactly why is never made clear.



1415 Resounding success at Agincourt and capture of several French armies sees introduction of wonderful War Surplus industry. Thousands of English men and women begin walking around in old ill-fitting greaves, dented hauberks, unmatched gauntlets etc. Thousands more spend all day staring at job lots of broken bucklers.

1530 Henry VIII, having failed on six occasions to find a woman who could be trusted to pop down to the shops for a pound of sprouts without coming back in eight new hats, dissolves the monasteries. Surplus trade booms; thousands of people walking around in old cassocks, mitres, birettas, hair shirts, wimples. Disappearance of established Catholicism introduces new phrase to language: "Something for the weekend, squire?"



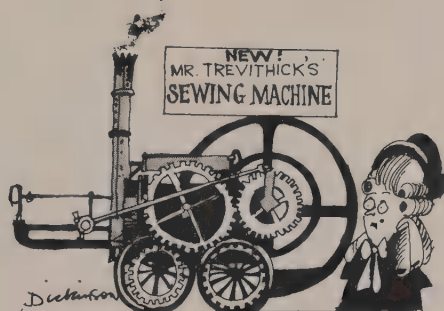
1587 Raleigh brings back tobacco from New World. No-one knows what to do with it until 1588, when Frobisher brings back barley sugar from Madagascar. The Confectioner-Tobacconist Industry is born, overcomes early problem period during which people are smoking wine gums and eating churchwarden pipes, and thrives.

1605 World's first Trade Launch goes tragically wrong. Sparkler manufacturer G. Fawkes is hung as example to PR men everywhere.

1665 Great Plague. A retail tragedy, since campaign to hold nationwide Plague-Damaged Goods Everything Half Price Sales fails for somewhat obvious reasons. Shopkeepers put heads together.

1666 Great Fire. Nationwide Fire-Damaged Goods Unique Unrepeatable Offer Must Definitely Close Down By December 31 Sales campaign resounding success.

1779 Industrial Revolution begins, heralding unprecedented retail boom with appearance for first time of mass produced manufactured goods. Whole country echoes to sound of sprockets falling off things, springs bouncing on floor, wheels grinding to halt, hinges snapping, locks jamming, grommets rolling under sideboards. Population of twelve million now split into four broad categories: those manufacturing products (one million), those selling products (one million), those buying products (one million), and those taking broken products back to shops (nine million). Once again, the culture reacts to the commercial shock: the language fills with a rich crop of colourful new phrases, like "Couldn't even look at it till Thursday week soonest", "Yes, werl, we couldn't



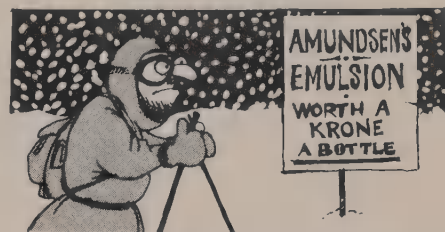
really tell till we stripped the whole thing down", "No, madam, when it says guarantee, it doesn't actually mean guarantee, it is more of a sort of an indication that we would be prepared to contact the manufacturer at your expense, if we weren't up to here with bleeding paperwork, as it is", "Ah, yes, well they modified it soon afterwards, I'm afraid a lot of people complained about scalding their ear when the lid blew off, unfortunately the company went out of business last Tuesday", and the universally popular "You haven't by any chance had a go at mending this yourself, have you, in which case the Sale of Goods Act 1794 expressly..." The Great Maintenance Debate rises to a crescendo as the 1805 *cause célèbre* trial when Emma Hamilton attempts to sue Novelty Limbs Ltd of Holborn, claiming that Nelson would not have been shot had he not been hobbling around on one knee (the other having sheared at the wing-nut) looking for his glass eye which had popped out due to inferior gum.

The retailers are, however, vindicated in the High Court on the grounds of Fair Wear & Tear. It is perhaps the most quoted precedent in English judicial history.

1840 Postage stamp introduced, to enable small retailers to operate from rat-filled attics impressively entitled Department PDF16, Malvilliers International Incorporated, Preston. With mail order, customers may receive broken clocks, three-legged underpants, and warped cardboard shelving without leaving the comfort of their own home, if it has any.

1851 Great Exhibition, designed to show all that's best in British commerce. Tragically, due to a clerical error, the fire does not break out for eighty-five years, by which time there are no goods left in it to sell off at knockdown drag-out rock-bottom prices.

1912 Scott reaches South Pole, but it is too late. Amundsen is already back home again, and selling commemorative plates, ashtrays, and sled dangle-dollies by the gross.



1914 Not Very Great War breaks out. There is a reasonable market for turnip jam and acorn coffee, but few other commercial windfalls.

1939 Really Great War breaks out: snoek, whalemeat, powdered egg, pom, spim, glum, jim, dum and millions of similar ersatz muck is foisted happily onto a ravenous market. Many butchers expire from sexual excess. Ministry of Food fails to quash ugly rumours that British greengrocers have collaborated with Admiral Doenitz, after stepped-up U-boat campaign raises lemon prices to £25 apiece. In 1945, many "regular customers" have their heads shaved, and an unsuccessful attempt is made to extend the Nuremberg trials to cover fishmongers.

1971 Decimalisation. Great fears about whether the Old Penny will be rounded up to the New Half Penny rather than down are allayed (but only in shopkeepers) when they take a unilateral decision to round everything up to the nearest £5.

1973 Britain enters EEC, to make it the Century of the Common Shopkeeper. The EEC is a revolutionary concept designed to enable shopkeepers—a term which by now embraces both political parties—to explain everything in terms of it. It is entirely self-contained. It particularly excites logicians, who name the new philosophy *Cobblers*. When, for example, in

1979 British butter prices rise as the direct result of there being so much butter produced that it has to be sold off by the million ton to Russia at a third of the price in British stores, many shopkeepers die of ecstasy. It is, perhaps, their finest hour.

A.C.



SITE FOR SORE EYES

If, as Henry Moore argues, the "Green Giant" skyscraper doesn't fit in with The Tate Gallery—what would? We asked our architect MAHOOD to prepare a new plan





METROPOLIS



ALAN BRIEN's London

PERHAPS it's the weather but whenever I sit down at the typewriter these dog-day evenings I feel a fit of prophecy coming on. It seems to me that no-one has yet appreciated the transformation, verging on a *coup d'état*, that Mrs Thatcher has wrought on the social life of London. There is a smell of easy money in the air, a rumble of conspicuous consumption around the corner, a dusting off of status symbols, a polishing of executive toys. The inmates of the cuckoo's nest have been locked up for the long weekend, and Big Nurse is holding a party for her trustees.

Is it possible that we are on the eve of another Gilded Age for the privileged few? That it is now the turn of our upper classes to relive the *Belle Epoque*, and help themselves to *La Dolce Vita* from the sweet trolley? Will we see our metropolis become Baghdad-on-Thames, a Diner's Club outing, a West End Jubilee Street Party, a Weimar Monarchy, where nothing succeeds like Access?

Already I sense that everything that is public will be allowed to run down and nothing that is private allowed to be wound up. That the bank rate will rise and the bankrupts revive. That under the New Order our Leader will guarantee that

American Express always arrives on time and no expense account is spared. That big will be beautiful again and the top flats of council tower blocks sold off as penthouses. That enterprise will be free and twice as expensive. That no face of capitalism will ever be unacceptable.

Now secretaries will have personal assistants, and call-girls PROs. Every celebrity will be a hero to his gossip columnist. We shall witness the return of lounge lizards and sugar daddies, playboys and undergrads, road hogs and tea dances, palm courts and motoring chocolate, valets and boot-blacks, mashers and flower girls, cocktail parties and visiting cards, silk stockings and spats, Brylcreem and dowries, gunboats and public hangment, top hats and advertisements on the front page of the *Daily Telegraph*, colonic irrigation and deer stalking.

Luxuries will become necessities, and the businesses which increase their turnover will be those providing jewelry for men and sports planes for women, champagne for sixth formers and race horses for schoolgirls, Old Masters for boardrooms and young mistresses for bored chairmen, coffee-table books and platinum conversation pieces, portable computers and wrist TV sets, indoor swimming pools and garden marquees, rooftop helicopter landing pads and basement mah-jong salons. The boom professionals will be dancing masters, interior decorators, plastic surgeons, fortune tellers, pastrycooks, bodyguards, butlers, flower arrangers, confidence tricksters, elocutionists, masseurs, tailors, bookmakers and bootmakers.

More children will go to public schools, more wives to health farms, more husbands to gaming clubs, more mothers-in-law to nursing homes, more financiers to the House of Lords, more peers into show business, more megalomaniacs into newspaper publishing. More politicians will be acquitted on serious charges and more senior policemen will retire early for health reasons. More Chairmen of nationalised industries will accept large increases in salary, to enable their middle management to be given small increases, before retiring to run the same industries for even larger salaries under private ownership.

HER Holiness Mataji Nirmaladevi, "renowned master of Kundalini," so ran the advertisement in *Time Out*, is in London now and granting self-realisation *en masse*. "Even from her photograph," it went on to promise, "you may feel the divine flow of vibrations. Just hold your hands to her picture, palms upwards, and see."

Possessor of a pair of the hottest hands in north-west London—I have had pigs jump when I branded my print on their oven-roast flanks—I could not resist the challenge. I cupped my knuckles over the page and felt the air rise in steamy columns. But then the same effect was produced, when I repeated the process, over "Camping Equipment Bought and Sold", "Call Saul if you're concerned about HAIR LOSS", and "Young executive looking for daytime dalliance with young female, own Rolls Royce, race horse etc."

Still, I have long wanted to release my own Kundalini, if only to see if it/she/he lives up to that name which somehow combines the vibrations of male and female sexuality in one portmanteau taboo word. From what I've read, I ought to expect a kind of coiled serpent, part psyche, part soma, which lies tensed around the sacrum like a jack-in-the-box, waiting to spring up and out through the fontanelle.

The first of Her Holiness's dispersals of awareness to the public was arranged in Caxton Hall. Formerly the most fashionable (or perhaps only the most convenient to Fleet Street) of metropolitan registry offices, this has always reminded me of an early Hitchcock set, possibly the headquarters of the Club of Queer Trades or the Thirty-Nine Steps.

Why are its rooms always let out for meetings of bodies with mysterious initials? How long has there been a council order on the noticeboard designating it as



"It seems only a partial loss of faith. Your right hand has lost its cunning, but your tongue does not cling to the roof of your mouth."

a dangerous structure? And nowhere else have I so often found myself in search of the Gents, spinning the tumblers on the door, bricked into the wall ahead in a subterranean corridor, of a man-size cast-iron safe. I think it may conceal Joanna Southcott's Box.

"*En masse*" was not exactly the phrase I would have chosen for 36 men and women, mostly young, largely white with a sprinkling of Indians, gathered, shoe-less, in the cosy Norfolk Room. Most of them seemed to be already devotees of H. H. Mataji. Certainly a number of them took turns at standing behind each other, miming away like theatricals playing *The Game*, hauling an invisible slippery eel from the base of the spine, squeezing it along the backbone, popping it out of the skull, then elaborately wiping their hands free of its dangerous contagion. Meanwhile we sat, as instructed, feet flat on the floor, hands cupped upwards on the lap, near the front to get the maximum benefit of The Mother's spray of power.

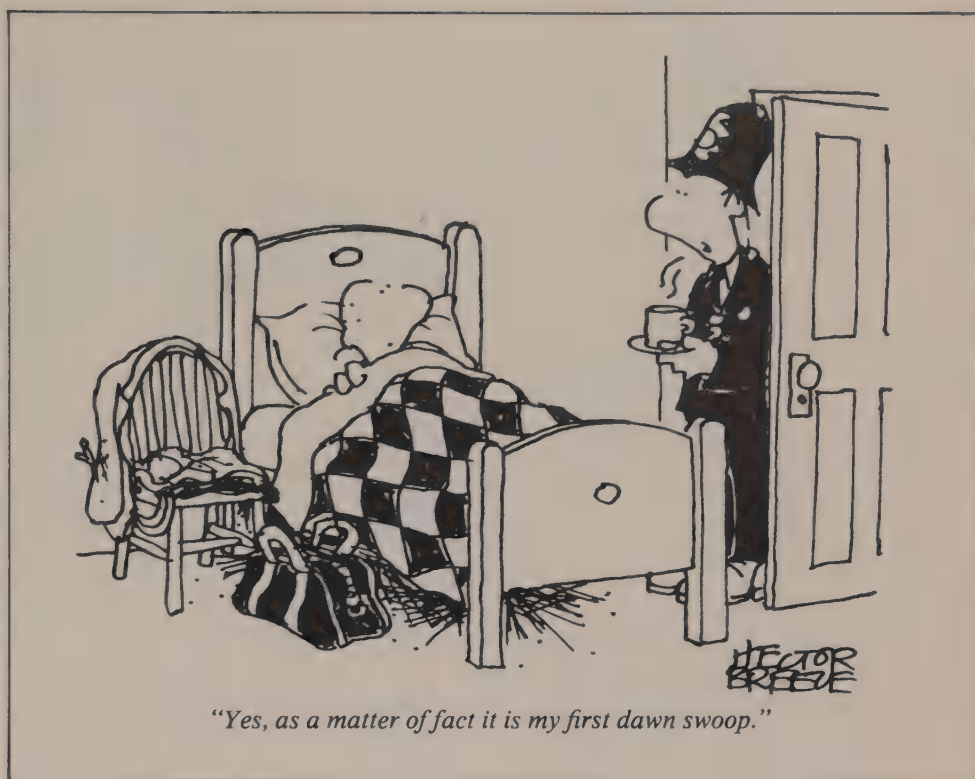
About ten minutes later, The Mother entered, a stoutish Indian lady in her forties, swaddled in white. With broad cheekbones and noble nose, she could even have been Red Indian. She had two expressions: one of slightly sinister suspicion with the eyes scrunched and radiating wrinkles; and the other of maternal jollity with the eyes round and flashing as granny glasses. Whichever look she adopted, it was aimed directly at you. We were each under control of our mercurial, brown Nanny.

When we were all relaxing self-consciously, she began. The working of Divine Love was very simple though the operation inside us was very complicated. (She gestured to a hanging diagram showing a squatting person whose inside from crown to coccyx was joined by the loop of a coloured rail track.) We shouldn't struggle too hard to understand. As a mother she would do the cooking for us—why should we worry about *how* it was done! It was enough we should start eating. That is, if we were truly hungry . . . (Eyes narrowed—looking at me?)

She had written a book we could read. But we ought not to read too many books. We ought not to have too many ideas. If her mike broke, it might take her four hours to put it together. (Eyes wide open, infectious chuckle convulsing almost all audience.)

Yet George here could repair it in seconds. That was what he knew how to do. The Mother did not feel inferior. We all had our talents. Hers, she did not know why, was to arouse, and tap, Divine Power.

The accent was chee-chee in the Sellers style, not always easy to follow. And her examples were not precisely tailored to the English idioms or customs. Man in his



search for happiness often believed he was going somewhere of his own will when he was really affected by other forces. Take a man on a train who put his suitcase on his head and thought he was carrying it through the countryside. That man did not know it was the train which was carrying both him and the suitcase. (Laughter.)

We were here for self-realisation, inner silence. Only then could Kundalini rise. There were dangers here. People might have gross or frightful feelings. Some confused Kundalini with s.e.x. Some shook like lunatics. (One or two of the audience rattled.) But the manifestation should be easy and natural and we should be able to see it with our naked eyes.

Any questions? Nothing from books, please. Nothing in argument. Nothing to disturb the faith of others. (That means *no* questions from you, hissed my wife, Jill.) So now—let us experience the power.

The cool flow crept from paw to paw along the rows. You? Good. You? Very good. All of you across there? Well done. You? You? (*Me!*) No? No coolness at all? (My palms were like boiled beetroots.) Had I ever consulted another guru? No? Was I certain? Yes? Then I needed special treatment.

A small task-force descended, rearranging my hands, adjusting my feet, patting my belly reproachfully. (I restrained myself from pointing out The Mother was not exactly *1 wiggy*.) Did I smoke? Did I drink? Ah, well, then my "chakras" must be blocked.

No wonder I was having trouble. These

were the causes of my illness. (I said I had not been ill since I was eleven.) What? Why had I come then? What did I really want here? (Self realisation, whispered Jill. Yeah, I said, that was it, true awareness.) The efforts re-doubled and they acted out again the angling for the giant worm, occasionally shielding themselves from possible side effects or leakages.

I tried at first to remain objective. My hands were not growing cool, but there was a slight tingle. This was bad. The right was a physical problem, the left emotional. Only one hand was better, but still not good. I began to weaken. Now, no hands tingled. Now, the breeze was coming. Everyone breathed relief. The crisis was over. There was hope.

I was shown the man in the row behind whose Kundalini was not such an awkward creature. A sure sign was the dilation of his pupils. Doctors could not explain this. I examined them closely—they were as bright and solid as blackcurrant pastilles. He had a grin like a fairground balloon and he felt as light as air.

Testimony poured out. This one was an insomniac. The other hated everybody. She hated herself. He always felt ill. Others felt ugly and boring. If I must go, I should take this photograph of The Mother—no, no, never bend it—and place a candle before it, put my feet in salt water, and hold out my palms. This was the best treatment for the non-realised.

Before I went, I must say—Mother, are you my guru? Then—Mother, you are my guru. Didn't I feel the difference?

The Singular History of Himmelweit

by PETER TINNISWOOD

It is my intention to recount the singular history of Himmelweit.

Himmelweit was the only German in the history of the summer game to play first class county cricket.

He played for the county of Somerset from the year 1919 until the year 1921, when he became the central figure in what is now known to historians as "The Incident at Frome".

Himmelweit came to this country in the year 1916 when his Zeppelin was shot down during a bombing raid on Shepton Mallet—thus giving him residential qualifications to play for Somerset.

He was deposited forthwith in prison—thus giving him residential qualifications to play for Wormwood Scrubs.

He first came to the notice of the cricketing authorities when, in 1918, he appeared in the match of Minor Counties versus Huns.

Minor Counties were skippered by Jas. Humberstone Senior.

Huns were skippered by Thomas Mann.

Mann, a minor literary figure, was later to achieve wider fame as the father and grandfather respectively of F.G. and F. T.

Mann of Middlesex and England.

The match took place at Much Wenlock, and Minor Counties won the toss and elected to bat.

The innings was opened by Jas. Humberstone Senior and the former Leicestershire professional, Amiss, later to achieve wider fame as the father and grandfather respectively of the two cricketing brothers, Denis and Kingsley.

The Huns skipper tossed the crimson rambler to Himmelweit to open the bowling.

Humberstone crouched at the crease in his typical aggressive stance.

As he faced up to the bowling the buckles of his braces flashed angrily, the ferrets in his hip pocket gnashed their teeth and the clank of his steel dentures echoed round the ground.

"Right, Fritz," he growled. "Do your worst."

It was to be a memorable moment in the history of the summer game.

Himmelweit commenced his run.

One stride, two strides, three strides.

It was indeed a fearsome sight as his iron crosses clattered and his cavalry sabre

splintered the weak Shropshire sunlight into myriads of sparkling fragments.

Nearer and nearer he approached the wicket.

And as he did so spectators became aware of a curious whistling sound.

Louder and louder it grew. Ghostly. Horrendous.

A banshee howl that caused Humberstone Senior to fling himself to the ground, clasping his ears in agony.

Himmelweit delivered the ball.

It was a masterly delivery.

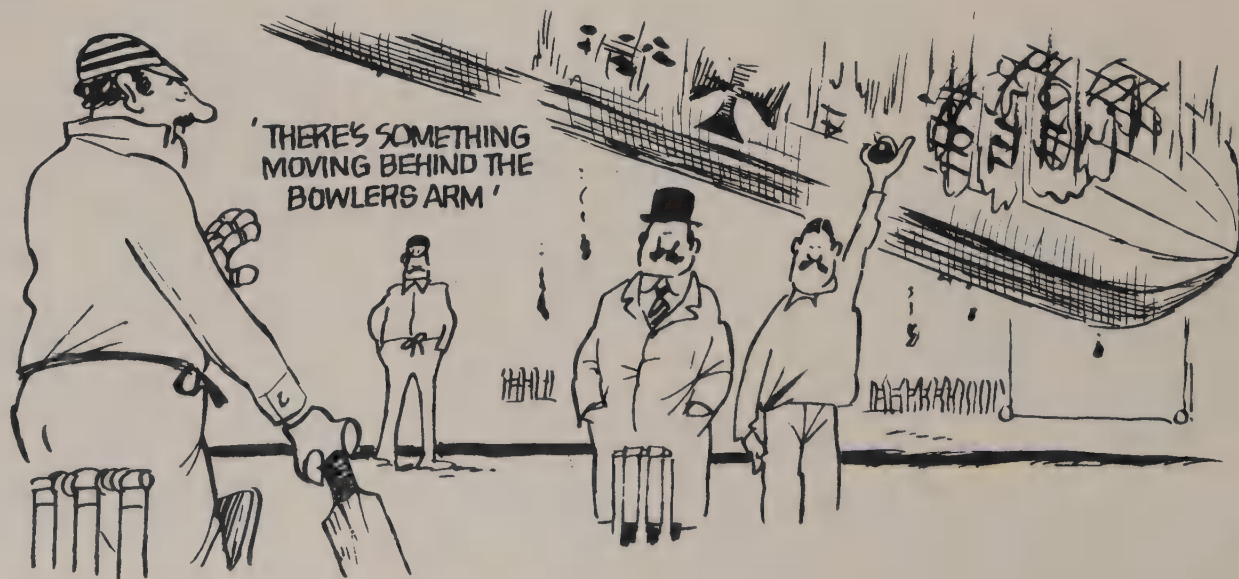
Full-length, pitched on middle and leg and veering sharply to off with a snake-like whiplash.

Humberstone's castle was wrecked.

The well-known cricket writer, Neville Cardew, later to achieve wider fame as the father and grandfather respectively of the distinguished wit and raconteur, Cardew Robinson, wrote in his journal the following:

"I doubt whether any man alive could have played that ball.

"Even the redoubtable Humberstone at the moment of delivery was stretched on the ground, writhing in contortions of







1988



agony, hands clamped tight to his auditory orifices. I am of the firm opinion that the perfect pitch and pace of the ball would have beaten his forward defensive prod and caused him forthwith to give no trouble to the scorer."

Thus did the carnage begin.

The Minor Counties were dismissed for five.

Himmelweit took all ten wickets at a personal cost of one run, all his victims being stricken by the all-pervasive and menacing whistling sound emanating from his person.

The Huns XI, in the persons of their two openers, the Umlaut brothers, A.P.F. and J.W.H.N.S.—the latter known affectionately as Johnny Will Heute Nicht Schlagen—knocked off the runs required in one over, thus winning the match by ten wickets.

It was some hours later during the subsequent fracas in the tea pavilion that the source of the whistling sound was discovered.

Himmelweit with typical Teutonic cunning had affixed to the inside of his kneecap a device used by the Germans in their howitzers during the bombardment of Beauvais to strike terror into the hearts of the allied horses.

The shock waves of this incident reverberated throughout the game and were the direct cause of what is known to historians of the summer game as the Much Wenlock Amendment:

"The Implements of The Game:

"Note Seven B.

"Articles of ordnance or artillery may not normally be used during the course of the match except by the prior agreement of the two captains who must notify forthwith the umpires, if the said articles contain matter of an explosive nature which may cause distress or injury to domestic and agricultural livestock in the immediate vicinity of the ground."

Despite the various unpleasantnesses which resulted from this match, Himmelweit's services were eagerly sought by all the first class counties with the exception of Yorkshire, who still to

this day refuse to allow to play for the county players of German birth or independent nature.

It was left to the MCC to decide that the enforced landing of Himmelweit's Zeppelin on Somerset soil gave that county the right to claim his services.

This rule has since been strictly applied to the registration of all overseas players.

Himmelweit's deeds with Somerset require little embellishment from me.

The records speak for themselves.

It is to matters of a more personal nature that we much devote our attention.

Sad to say, it must be recorded that Himmelweit seemed to go out of his way to antagonise both team-mate and opponent alike.

While the majority of players were content during drinks intervals to accept orange squash or grapefruit crush, Himmelweit insisted on a half-bottle of lightly chilled Hock. And on finishing this he would invariably hurl his glass to the ground and grind it underfoot with his spurs—an act which was subsequently found to be responsible for the untimely demise of the groundsman's horse at

the Chelmsford Cricket Club.

While most players, too, during the luncheon adjournment were content to take a light salad, Himmelweit insisted on a full five-course meal consisting usually of Bauernschmeiss mit Knackwurst, Sauerkraut mit Bratkartoffeln, Bayerische Obsttorte, Kaffee mit Schlag and Knoedel au Harry Makepeace.

Himmelweit fell foul of umpires, too, by insisting on appealing in his native tongue.

"Wie ist das?" he would shout in a blood-curdling yell.

And when he came to the wicket to take up guard he would scowl at the umpire and snarl:

"Mittel und Bein."

Many years later, when talking about this the celebrated umpire, George Pope, who was later to achieve wider fame as the father and grandfather respectively of John Paul I and John Paul II, was heard to remark:

"Ahd 'ave let t'booger rot, if he'd not 'ad t'decency to say bitte schoen."

It was undoubtedly these indiscretions which accounted for his singular lack of support from both players, spectators and officials alike at the time of the infamous "Incident at Frome".

I now propose to recount in some detail the circumstances surrounding this occurrence.

It took place during the match against Lancashire. At that time the red rose county had a team of all the talents including that nonpareil of fast bowlers, the Australian, E. A. McDonald, who was later to achieve even wider fame in the moving cinematograph as the partner of Mr Nelson Eddy.

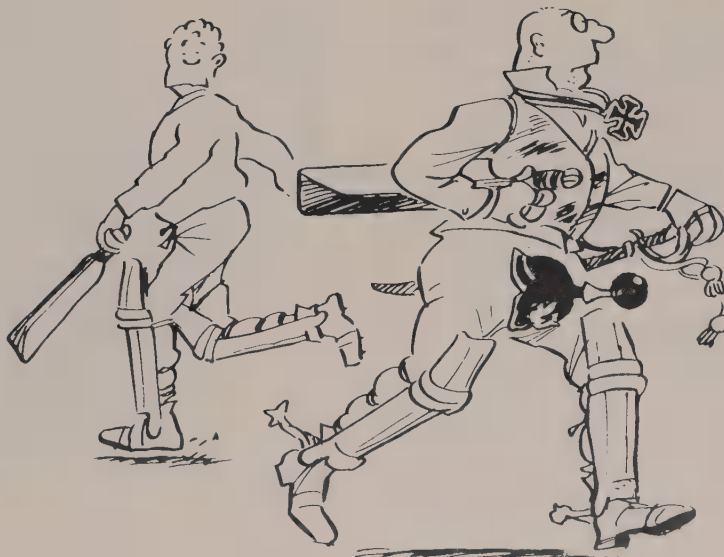
McDonald was a bowler of awesome speed, a man in the prime of his talents.

Somerset won the toss.

Skipper Bertie Furze deliberated long and hard, but at length decided to bat on a green and lively wicket, expecting, no doubt, great feats later on in the game from his one-legged off-spinner, Mendip-Hughes.

It was a disastrous decision.

McDonald bowling at fearsome speed





had the ball rearing and spitting from the very first moment of the game.

Within the space of five overs he had claimed six Somerset wickets and despatched three of his opponents to hospital.

It was at this moment that Himmelweit appeared at the wicket wearing garb of the most singular appearance.

The Lancashire skipper immediately objected.

But on finding that the rule book contained no references to cavalry breastplates, spiked helmets or sabres (Allied or German), play was allowed to continue.

The first ball McDonald bowled to Himmelweit whistled down to a good length and reared like a mortar shell head high.

Himmelweit did not flinch.

Instead of ducking he soared into the air and with a movement of the head muscles that would have shamed the immortal Ralph "Dixie" Dean, who was later to achieve even wider fame as the father and grandfather respectively of the celebrated light comedienne and chanteuse, Miss Phyllis Dixie, headed the ball first bounce to the boundary.

Incensed, McDonald hurled down a ball of even greater speed.

Once more Himmelweit rose into the air and headed the ball to the boundary.

A six!

McDonald knotted his dark antipodean eyebrows and next ball bowled a vicious delivery that hurtled at Himmelweit's midriff and struck him a sickening blow in the vitals.

Himmelweit stood his ground.

His upper lip curled icily. The sunlight flashed on his monocle.

And then with a sudden movement he made a crucial adjustment to his dress.

McDonald bowled again.

Another ferocious ball hurled straight at the most tender anatomical parts known to man—and sometimes to woman.

Clang!

The noise echoed the length and breadth of the green and rolling hills of Somerset.

Rooks flew up in alarm. Rabbits scurried to their burrows. Hens stopped laying.

Himmelweit did not budge.

Defiant and upright he stood.

But where was the ball?

It was the great Dick Tyldesley who spotted it.

"How's that?" he yelled.

Scarcely had the words left his lips than Himmelweit commenced to run.

"Lauf," he shouted to his bemused partner, the young Goblet. "Lauf, Du Englischer Schweinhund, lauf."

For some time the red rose players stood in a motionless daze as Himmelweit and his partner commenced to run between the wickets, the ball still attached to the spike on the German's helmet.

Twenty-seven they ran before the immortal Cec Parkin shouted:

"Right, lads, let's scrag the German sod!"

The subsequent fracas was ghastly to behold.

Lancashire players piled themselves on top of Himmelweit who in a cold fury struck out with his sabre.

The gore flowed copiously, and it was not until the arrival of a detachment of the Somerset Yeomanry and representatives of the Frome Fire Brigade that the players were separated.

There was a moment's silence. And then the immortal Cec Parkin pounced once more.

Pointing at the wicket, he shouted: "How's that?"

Himmelweit was given out.

And that to my knowledge is the first and only time the dismissal has been written in the score book:

"Out. Iron Cross Hit Wicket."

But what of Himmelweit?

Of him there was no sign.

Indeed, never again was he seen.

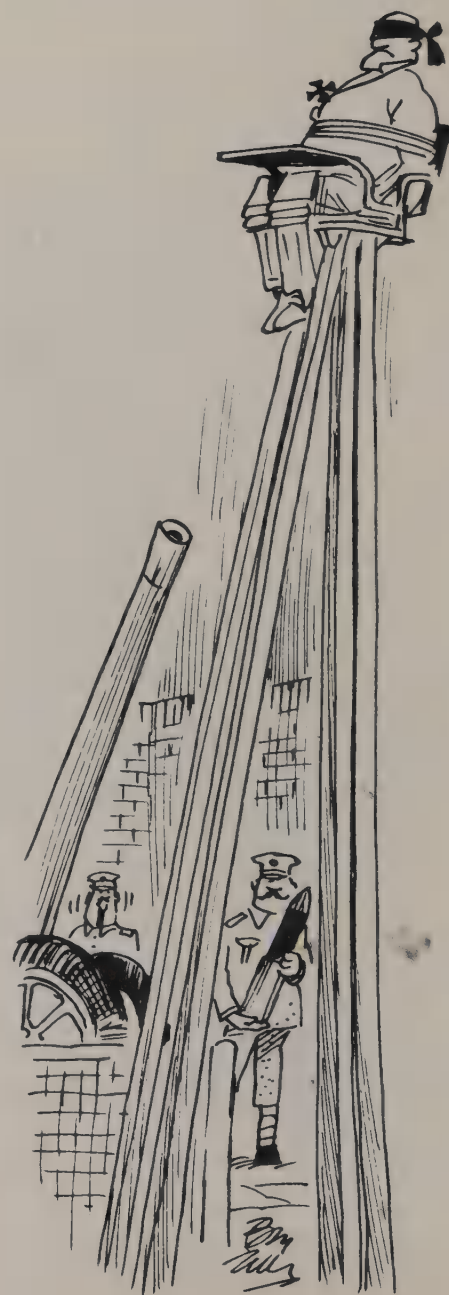
Rumour has it that he was taken under armed escort by the Somerset Yeomanry to London in the dead of night and there executed on the real tennis courts at Lord's.

But who can say?

One thing, however, still puzzles me about Himmelweit.

No one ever knew his Christian name.

But then I don't suppose he was the sort of man to have one.



TONS OF LOVE FOR LUCKY NORM!

It all started one evening last November when Willesden quantity surveyor Norman "Norm" Charnley, 34, came back from a hard day at the office and hung his hat on his wife.

"I was just stood there by the door, and it all went, well, black", is how lovely obese Samantha, 30, remembers it now, with a girlish giggle that sets her chins going like a boxful of ping-pong balls. As *Pig Magazine's* Fat Lump of the Year, she can afford to laugh, but it was no laughing matter then, she can tell you!

"I was only about eight stone. I'd put on a size 28 frock from somewhere chic like Huge Her Modes, and it would just hang on me. I looked like one of them hot hair balloons after the wossname's gone out, I do not mind saying! I would just sit in the changing cubicle and sob,

watching through the curtains while enormous customers primped about in their smart new clothes and brought the plaster off the walls."

But then she pulled herself together.

"But then I pulled myself together. It is no good sitting here on your bum, or where your bum would be if you had one, I said to myself, you have got to do something about your weight, Samantha Charnley, or your husband will not have no more relations with you."

So she started buying *Pig Magazine* every week, and following its diet rules

assiduously, often eating far into the night.

"I had this craving for unsweetened lemon juice and Slimcea, but I learned to beat it. Some nights I would shift two hundredweight of mashed potatoes and watch the dawn come up. My friend Sharon was a great help, mind, and I do not know what I would have done without her help. Many's the time she gave up her evenings to sit there and shovel bread pudding into me with a garden trowel after I was too tired to lift my own spoon. I owe a lot to willing friends like her, and of course my husband Norm has been an enormous pillar of strength, turning over his weekends to making porridge and so forth or filling me with bottled Bass down The Frog & Radiator."

Bikini

But, finally, her courage and perseverance have paid off. Yesterday, at the editorial offices of *Pig*, she received the coveted Bronze Swine statuette for getting her weight up to a shapely 48 stone 9 lb.

"I can't get into anything now", she told reporters happily. "I get wedged in the bath, and I make all my frocks out of duvets, and Norman has at last been able to get rid of the Allegro and buy a Foden three-tonner. I've thrown away all my bikinis and bought a lovely German tent in blue and orange from Pindisport. It has a window in the back where Norman can climb in."

"Yes", averred a new, chirpier Norm, "our personal relations have perked up no end. Also I can take her out and about now. I never used to take her to watch QPR on account of my friends would laugh, but now they are more than happy to stand behind her when the wind blows down the terraces and she is just one of the gang, added to which she is no end of a boon showing her way through to the bar of a crowded Friday night."

In addition to the handsome statuette, Samantha also wins a glorious all-in eating holiday for two in Bavaria, the strengthened floor of her dreams from the Wembley Joist Company, and a freezerful of suet worth almost twelve pounds. (*Reuter*)



A radiant Samantha clumps seductively down Willesden Way, carrying the cardboard cut-out of her grotesque former self.



Continuing the series of Round the World
Gigs with **GEORGE MELLY**

Mellymobile

IT'S surprising how quickly you settle down in a city. Within a week in New York I'd established a routine, got to know the tobacconist, the man in the dry cleaners, bought the *New York Times* here, had breakfast ("You're welcome") there. Work at Michael's Pub, although always a thrill and a challenge, became part of the daily round, strolling in about ten minutes before the first set and greeting Louis, Gill Weiss, and Richard, before joining the band at the dark bar for a drink and a gossip. We'd soon made our own New Yorks. John Chilton was all over the city tracking down a fascinating story in the history of Black music. Chuck Smith and his wife on her first-time visit "did the sights". Stan Greig paced the avenues in pursuit of bargains, one night complaining that while we had discovered a store that sold jeans cheaper than any others, the students' jeans were two dollars less again if he only could have got into them. "The largest size they made was 30," he growled frustratedly, "and I take 31." He was as cross as Cinderella's ugly sister failing to get her foot into the glass slipper.

As for Barry Dillon, his life remained, as always, a mystery. There were rumours that he'd been to Greenwich Village, but they were unsubstantiated. He walked certainly and carried a camera. I have seen him in the past pointing it at famous monuments. Perhaps that's what he did.

Every night was, of course, different; sometimes noisy, sometimes run-of-the-mill, sometimes glittering. Caroline Kennedy came for the second year running and requested *It ain't no sin to*

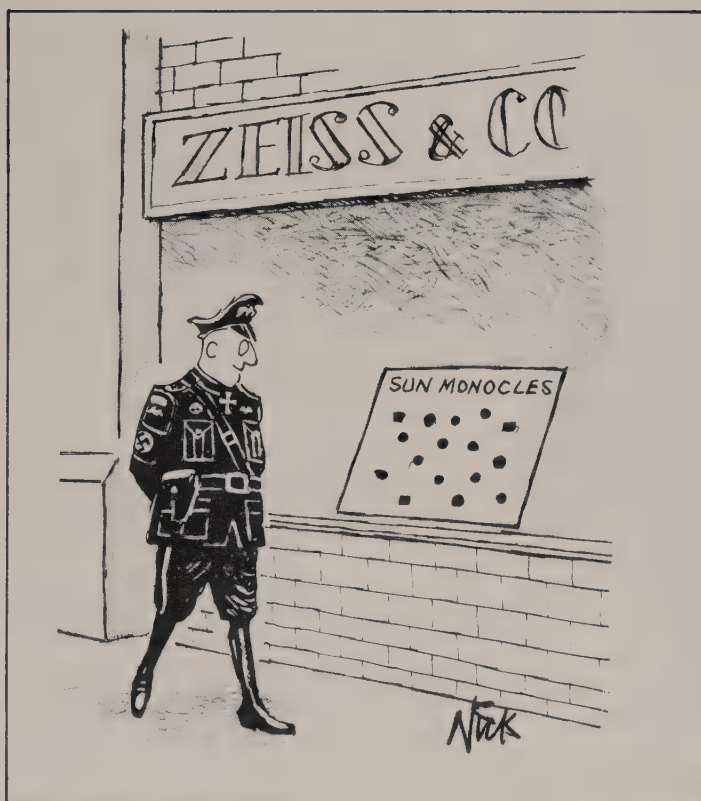
take off your skin and dance around in your bones. Tom Wolfe was there, so shy and charming that it was difficult to reconcile his manner with his wicked pen. The widow of the great drummer Zutty Singleton came, a sprightly old lady full of anecdotes: "Zooty always call everyone 'face', and sometimes someone would say, 'Hey Zooty why d'you call me 'face'?" and he'd say, "You got one hung on you ain't you!" We used to laugh so much . . ."

One night, quite without warning, a very large German sitting with his family suddenly jumped up and began, ponderously, to dance like a solemn drunken bear. You could almost hear the smacking of Bavarian thigh, the creak of *lederhosen*. When at last he collapsed back onto his chair, I told the audience we never knew who might come in. Tonight for example it was Nureyev . . . There was a moment or two between the audience's justifiably mild reaction and the time it took for his family to explain what I'd said to the German gentleman. Then he began to laugh as though he would never stop. "So vitty!" he shouted in between gasps, "So qvick ya!" Band and audience caught his hysteria and it was some time before we were able to continue.

After hours, when not too exhausted, we "hung out" and sometimes sat in along 54th Street especially at Jimmy Ryans, that long narrow room with its formal if faintly shop-worn headwaiter and its celebrated doorman; a cigar-smoking cross between Jimmy Durante and Quasimodo. The great Roy Eldrich looking, I'm happy to report, much fitter than last year, was blowing a storm. One night I made friends with a very beautiful and very bright Black hooker called Barbara, and she came several times to hear me sing. Another case of nature copying art. Whenever we enter a particularly staid-looking English town to do a Sunday concert, Chuck Smith announces that our hotel is famous for its "Black 'ookers."

Annie Ross was in town singing in the Village at Reno Sweeney's and gaining golden opinions. She was staying with Professor Irwin Cory and his wife in their house in a beautiful little mews called Sniffin Court which, although in bustling mid-town, had the atmosphere of a quiet backwater in Amsterdam. The Professor, a famous comedian, the mentor of Lennie Bruce, is a small waddling irascible person. His wife, a painter, is calm and motherly, seemingly indifferent to his constant complaining. His act, an indignant and very funny squawk against the corrupt absurdity of the world, is famous for its opening. After examining minutely, and from every angle, a piece of paper whose object is presumably to remind him of his routine, he pronounces with great emphasis the word "However . . ."

The Professor and his wife, Annie and myself, were guests at a party given for Annie by Mr and Mrs Sam Coslow in an apartment overlooking the East River and the dramatic cable car to Roosevelt Island where Mae West languished and Frank Hercules lives. Sam, frail but wiry, wrote, among many other hits, *Cocktails for Two*. As well as Annie, there was Sylvia Syms, the chanteuse who recently took Country Cousins by storm, Kenneth Haigh and his very glamorous West Indian wife, and en route to a premiere, the singer Bobby Short, with Gloria Vanderbilt in Hammer Film make-up on his arm. A great deal of drink was taken, and everybody did their party pieces. In between the acts the beautiful "Jewish princesses" discussed on which bit of Long Island they were going to spend the summer. I suppose that this party came



closest to my adolescent dream of New York: the huge apartment, the grand piano, the twinkling lights of Manhattan far below. Admittedly Noël and Gertie, the Lunts and Cole weren't present nor, as on one famous occasion at the Van Vechten, Bessie Smith, but it was close enough. It'd do.

Other expeditions were more louche. One night after I'd finished singing we cruised the quays of Greenwich Village, an area known as "The Meat Rack", where the gay scene parades its new moustached and macho image. We drank in a bar called "Peter Rabbit" an ambiance of which I felt Miss Beatrix Potter mightn't entirely have approved, but an attempt to gain access to "The Anvil", by reputation an extremely outré establishment, was frustrated by the fact that I wasn't wearing jeans. I complained of elitism and my guide, one Robert, was most persuasive, but it was no go. Resisting the blandishments of a black transvestite built like a tank and with a voice like a corncrake with bronchitis, I walked home.

I lunched with Sarah, Jamie and the now-retained Jo in the United Nations Building, that huge luxury hotel with its aspirations to peace expressed in grandiose pictures, tapestries and statues contributed by the squabbling nations and embellished with pious platitudes.

Lunched with Richard Merkin and Janet in a suitably art deco restaurant under the great metallic sweep of Brooklyn Bridge and with a sensational view of the towers of Manhattan on the further shore.

Walked through the glass-strewn streets of Brooklyn to the magnificent museum in its great park. Visited The Mud Club, New York's new and apparently infamous centre of punk activity but, on the night I was there, it was as low key as a fairly downbeat evening at Dingwalls.

Sarah lives on a street which is also the home of the New York chapter of the Hells Angels. She gave a party too, mostly expatriates, either British or Australian: the painter Mark Lancaster, Bob Hughes, the art critic and *Time and Life* executive, a girl called Tamara who works in publishing and is both formidably intelligent and rather touchingly vulnerable, or so I formed, over several meetings, the impression. Litres of Californian wine, while the Angels revved up in the dark street far below, and the English and Australian voices talked nostalgically of Cambridge and the Kings Road, Camden Town and Frank Randle.

One Sunday Jamie hired a "pimpmobile" and we drove 100 miles up Long Island to spend the day with two friends, Penny who is in advertising and her husband Cody, a film critic. They have a weekend bungalow on the edge of a small reed-fringed lake. I fished, caught several small perch and hooked and lost a pretty green species of pike called a pickering, while the great fresh water bass splashed about as though to prove, rather irritatingly, that they were there. I formed a liaison with Kate, Penny and Cody's six-year-old daughter, on the basis of an exchange of jokes.

On the strength of our relationship, this young lady, dressed up to the nines, insisted on a visit to Michael's to prove that I wasn't lying in claiming to be a jazz singer. She left under duress, after the first set, presumably convinced, but no less bemused.

Such a lot of bad temper in New York. Heard over my shoulder, a man sounding on the edge of apoplexy, "But what *really* burns me up . . ."

We finished at Michael's Pub on a very good Saturday, going on to Ryans with Jamie's last table, the whole band, and Barbara in tight fake leopard-skin disco pants. I thought how marvellous it would be to live in this multi-layered, ever stimulating city. To get to know it beyond the partial impressionism of the occasional visitor. Where else could they conceive, let alone build a district of 30-storey skyscrapers imitating in style Tudor country houses, or advertise "The Roach Motel", a trap for killing cock-roaches: "They check in," it says of a roach couple, she flirtatious, he lecherous with suitcases, "BUT THEY DON'T CHECK OUT!"

On my last Sunday I gave a small lunch for the British party at One Fifth on the proceeds of an article I'd written, at the suggestion of the journalist Jane Perlez, for *The Soho Weekly News*. Barbara was meant to come, "Sure I'll make it," but I suspect it just wasn't her hour; One Fifth, where I'd spent my first evening, and they play Bessie and Louis on the tapes in the bar. As the champagne cocktails came up I was overcome by alternate waves of elation and sadness. New York, New York you really truly are a wonderful town.

Not The Times Personal Column

Mortification of the Spirit, Foreign Travail, Used Beachwear, 10p per line; Tricycle Sundries, 5p; others, Free.

FOR THE TABLES ARE FULL OF VOMIT AND FILTHINESS,
SO THAT THERE IS NO PLACE CLEAN. Isaiah 28. v. 8.

Due circs. beyond our control End of World will not now take place as advertised (5.30 am, Aug. 4th 1979). Applications refund of return coach tkts Stonehenge, luncheon vouchers etc., to: "Friends of Doomsday", Arthur's Seat, Camelot, Som.

Farida: I divorce thee, I divorce thee, I divorce thee: Jafr.

To any Mid-East Gents whom it may concern: You have bought Ritz, Paris etc., now how about Private Temperance Hotel in exclusive area, genteel clientèle, many been with me since Sept. 1939? Now up for sale due rheumatism (left leg, elbow): Mrs Ernestine Vellum, Morpheus Towers, Liverpool.

Old Wehrmacht type (Harrow, Jesus) compelled move house unexpectedly, will dispose treasured WW2 souvenirs, militaria etc., inc: 78 rpm record "Vilia" (Merry Widow) H. Himmler (Soprano); Axminster Carpet (Slightly bitten); Luftwaffe Marshal's corset; charming original Austrian water-colour "Pussy's Dinner", signed "A.H."; Selection unusual lampshades. Seen Buenos Aires. Offers? Box 203.

Jerry: How come I never win?: Tom.

"The Assassination of J. F. Kennedy by President Richard Milhous Nixon as performed by the Inmates of the Leon Trotsky Eventide Home". Devised by Rattler Morgenkirsch. Coalhole Theatre Downstairs, Shaftesbury Ave. Burnley. Chairs 3p, 6p, 11p. Mature Paroled, Gay Senior Citizens half-price. Mats. Sundays 8.15 a.m.

Westminster personality, re-organising house, seeks dispose old china (Wedgwood). PO Box 99999999.

Film-actress, rich, 40's, convent-educated, seeks leading role working-class cause. Sundays preferred. Box 2079.

Ex-Butler, recently retired titled household, will teach deportment, decanting, condescension, telling curtain-lines etc., Box 937.

I pay top prices unwanted hearts, liver, kidneys etc., Strict confidence plain van calls collect promptly. Mrs E. Blouse, Surgical Spares Ltd. Cemetery Crescent, EC4.

Butch: Nobody knows the trouble I seen. Could stay that way. Make me an offer: Slasher.

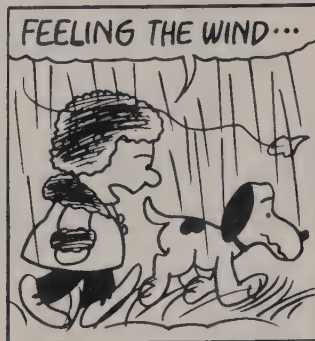
Won't someone give good home to 1st World War German "Big Bertha" long-range gun? Immac. cond. only one owner. Buyer to collect. "Stan's Auto-parts", Flowerpot Lane, Hyssop, Hants.

Middle East. Jerusalem, Cairo, Pyramids, American Express Offices. Seats still available July, August, Sept. Peace Treaty agreements. Pipedream Tours. Ring 01-799-734491789.

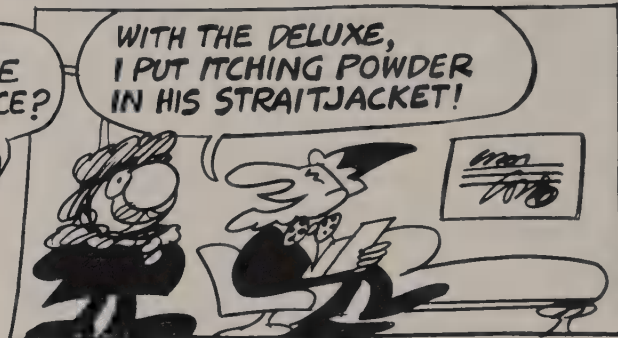
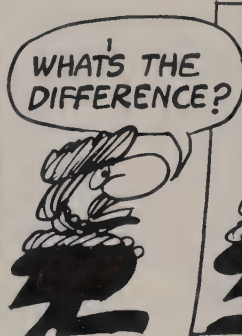
Crimean War Veterans: If you are not receiving quarterly News Letter, rap twice: Mrs Evadne Lumina and Gunga Din.

WHAT'S BLACK AND WHITE AND

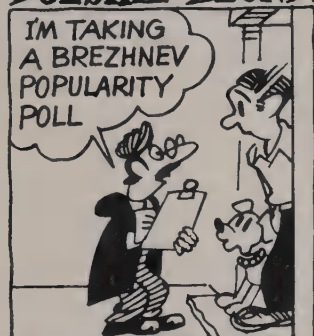
REDNUTS



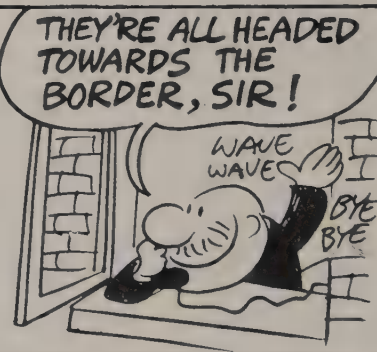
WIZARD OF KREM



BOLSHIE BLONDIE



COMRADE BRISTOW



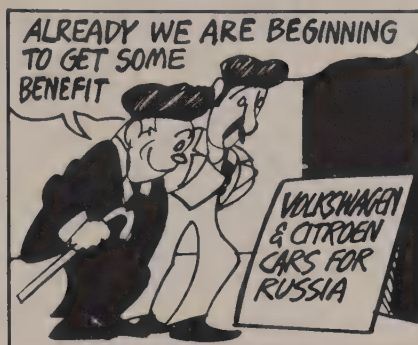
BEETLE BORIS



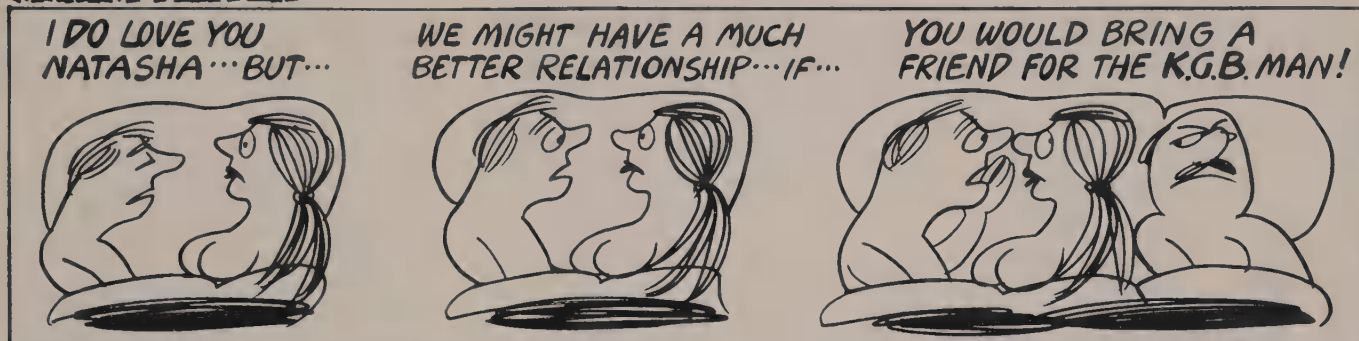
RED ALL OVER

Can Russian cartoonists respond to Pravda's plea for them to comment on contemporary problems? MAHOOD show them how it might be done.

BRINGING UP FEDOR



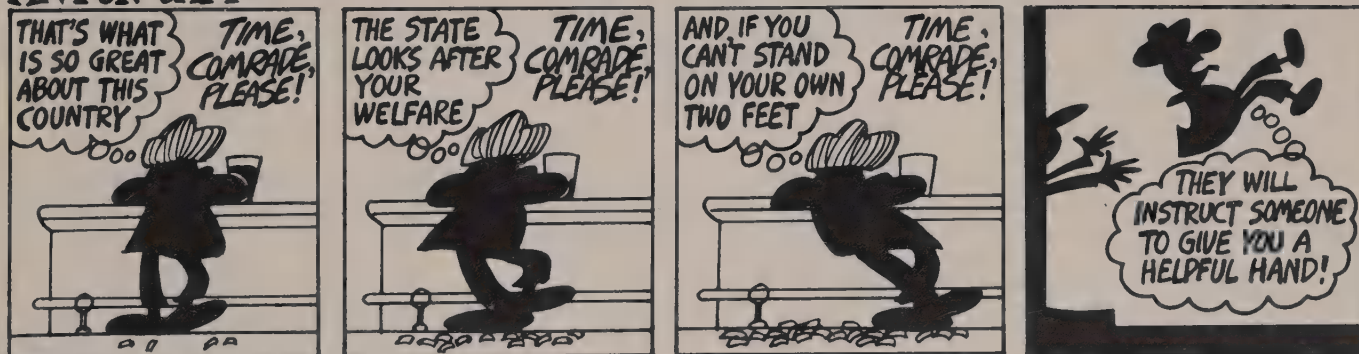
MAXIM FEIFFER



U.S.S.R.

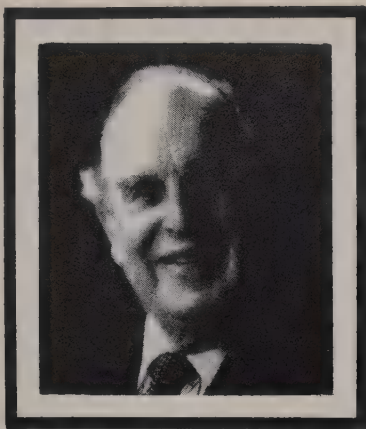


ANTON CAPP



POLITBUREAU POGO





ROBERT MORLEY

presents



My Public

THERE ARE ACTORS who shrink from recognition, playing a perpetual game of hide and seek. Alec Guinness, Paul Scofield, Elizabeth Taylor. No one, I told the latter, will know you in Leningrad; put a scarf over your hair and come for a walk, or come downstairs and dine with me in the hotel restaurant. The Russians stood on their chairs to get a better view. Miss Taylor ate very little.

No one has ever stood on a chair to see me. If there is any chance of my not being recognised, I stand on the chair. For everyone who can put a name to the face there are ten who can't. These are the ones who ask for autographs; mine is not the most legible signature, especially when scrawled on a newspaper in pencil. I leave them to puzzle it out. Some prefer to continue guessing, and expect me to halt until they have succeeded. "Don't tell me," they will urge, "I'll be there in a moment." "I have to be there sooner than that," I reply, "the name is Morley." "That's right," they tell me, "Christopher Morley," and we part friends.

Not all my colleagues enjoy such interruptions; they have other and more serious purposes in life than being quizzed or being told by strangers that the last

time he or she met them was on a plane bound for Jersey fifteen years ago. "I don't suppose you'll remember," they add for further identification, "they were plumb out of gin." It is, of course, always impossible to recall the incident, but I for one go on my way sustained by the hope that we shall meet again fifteen years from now, and one of us be sufficiently impressed to recall our second meeting.

Only on race courses do I refuse an autograph. Alistair Sim, among others, always refused to give them. He would explain, at considerable length, his objections to such a foolish request. He refused to litter the world with idiotic scraps of paper. Nowadays his signature is valuable. For some reason the Germans and the Americans are the most avid autograph collectors. They write from Bremen and Minnesota in facsimile enclosing international tokens and a half-dozen blank sheets. I never sign more than one; if, as one supposes, the sender is commercially orientated one doesn't want to flood the market.

Now and again you will be shaken by the hand by someone who knows your brother in Orpington. The fact that to the best of your knowledge you haven't a brother carries little weight on such occasions. The stranger departs, convinced you are lying and that you are estranged from your relative. You depart wondering if (as in the case of a theatrical friend) your father kept the existence of an entirely separate brood a secret. My friend was tempted to investigate further the chance remark of a book-seller, and discovered he had not one but several brothers and sisters or, more correctly, half-brothers and sisters. But in my case I have been content to let sleeping dogs lie.

Occasionally I get dead rats and even more unpleasant anonymous gifts through the post. I tell myself that it is unlikely that the former were contaminated by plague, and that I have reduced the intolerable pressure of some fellow lunatic. I refuse to accept it as a judgement on my performance. The older one grows the more pleased are one's contemporaries to see one, although not necessarily performing in the theatre. They are heightened by such encounters. There is a strong geriatric bond. Some recall how well one looks, others, an occasion many years ago when they first caught sight of one across the footlights. They strive to remember the name of the piece, or the date, or where they were at the time. It is often a slow process of gradual recall. One hesitates to prompt, even if one could. The parting is delayed but pleasurable. They go on their way remembering something entirely different. How fond they were of Aunt Maud who provided the matinee treat. One is left with the name of the leading lady on the tip of the tongue.

Americans make the best fans, perhaps because they always seem to have time on their hands. The native young pound along behind, thrust a cigarette packet into one's hand, and are off back to the shop. Worst of all are the temporarily

incapacitated who demand you sign the plaster on the fractured limb. I find it well-nigh impossible to scratch on plaster of Paris, yet others seem to manage.

Few ask for themselves; it is usually for a child: "My little grand-daughter will be so excited," they urge, but surely a candy bar or a toy is a more suitable present? I can hardly bear to contemplate the disappointment. "Guess what Grandpa has for you?" The small victim searching the pocket and coming up with a squashed plastic cup bearing the signature of someone of whom she is totally ignorant. "Don't cry dear, and grandpa will go out right away and bring back an iced lolly."

New Zealanders often produce passports; there is a certain satisfaction in writing on an official document. The suspicion that in so doing I may have invalidated it doesn't seem to occur to them, as it does to me. I should, I suppose be grateful that at least people don't seem to want to write their names on me, as they do on other ancient monuments—and I am.

Heavier citizens demand that I should follow them, to be introduced to their wives on the grounds that the latter often remarked on our striking resemblance. Functioning as I do as a sort of decoy duck for British Airways, I am hailed as a friendly counsellor whose advice has been accepted and on other occasions blamed for delays at Heathrow. Sometimes asked if I ever resent being better known for performances in television advertisements than as the definitive Hamlet of my time, no, I tell them bravely, in the world of commercials everything ends happily and that is precisely what I aim to do.

Of course, it has not been so easy for the children, and now the grandchildren, who are at times appalled by my constant bonhomie. My son once summed it all up. "There are times, Papa, when you made us cringe a little, but taking it by and large we got the service."



"I figure if all 65 show up, our family reunion should cost roughly \$975 for the day plus court costs."

Sex à la Carte

by FAY MASCHLER

ON television the other night there was a programme about maleness and femaleness. It kicked off with a film about a family on an island in the Caribbean where two or three of the children, having started off life as girls, at puberty, much to the pride and joy of their parents, turned into boys. Though it was perfectly obvious (details were *generously* displayed) that they had changed sex, the doctor interviewing the mother asked questions like "And what did the latterday boys play with when they were little?"

Having elicited the answer "dolls", he seemed satisfied that here was the incontrovertible truth that these kids had indeed begun life as girls. He was also gratified to discover that they had not baulked at washing clothes or fetching water. Later on in the programme, an Englishwoman who apparently has testicles (somewhere) was shown doing the washing-up. This was another piece of scientific evidence that she was in fact living her life as a woman.

Speculation as to where our gender stems from led to the question of whether there is a difference in male and female brains. Experiments in America on rats, and in Germany even more indefensible tests on some, understandably, depressed-looking homosexual man, seemed to prove that there might be something in it. Slides were shown with the section of male brain looking complicated and dense, like a mass of *vermicelli*, and the female brain less elaborately entwined, more like *linguine*. None of the experiments, which included dressing boy babies up in pink frilly dresses and handing them to goofy strangers who had to choose a toy with which to amuse him be it squeaking rubber hammer or cuddly dolly (guess which one the pseudo girl was handed? "She" bawled, of course, having just been plonked on the lap of a stranger, but proved to the tester, I suppose, that "her" boyish brain was offended) concerned themselves with preferences for food.

I felt there were two ways I could help these eminent doctors. One was to remind them of the truth that every child in my old school knew; that if you touch your elbows behind your back you will change sex. The other was to study the eating habits of men and women and then in the

case of confusion between the two, a simple menu test could help decide which sex the doubtful case might be encouraged to choose.

Waiters will tell you that women like things wrapped in pancakes. Perhaps it reminds them of their mothering role. Perhaps it is because, as a dish, it is soft and yielding and pale skinned, like themselves, they think. Anyway, men do not go for chicken in bechamel sauce enclosed in a pancake. On the whole they don't go for chicken at all. This guideline has become unreliable since chickens nowadays taste so dreary that no-one in their right mind orders chicken in a restaurant. So, it is a more useful test of faculties than gender.

Women eat more fish. A TWA airline steward, who had to load his plane with the various main course dishes that were offered to all passengers, but couldn't take on board enough of each item to supply everyone, told me that, consulting the passenger list, he was usually able to get the balance right. Certain names were obviously not going to choose pork, men would have steak, Fridays and women would up the numbers for fish.

Men do like eating steak and an ethologist would no doubt say that this was due to their repressed hunting instincts. By the same token they go for game, the rarer the better, and for raw meat as in steak tartare. Steak tartare also involves a dialogue with the waiter who must hover in attendance, adding a little more Tabasco, weeding out an over-abundance of capers, grinding on more grinds of the pepper mill, proffering a little taste of the mixture and then going back to mash in maybe another anchovy. It reminds the man of how his mother used to wait on him and stand aside watching his reaction to the first mouthful and be fulfilled or cast down accordingly.

Of course, men like anything their mothers used to make and this usually includes things like Eccles cakes and matzoh balls that no-one else will ever get quite right. Despite the fact that a man on a permanent diet will be infuriated if offered

fattening meals, he will eat his Mum's suet stodge and reproachfully let it be known that no-one else ever bothers to make it for him.

Women are not similarly hung-up on the food of their past. On the contrary, for that reason they might avoid obvious English cooking or items reminiscent of school dinners. Women, though, also like to be seen to be on a diet and restaurateurs, realizing this, have developed some ghastly dishes they know the would-be-thin women will order. They are mostly composed of cottage cheese, lettuce leaves, radishes and tinned pineapple. They often are garnished with one Maraschino cherry.

Afterwards these same canny restaurateurs will make sure there are plenty of creamy pastries on hand, for the women, having slimmed for most of the lunch, will reward themselves with a *mille feuille* or two. Men are not attracted to gâteaux or patisserie but they do like a pudding or a sweet. Steamed puddings are always welcome, but best of all is homemade custard. I recently offered a man some *Iles Flottantes*, which has a base of custard. He loved it. He ate all that was there and finally simply sank his face into the bowl to get at the edges. Men like chocolate mousse but according to Francis Crick a liking for chocolate is genetic. It is hardly necessary for survival yet everyone appreciates it and wants it. You don't have to trick children into eating their chocolate.

Vegetables are a less clear-cut test of sexual standing. I think men are a bit wary of peas and rarely order cauliflower. They are inordinately pleased to be offered broad beans which women don't seem to like or want to cook. They like asparagus but the obvious phallic explanation was upset for me by some wife at one of my dinners who protectively announced that her husband would not bother with the first course of leeks vinaigrette. Had I seen the *Horizon* programme at that point I would have known him to be in possession of a female brain. Instead I was indignant.



"So then she called me an egoist and went home to my mother-in-law."

In an ideal world...



BARRY NORMAN dreams of Ideal Cinema

LET me say for a start that anybody trying to introduce an ideal world around here is going to meet with my implacable opposition since there's a very fair chance that in an ideal world I'd be out of a job.

In an ideal world, after all, there would hardly be any need for film critics, would there, and what sort of ideal world would that be? I mean, look at it from my point of view—out there starving on the streets with a wife and mortgage to support, to say nothing of two dogs, two cats, two daughters and, for all I know, a long-lost, free-range guinea pig still roaming the local fields and liable to turn up again at any minute demanding its rights.

No, in an ideal world all films would be, by definition, ideal and that being so I can't see anyone being particularly anxious to employ me to announce this fact to a viewing public that knew it already. The basic problem, you see, is that one man's ideal world is nother man's penury.

Mind you, the prospect suggested above—the prospect of the total disappearance not only of me but also of every other film critic—probably comes as close as it's possible to get to Wardour Street's vision of an ideal world.

Wardour Street, which is where film distributors, exhibitors and publicists have their lairs, hates film critics. Film critics, says Wardour Street, are snide, though it doesn't use the word in its *Shorter O.E.D.* sense of counterfeit, sham or bogus.

What Wardour Street means by snide, as applied to film critics, is sarcastic, cynical, underhanded, dishonest, sadistic and quite

incapable of recognising sincerity, true beauty and the producer's undoubted altruism.

"Don't you realise," says Wardour Street, usually represented at such times by a publicist with a large scotch in his hand, "that Herb Omlet, God bless him, gave a year of his life to this picture? A whole, goddam year. And he did it for nothing—a lousy quarter of million up front and ten per cent of the gross. Then guys like you come along and piss so much ice-water all over it that he'll be lucky if that ten per cent brings him another couple of million."

It does seem a very small reward for a whole year of a film producer's life and in an ideal world no critic would have to face that kind of accusation or bear the heavy responsibility of knowing that a chance remark tossed into the public prints or uttered lightly on the airwaves had caused Herb Omlet to delay his move from the foothills of Sunset Boulevard to a mansion in Bel Air for another year, another film and another ten per cent.

So then for obvious reasons an ideal world is simply not good enough. Let us therefore project the idea a little further and consider an ideal, ideal world with room for us all—producers, publicists and critics alike. In such a world every film would be *Citizen Kane*, or possibly *La Grande*

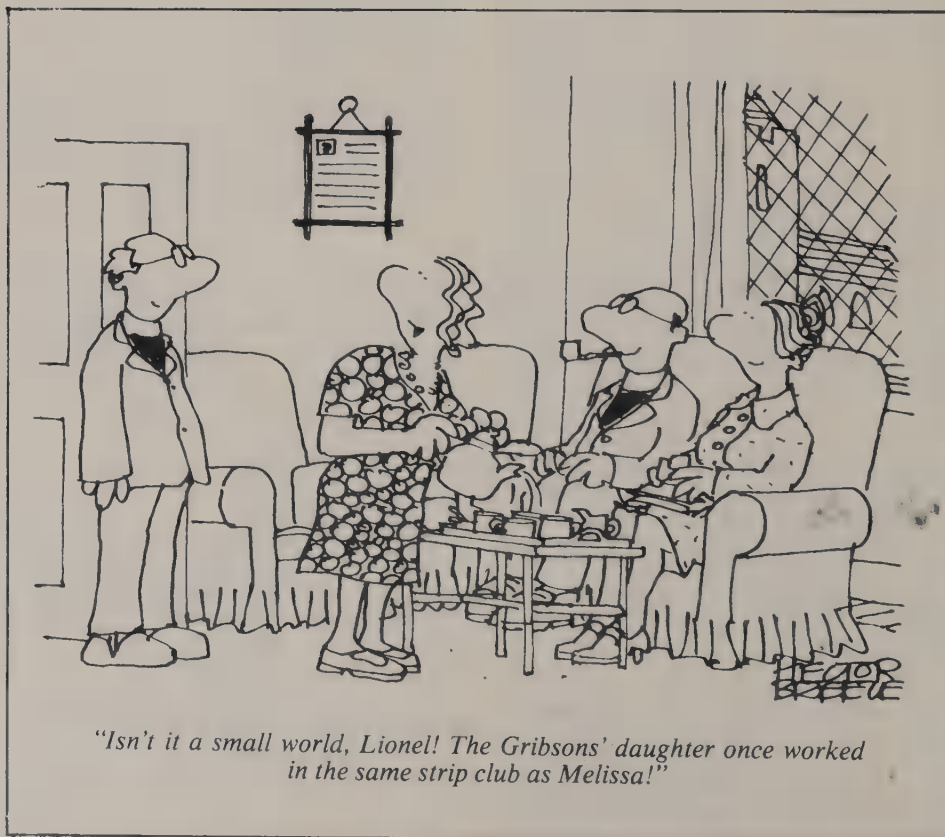
Illusion, or, if you like, *Ninotchka*, or . . .

Really I can't imagine anything more boring. It's not just the great films that make a critic's life supportable; the very bad ones play an equally important part, for there is nothing quite so satisfying as a truly rotten movie.

Does anybody remember *Zarak* and Victor Mature saying to Anita Ekberg: "It is written that a man must not marry his father's wife"? (I'm not entirely sure where else it's written but it was certainly written in the script of *Zarak*, thank goodness.) Or Anthony Perkins renaming Diana Ross *Mahogany* in the film of that title because "I can't think of a better word for something soft and warm and brown"? Search *Citizen Kane* as diligently as you like and you won't find more pleasurable dialogue than that.

So in this doubly ideal world there would be a place for really awful films as well as very good ones. But, great or dreadful, what would they be about? Well, they would be about conflict rather than violence, people rather than things, love rather than sex. You may think, because you probably don't go to the cinema very often, that that's what films are about now but, generally speaking, they're not and haven't been for some while.

It often seems to me that the ultimate in contemporary movies will concern a



murderously psychopathic android from another planet which alights from a space ship a mile long and proceeds to rape every woman on earth, having first brutally kicked to death any man with the temerity to oppose it.

The cinema's current obsession is with science fiction; its permanent obsession is with violence and sex.

Now I have no objection to sex in the cinema—not on the screen anyway, though in the auditorium it can be a trifle distracting. But I don't necessarily want to watch sex all the time.

Apart from anything else it's much over-rated as a spectator sport since the most dramatic result that can be achieved is a one-all draw.

Once upon a time in the cinema actresses remained vertical and fully-dressed from reel one to end credits, screen lovers were allowed to kiss for no more than eight seconds at a time (and then with their lips zipped up) and you only knew a seduction had taken place when a train suddenly

thundered into a tunnel.

I miss those trains thundering into tunnels. I haven't seen one in years. Nowadays you get the full, heaving seduction, usually in close-up. I know many an actress whose pubic hair is more easily recognisable than her face and I sometimes believe that the last leading lady permitted to keep her knickers on for the entire duration of a film was Greta Garbo.

What's more in those old days when the lovers moved into their final—and quite possibly their only—embrace you knew they were at least temporarily in love. Today as the picture fades out on the umpteenth act of copulation and the background music swells up over the heroine's last climactic moans all you can be sure of is that, in the modern idiom, they're getting their rocks off together.

No, hold on. I'm beginning to sound like Mary Whitehouse. What I mean is that a little bit of sex on the screen, like a little bit of SF, is perfectly acceptable. Violence hardly ever is. Explicit violence in the

movies is not only brutalising but, even worse, shows a depressing lack of imagination on the part of the film makers.

Thus in my doubly ideal world the movies, great and lousy, would occasionally deal with science fiction (or whatever the latest trendy genre happened to be), occasionally with gentle and erotic love-play and rarely, if at all, with violence. Unfortunately that would mean the cinemas would be virtually empty since box office returns indicate that the patrons are very fond of violence, even more fond of violent sex and probably most fond of violent sex among the crew of a spaceship involved in inter-planetary warfare.

Well, in an ideal world you couldn't have empty cinemas. I think we'd better start again. In a *trebly* ideal world . . .



"I don't suppose you fancy half an hour on the Parkinson show?"

BODIES

DAVID BURKE *as David*
ANGELA DOWN *as Helen*
DINSDALE LANDEN *as Mervyn*
GWEN WATFORD *as Anne*



Hewison-theatre

ONCE IN A LIFETIME

RICHARD GRIFFITHS *as George Lewis*
DAVID SUCHET *as Herman Glogauer*
ZOE WANAMAKER *as May Daniels*





LAST OF THE RED HOT LOVERS
 SUSAN ENGEL as *Elaine Navazio*
 BRIDGET TURNER as *Jeannette Fisher*
 GEORGINA HALE as *Bobbi Michele*
 LEE MONTAGUE as *Barney Cashman*



DISPATCHES
 JACK SHEPHERD as *The Correspondent*



"It might have been worse—he could have played the saxophone."



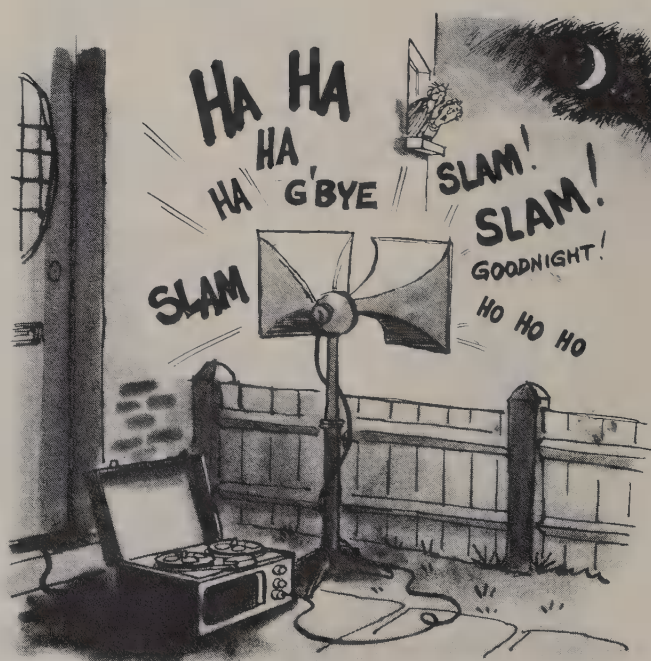
Spring Offensive

McMURTRY's neighbours come out of hibernation

"Hello, Mr Tomkins? Sorry to interrupt your holiday in Torremolinos, but you are being burgled."



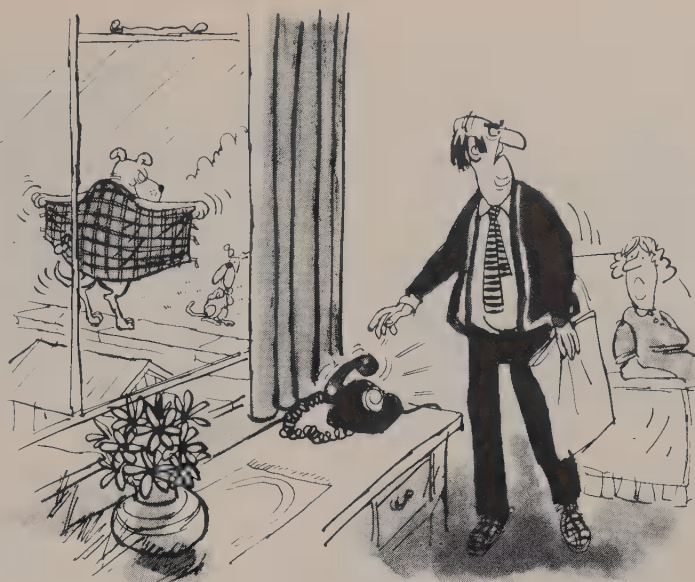
"We have got your gnome and unless you trim your side of the hedge by Sunday..."



"I think it's a recording of our after-dinner party last night."



"They've missed us out of their prayers again!"



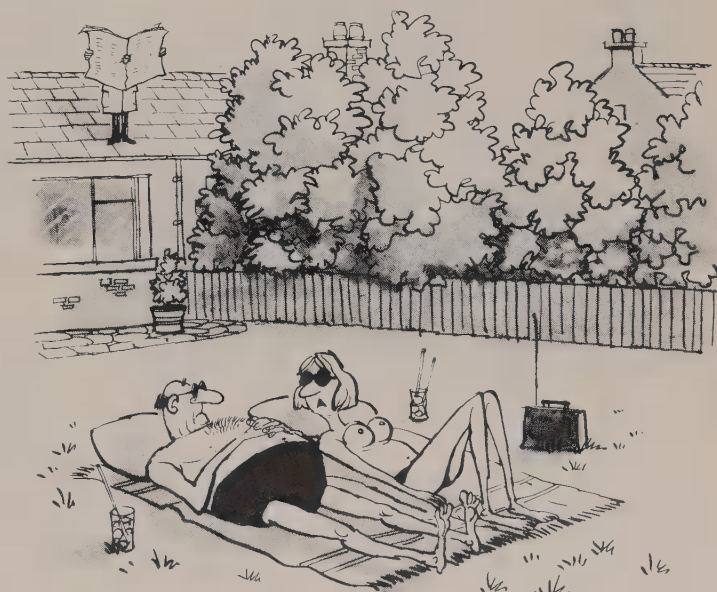
"Ten to one the dog's dug up Mrs Perkins's geraniums again."



"Have you no consideration? Last week it was ambulances tearing up and down, slamming doors!"



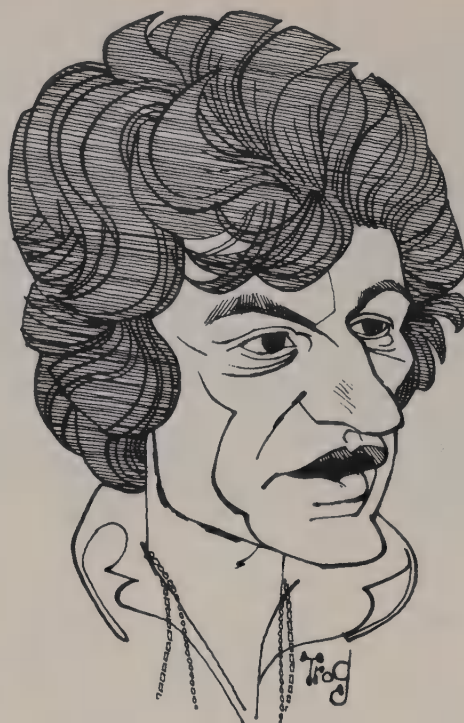
"Well, I didn't hear it tweet."



"Mr Taylor is reading his newspaper on our bit of roof again, dear."

Gloss Finish

Fashionable and fashion-conscious photographer
LORD LICHFIELD
talks to DAVID TAYLOR



ONE'S upbringing was practically Victorian. Maturity has been more baroque. Always one has been accustomed to a life of exquisite style and usually to a life of great wealth. One's not at all dim—know's perfectly well one's an easy target: the trendy, picture-snapping, racy-living Earl and all that. One shrugs off any tart asides, like water off the proverbial whatsit's back, and gets on with one's professional and private lives—both of them immensely full—simply because one has always been suffused with this conviction that there really isn't a moment to lose.

Take today: one's sat here in a frightfully smart bit of Campden Hill and oh, Lord knows how one might describe it: a bijou, creeper-clad house in a street so tiny it could be mews, interior largely muted greys set off with splashes of bold plum, furnished in a smokey glass and chromium style, I suppose, packed with gadgetry which one adores, desk and chair in functional black, corduroy highlights, map of the world with gaily-coloured pins showing where one's photographed on location (simply everywhere except, inexplicably, Wales and some of the Gabon) and a much-thumbed *Reader's Digest Great World Atlas*, much-buttoned telephones galore, a digital clock which—blast it—has stopped, snazzy little Jap TV, pin-sharp Olympus camera gear (one's on contract to them as well as Burberry's), beautifully-turned collections of one's work and—can hardly miss this—photographs gummed to every available square inch.

Where were we? Taking today. Right—back from Scotland overnight by jet to this, one's metropolitan working pad, whilst Leonora took herself and the children in the Range-Rover down to Shugborough, one's seat. Must look in on *Vogue* and talk to Nescafé, be in Eastbourne at first light to photograph macs against the Seven Sisters, got a job in Singapore coming up and have

just done a talk in Monte Carlo—no, sorry, that's tomorrow—and must try and wangle a seat on Concorde to save time on the way back from the Far East—terrific amount of work has just come in—plus there's this exhibition just opened: the collected works of Bailey, Beaton, Brandt and Lichfield (crikey, sounds like a firm of commissioners for oaths, does it not, with oneself the junior partner) and that's right, it's the show they publicised by chartering a light aircraft and chucking out leaflets to flutter down all over the West End, a charity do, in aid of spina bifida kids.

Look, I'm sorry, I should have done a formal introduction. This is Thomas Patrick John Anson, 5th Earl of Lichfield, 6th Viscount Anson, 6th Baron Soberton, cousin of the Queen, married the old Duke of Westminster's daughter, photographer chap, everyone calls him Patrick. Fact is, he's not at all formal: used to cause the most frightful rows by prating about in embroidered Mr Fish shirts and kingfisher tweeds, had a fetching hair-do, all at a time when that sort of thing wasn't really on for a chap of pedigree just out of the Grenadiers: people took him for a Sixties dilettante.

Doesn't mind the Sixties bit, but dilettante smarts. Patrick Lichfield has always been conscious of an obligation to work twice as hard at his chosen career in order to persuade colleagues one's not just amusing oneself. His great mate is David Bailey—opposite end of the social scale—and when first they met at *Vogue* they did nothing for months on end except exchange furtive glances: Patrick shy of being in the presence of grass-roots genius, David half-suspecting he was up against a toffee-nosed toff. Finally they were introduced underneath a Paris bedstead, each having dived for cover during an episode we'd better not dwell on now that his Lordship is a respectable family man.

Respectability at Shugborough, when he was a lad, was of the Victorian sort, I began by suggesting, for Patrick was reared in an atmosphere of quintessentially upper-crust barminess, largely influenced by his septuagenarian grandfather, the 4th Earl, who ruled the household, staff and family, with preposterously despotic vigour—a feudally-minded, eccentric martinet who meant kindly but often disguised it well.

Lest Patrick should take on cissy airs, for instance, he was from his earliest days despatched by the 4th Earl to a room in one of Shugborough's outside towers, so perishing cold that for six months of the year the ink froze over in the inkwells. Patrick took his food in the nursery until seven, then graduated to the servants' hall until he was fourteen and finally considered fit to join the family at table. He started off there in disgrace. Grandfather instructed him to pass the port off the sideboard and Patrick, to date experienced only in decanting pop, held on to the stopper and shook vigorously to bring up the sparkle. The butler was told, by a written note, to fetch a fresh supply. The butler always got told what to do in writing—the 4th Earl never uttered to staff, even when in the same room. His style was succinct. Patrick still has an example which reads: *Beans cold. Butler farted.*

Escape into a less cloistered world came by way of prep school, Harrow and Sandhurst. The Discipline was, and remains, useful. The travel was enjoyable. For the rest, says Patrick Lichfield, the thing he remembers most clearly about the army is leaving it at 2.30 pm, 24th October, 1962. He was 23.

He was also lumbered with Shugborough. Not that he doesn't adore the place—one finds it totally relaxing—but the 4th Earl had in the 1950s made over all 9,000 acres of it to Lord Lichfield's father. Father died first, followed two years later by the 4th Earl, a tragedy further clouded by the fact that Father had remarried only three months before his departure. The results of this tortuous piece of probate were that Patrick, though an Earl, was strapped for cash to maintain the family seat which had lost two lots of crippling death duties in two years, and he could not hope to pursue his passion for photography with any real zest until he had seen to re-roofing Shugborough as a necessary condition before it could be handed over to the National Trust. Fortunately, he was greatly helped with the

hand-over by his step-mother who, he admits, probably loved the place more than did any of the family. She moved to Cornwall. Patrick moved into a private wing.

He also moved into London society and into an informal apprenticeship with Dmitri Kasterine, the beautifully-spoken ace photographer much featured in *Radio Times*, who taught him all the rudiments of the photographic craft. Contacts brought him to *Vogue*, for which he still has great sentimental affection, and the glittery world of fashion photography. People, he now says, remain his favourite subject: he has never entertained being a sharp-end photographer assigned to the horror that is war, nor until recently has he favoured meaningful snaps of harsh or cryptically-cropped landscapes. Society pictures by Lichfield appeared in *Queen* (now *Harper's* and same) and he graduated to the week-end supplements.

He has never sniffed at advertising. Probably the best-known snaps by Lord Lichfield are self-timed snaps of Lord Lichfield, belted up in a Burberry, with a couple of stout labradors in one hand and an expensive-looking blonde in the other. He also went through a frightfully commercial patch of being seen in a succession of flash cars, not to mention flash motor-bikes, the latter resulting in his being



admitted to casualty no fewer than thirteen times. He has always suffered, he avers, from a rather childish tendency to suppose that everyone's a jolly good sort and was, for a time, in danger of "making rather a Horlicks of one's life" in over-earnest pursuit of fun. Marriage changes a chap,

though. Today he's totally house-trained, he says, besotted with his children (one of each) and at pains successfully to combine his private and professional lives. Leonora, though musical and a gifted illustrator, does not share his passion for pictures, he says. This is a positive advantage. One has the benefit of perspective.

One also has—though it does seem churlish to drag it in—total freedom from financial worry. Not that it stops one worrying—one's "an optimistic worrier"—because we're back to the old chestnut of is he, or is he not, taking his photography seriously? One unequivocally is. One has a staff of five and work up to *here*. One is emphatically not in the business of gumming happy snaps into a vellum-bound album. One is clicking, against stiff and unforgiving competition, and determined to uphold one's (justified) reputation as a photo pro.

One is, after all, a Taurus. And superstitious as hell. Wet as it may sound, one does experience, from time to time, inexplicable insights—OK—rather paranormal things. But there honestly isn't the time to get bogged down with *that*. One's only sudden feeling right now is that the chauffeur-driven Merc is outside and the traffic may be hell between here and lunch. As seems always to be the case, one must tidy one's self up and dash.



"About one in ten of the Christmas cards sent in Britain this year will have been printed in Russia."—Daily Telegraph.

E. S. TURNER investigates . . .

RED STAR OVER BETHLEHEM



Christmas warms our hearts again.

Lo, the earth is clean and white!

What a wondrous world to gain!

Workers of the world, unite!

(K. Marx: arr. Rumbolovsky)

This Christmas card is one of a series printed in the Uzbekistan Soviet Socialist Republic and proceeds from the sale will be divided among the following charities:

The KGB General Comforts Fund:

The Philby Family Trust:

The *Pravda* Press-Room's Annual Black Sea Wayzgoose;

The Decayed Intourist Guides' Sunset Homes, Archangel;

The Samovar Polishers' Benevolent Fund;

The Mission for Disseminating Atheism among the Volga Boatmen;

The Warsaw Pact Steering Committee Widows' and Orphans' Fund;

The Trans-Siberian Passengers' Relief and Sustentation Fund;

The USSR Foreign Currency General Reserve.



'Twas the night before Christmas and deep in the snow
The lights of the Gulag were dimly aglow.

The warders beamed down on the somnolent forms
Of those who had proudly completed their norms.
From gaining and spending they all were excused;

Then one tough old rascal got up and enthused:
"I'd rather be kicked every hour by a mule
Than face the sheer hell of a westernised Yule."

Tonight the bells of Christmas
Peal out across the town.
O happy bells and holy!
They fairly get you down.

Afar in Moscow's belfries
The bells their silence keep,
And there at least the Comrades
Can get a bit of sleep.

Sing a song of Christmas!
 What do we desire?
 Arson for the Parson,
 Lynching for the Squire,
 Cankers for the Bankers,
 Landlords strung from oaks.
 Peace on earth will follow.
 Let's be at it, folks!

(Old English, traditional)

Proceeds from the sale of this card will be used to help the deprived and underprivileged to help themselves—to whatever is going.

The Wise Men to the Kremlin rode.
 (My dear, another drinkie?)
 Above their heads a red Star glowed,
 Both luminous and dinky.
 And there a Great Idea was born.
 Remember it this Christmas morn,
 And treat with every sort of scorn
 The Wise Men of Helsinki.

Proceeds from the sale of this card will go to enlighten the ignorant and culturally backward in all lands and introduce them to the delights of dialectical materialism.

Peace upon Earth!
 A truce to all that's fissile.
 Stick to the missive
 And forget the missile.

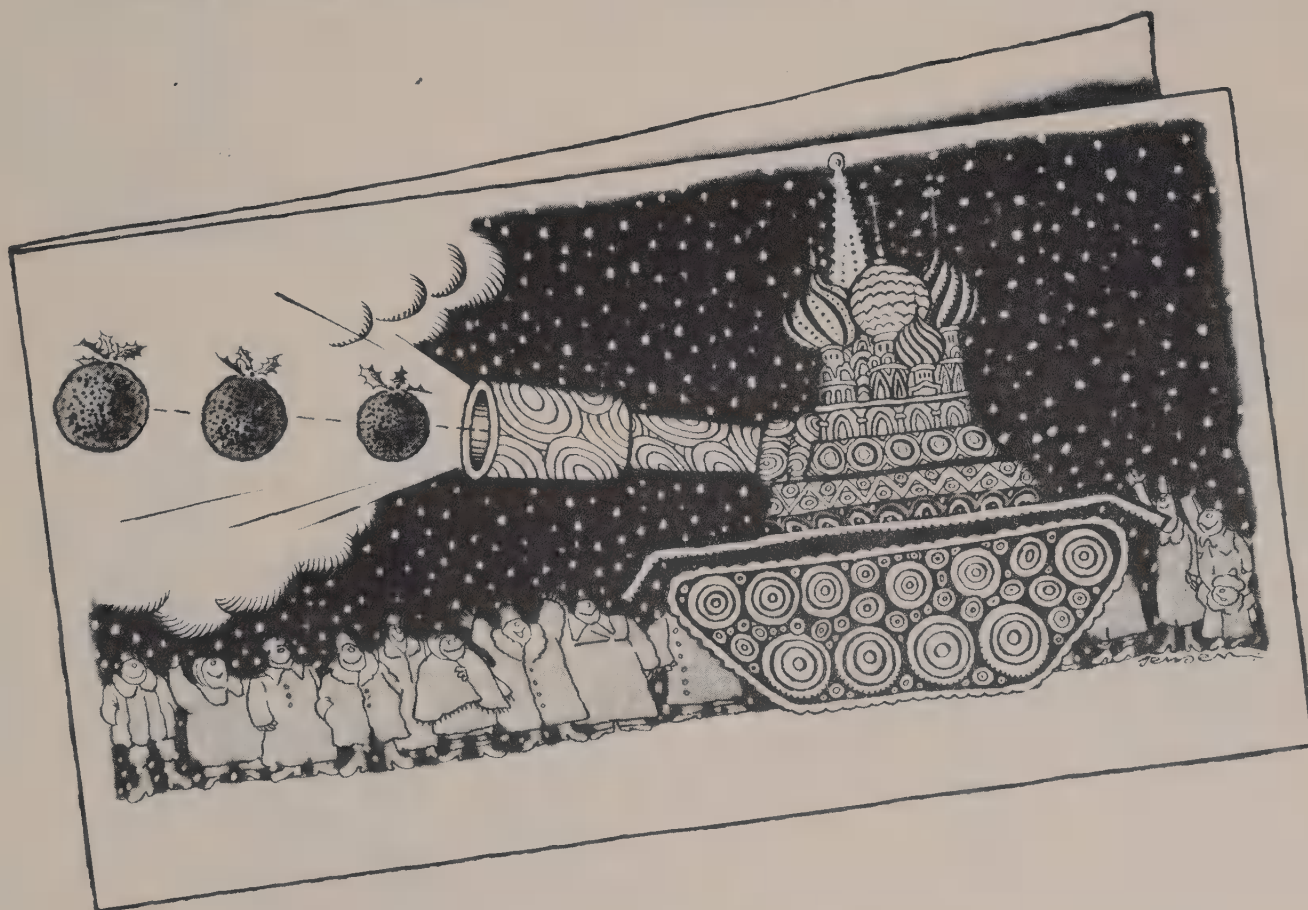
Proceeds from this card will go to Soviet nuclear research and development.

Heap on more logs—the wind is shrill.
 The shrieks from clinics strike a chill.
 But let the misfits shout their fill,
 We'll keep our Christmas merry still.

(Walter Scott: arr. Rumbolovsky)

Pile high the fragrant Yuletide logs.
 Soon now the Old Year closes.
 Revisionists and running dogs
 Go round with running noses;
 Hyenas, jackals flee the scene.
 And by the way, is YOUR nose clean?

Christian men, be prayerful
 As you carve the joint.
 Try to be more careful
 Where your missiles point.

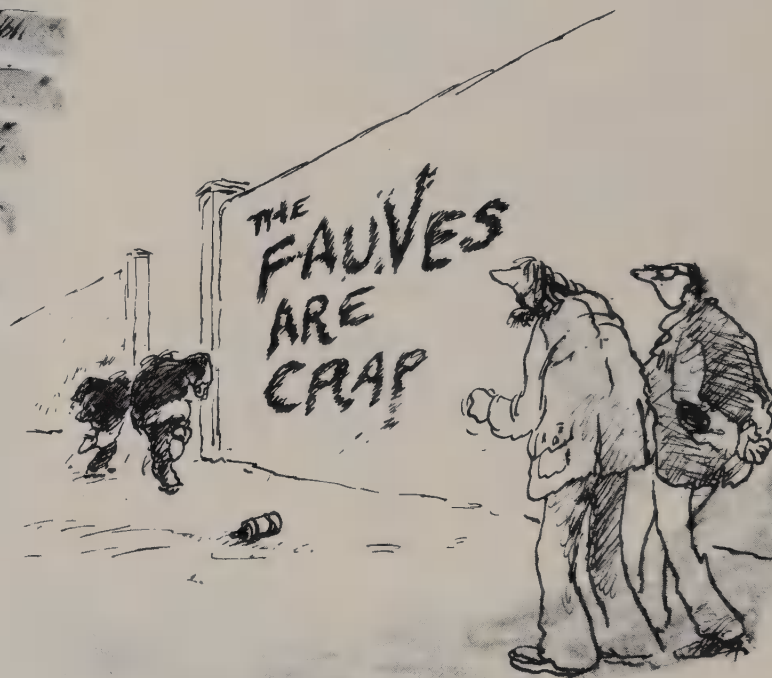




BILL STOTT:

YOUNG AT ART

"It might be freedom in space to him, but to me it will always be 12 metres of chicken wire, 7.5 litres of Polycell, 102 Daily Expresses, 51 Observers and 7 Exchange & Marts."

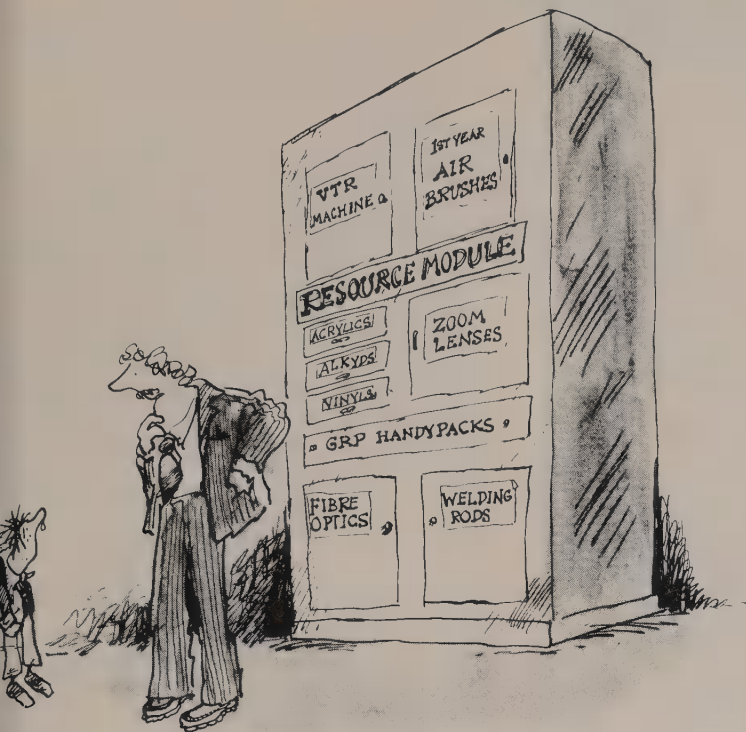


"It's true, then? You ~~are~~ attempting the O-Level Art written paper this year?"



"Right—where's the Cow Gum Monitor?"

"It's amazing the way the world of art can be reduced to 'light on one side, dark on the other', isn't it?"



"A pencil? No, 'fraid you've got me there, Hopkinson."



"Ah! Now, when I wrote that your Wayne was an insensitive, clumsy nuisance, what I meant was..."



"Oh, she's always talking about you, Mr Baldwin—art, art, art, it's all she thinks about—quiet as a mouse, scribblin' away—never bothers with tellu—do you know? She can draw Andy Capp just like that—I defy anybody to tell the difference—Rolf Harris isn't in it..."



"Ah! Battersby—just knock and see if Mr Hartley's free, would you?"

METROPOLIS



NIGEL DEMPSTER'S Paris

COLLECTING a writ, bearding an old enemy and visiting old friends took me to Paris in the unfashionable month of August, a favourite time when the city belongs to those discerning folk who have no wish to fight for the last square metre of Riviera *plage* or join nearly 40 million tourists on roads to other holiday "havens".

The British have always enjoyed a perverse affinity with the Gallic race—"That sweet enemy, France" in the phrase of Sir Philip Sidney four centuries ago—but sneer as they may at our insularity, cuisine ("the British only have one sauce, mint") and obduracy in remaining firmly unilingual, our flag flies high just now in the French capital.

Thanks to the former ambassador, Sir Nico Henderson (yanked out of retirement by Mrs T to take over on Massachusetts Avenue from Peter Jay), the British Embassy is renowned for the finest hospitality and, yes, food in the diplomatic circle—a far cry from the days when another incumbent, Duff Cooper, appointed my ex father-in-law to some minor diplomatic post solely to accompany him on drinking forays.

The only profitable hotel chain in Paris is run by Sir Charles Forte whose flagship *Plaza Athénée* (more of which, anon) is generally regarded as the city's finest. And

presiding over the best regarded wine academy is a young Englishman, Steven Spurrier, whose family fortune originated not in vines but gravel pits.

The Courts of the Kings of France were always liberally populated by the British for reasons of both forced exile and choice and it is to the arms of the republic that their most discerning successors, the tax exiles, have been coming.

In order to benefit from the sale of Warwick Castle and many of its choice contents, Lord Brooke moved his residence to Paris and is to be found most days taking a solitary lunch at *The Travellers*, the French equivalent of *White's*.

Viscount Rothermere, protecting the Harmsworth newspaper fortune estimated in excess of £50 million, has plonked himself on a fashionable island overlooked by Notre Dame, next door to a nightclub called, suitably, *Mylord*.

Until his death last month Sir Charles Clore, who took his fortune out of Britain solely to leave it intact to a variety of charities associated with Israel, lived here as does his son Alan who pursues an interest in racehorses and breeding at the many racetracks in and around Paris. Longchamp, in the heart of the Bois, is generally regarded as Europe's finest racecourse and Sunday racing, apparently a non-starter in Britain, has been long established.

But to return to the matter of Sir Charles Forte and the *Plaza Athénée*, an affair which started with the summary sacking of the hotel's General Manager, M. Paul Bougenaux, last month.

Once a washer-up in the *Plaza* bar, Bougenaux rose to head porter and when Trust Houses Forte took over the run-down chain consisting of the *Plaza*, *Georges V* and *de la Tremoille* for \$26 million, he was promoted and became general manager 10 years ago.

Sir Charles, at the time of the purchase, to mollify President de Gaulle so that the deal could go through, started a scheme whereby all the workers in the three hotels would share 26% of the profits.

"I took advice from the British Embassy and from an expert in labour relations in France and they gave me the scheme to put in the hotels," says Sir Charles, whose chambermaids are now reputed to receive £140 a week—plus around £35 a week from the scheme.

Bougenaux has always claimed the scheme as his own invention and even received the *Légion d'Honneur* for it. Clearly he regarded himself with increasing self-importance, for it came to the attention of Sir Charles that Bougenaux had been instrumental in hiring a manager for The

Dorchester Hotel in London, a few yards down Park Lane from Forte's own Grosvenor House.

"The man was sacked for this. Quite simply, whilst working for us, he was at the same time acting for an Arab Group for whom he engaged, in New York, a manager for The Dorchester," says Forte. "Now a great smokescreen has been put up saying that the sacking was really all to do with the worker participation scheme."

Bougenaux, 54, who was originally offered (now withdrawn) a handshake of around £230,000 by Forte, has been spreading the word that the company is planning to sell the hotels—along with an associated hotel laundry concern—thereby ending the profitable scheme for the workers.

To counter this Sir Charles, at a cost of £5,000, took out a full page advert in *Le Monde* to deny this canard and state that his company had spent £12.5 million on improvements to the hotels, was extremely satisfied with the investment and was, far from selling, planning further purchases in other areas of France.

"A handshake was offered to Bougenaux because we understood that he had not been accepting money from the Arab group. But further things have come up and we have written to our solicitors," Sir Charles tells me. "The sacking stays and the manager of the *Plaza* has been appointed acting general manager in Bougenaux's place."

When the group was up for sale originally, Bougenaux led a spirited march at the head of the workers to ensure that their jobs would not be in jeopardy. Will they now reciprocate in his hour of need?

"There will be no strike," said one. "We obviously don't want to kill the golden goose."



"I'm afraid he's really drunk."

Fleet Street colleagues like Auberon Waugh have always rejoiced in the desirous aspect of French libel laws—he informs me that the maximum penalty is a 100 franc award—but they have obviously never fallen foul of an altogether more sinister legal gambit involving invasion of privacy.

My writ came from “Son Altesse le Prince Karim AGA KHAN” following an item in which I made so bold as to identify two ladies, other than his wife, to whom he was, *ahem*, close. It was served on the Paris office of the publication in which the story appeared and claimed damages of 1 million francs for “invasion of privacy”, a charge for which the truth is no defence whatsoever!

It has been explained to me that this curious legal ruse was reactivated by President Pompidou to protect persons in public life from having revealed personal aspects which have no bearing on their public duties or position. It will be remembered that many rumours of a salacious nature circulated about Pompidou during his presidency and a certain self-interest appears to have motivated his thinking on the matter.

Who is the Aga Khan and what “public” position does he hold in France where he is best known as a racehorse owner?

He is the grandson of that obese, toad-like voluptuary who was a leading member of the British Turf (winning several Epsom Derbies) and succeeded his grandfather as the fourth Aga Khan in July 1957 over the head of his father, Prince Aly Khan, who was soon to die in Paris at the wheel of a Ferrari with a pretty model at his side.

Karim, or K to his friends, is the 49th Imam of the Nizari Ismaili sect of Shia Muslims and claims descent from Fatima, daughter of The Prophet. Aged 42, he is the elder son of Aly's marriage to the late Lord Churston's daughter Joan, uses British nationality to the extent of once gaining admission to the British ski team and, certainly until the downfall of the Shah, who conferred on him the title H.R.H., travelled on an Iranian diplomatic passport.

There are around 20 million Ismailis in some 25 countries, but few in France where K lives in Moghul-magnificence having just built two replica 17th century châteaux at Gouvieux, near Chantilly, at an estimated cost of £20 million. The location is convenient for his racing stables—including stallions, brood mares, yearlings and horses in training he is reputed to own some 600 or 700 horses.

He lives during the summer at his Costa Smeralda (Emerald Coast) holiday development in Sardinia, travelling between the two and various racecourses where his animals are running (Deauville at the moment) in a £3 million Grumman Gulfstream II executive jet from which the only luxury missing is a throne.

After several, well-publicised romances (including those with the two ladies mentioned in the offending article), Karim



“But honey, can we afford a pool?”

married a former English debutante whose previous marriage to the Marquis of Bute's brother, Lord James Crichton-Stuart, had been dissolved. They now have three children—Prince Rahim, seven, destined to become the 50th descendant of The Prophet, Princess Zahra and Prince Hussein.

The Khan fortune is estimated at around £500 million and all Ismailis, many of whom are prosperous traders and members of the middle classes in their various communities, contribute “one or two percent” of their annual incomes to the Imamate.

This has been invested throughout the world via a company called Industrial Promotion Services and involvements include: diamonds, underwear, retread tires, newspapers and printing presses, hotels, trousers, suitcases, saucepans, onyx, construction, cold storage, life insurance, airlines, mines, safaris and beach sandals.

All of which was taken into consideration, no doubt, when the case was heard in the Tribunal de Grande Instance de Paris by three magistrates, Messieurs Justafre and Barat and Madame Martzloff.

Well, justice of a sort seems to have been done. Papers delivered to me this week inform me that the Aga's “privacy”, far from being worth the 1 million francs he claimed, rated, in the justices' opinion, a more modest award of 40,000 francs. Even so, a ridiculous expense to bear when the veracity of the original story was never questioned.

WHEN Steven Spurrier, a contemporary of mine and an old friend, married a lovely lady from the Landed Gentry, called Bella, and moved to Paris a decade ago to start up his own wine business, we all nodded wisely and expected to see him return, chastened, within a year or so.

But, happily, he has prospered and his *Caves de la Madeleine* is one of the best known and patronised wine firms in the city. The wine academy, which he opened six years ago to instruct the French in the subtleties of their own national product, has flourished equally to the extent that there is always a lengthy waiting list to enrol.

Spurrier, whose family, apart from the gravel pit windfall, was involved in the formation of what is now British Leyland, lost one fortune in speculations before he arrived in Paris and, understandably, suffered many travails before achieving his present success.

It's an expensive business now that French wines are fetching prices, years before they are suitable for drinking, some 200% and 300% up on last year and freak storms have virtually wiped out the 1979 vintage to further accelerate inflationary spirals. What to do? Follow Spurrier's example—when last seen he was quaffing a Château Lafite the cost of which worked out at £1,333 a glass.

Nowhere more than in Paris do *bon vivants* do justice to their motto: “The best revenge is to live well.”

PRIVY COUNCIL

Two senior council officers were wrongly disciplined for taking pity on an 83-year-old widow and decorating the ceiling of her home, an industrial tribunal was told yesterday.

They were moved to other jobs on lower salaries after complaints from officials of the Union of Construction Allied Trades and Technicians.

A council disciplinary hearing found that the men knew, or should have known, that the ceilings were "blackened" because of a dispute.

Daily Telegraph

Minutes of special branch meeting, Slagton Boro' Maintenance Operatives' Branch, Amalgamated Socy of Ragged Trousered Philanthropists.

Bro Kneape reported that he had had it up to here. He had had no satisfaction as regards the thingy, he had made representations at personnel officer level until he was blue in the face, and honestly, he was not lying, it was like talking to a brick bleeding wall. Bro Kneape gave up, he really did.

Bro Cooney said personnel officers, he had a four-year-old nipper what could fill the post better, he kidded branch meeting not.

Bro Ratchet said if bleeding Liver-sausage (Mr N. D. Liversedge, Co-ordinator of Personnel, Slagton Borough Council) called himself a perso-bleeding-nel officer, his (Bro Ratchet's) arse was a perso-bleeding-nel officer.

Bro Eames, on a point of procedure, asked if branch was dead sure the thingy was Liver-sausage's pigeon.

Bro Kneape said if Bro Eames could handle negotiations better than what they was being handled already, he (Bro Kneape) would be only too glad to chuck the job in there and then. You slaved your fingers to the bone (reported Bro Kneape), doing paperwork and Christ knew what, then when you reported to branch, that was the bleeding thanks you got.

Bro Eames said he was only asking, there was no need for Bro Kneape to get the bleeding hump.

Branch chairman asked if branch meeting could be a bit more constructive.

Bro Kneape reported look, he had tried the Borough Engineer's Dept, he had tried

the Borough Health Dept, he had tried Welfare; The Chief Executive, he had been down the Town Hall and had a go at him personal; and they had all told Bro Kneape the self-same bleeding thing. The thingy was Liver-sausage's pigeon. Definitely. No question about it whatsoever in any shape or form.

On a point of information, Bro Tompsett asked if he could ask what the thingy was that Bro Kneape was making reference to, or was it supposed to be a closely-guarded secret which you had to belong to a certain clique before you knew what was going on.

Branch chairman asked Bro Tompsett to withdraw grossly offensive remark about cliques.

Bro Tompsett said that was funny, coming from branch chairman. Everybody knew what clique he was talking about. There was Bro Kneape, there was Bro Ratchet, there was Bro Cooney, and there was the branch bleeding chairman, and they was like that, the whole pack of them. They ran the branch like it was their own private bleeding club. However, he had been told to withdraw so he withdrew. He would still like to know what the thingy was when it was at home, if it was not much trouble, pardon him for breathing.

Bro Kneape said that Jesus Christ, some mothers did have them. He thought everyone knew what the thingy was. It was the outside carsey at No. 3 Gravel Depot. The bog. The toilet, as he expected Bro Ratchet would prefer to call it. If Bro Ratchet had ever come to meetings (continued Bro Kneape) he would know that demands for an inside jakes at No. 3 Gravel Depot had been pursued at branch level till they was sick of hearing about it.

Bro Tompsett asked how, not being a bleeding conjuror, he could be expected to attend branch meetings on a regular basis when his wife was in dock with her leg. Perhaps Bro Kneape did not know what it was like to have four kids and get their tea ready. However, Bro Tompsett was straying from the point.

Branch chairman said too bloody true.

Bro Tompsett said the point was, what had the bleeding No. 3 bleeding Gravel Depot to do with branch? They was all skilled painters and decorators, else they was plumbers, else they was electricians, else they was carpenters. One thing they was not, and that was Nigerian bleeding road-sweepers, what he believed had jurisdiction for filling the bleeding Council gravel bins. So (concluded Bro Tompsett) why should it matter a sod to branch whether No. 3 Gravel Depot's carsey was outside, inside, or on the bleeding roof?

Bro Ratchet said that was right, pull the bleeding ladder up.

Bro Tompsett maintained that he had asked a straight question and was entitled to a straight answer.

Inviting Bro Tompsett to piss off, Bro Kneape said that he was an item of female anatomy. If Bro Tompsett would poke the wax out of his ears he would be aware that branch was supporting representations made at branch level by the Nat Union of



"And do you think this will last any longer than the winemaking?"

Snowshifters. It was reciprocal. Branch supported the snowshifters' claim for an inside carsey at No. 3 Gravel Depot, and the snowshifters would support any claim branch might make in the future, it might be a wage claim, it might be a turps allowances claim for getting paint out of their hair, it might be anything. Only that turd Liver-sausage did not want to know. Speaking in a personal capacity, Bro Kneape said that he had had a bellyful.

Bro Cooney proposed that branch should stop frigging about and give Liver-sausage an ultimatum: either he got the snowshifters' thingy implemented by Monday or it was industrial action.

On a point of order, Bro Tompssett asked why branch should take industrial action on behalf of snowshifters, when snowshifters was not taking industrial action themselves.

Bro Booney said it was the principle, wasn't it?

Bro Gibbs said that he had taken full cognizance of all what had been said, and he was not knocking Bro Cooney's call for industrial action, the reverse in fact. Sod them, was what Bro Gibbs said. But branch had to take into consideration what the media would do with it. He could just see the headlines in the *Daily Telegraph*: "COUNCIL WORKERS IN BOG STRIKE."

Bro Kneape, through the chair, asked if he could ask Bro Gibbs one question and one question only. Was he in support of industrial action by a decision democratically arrived at, or was he going to be a blackleg all his life?

Bro Gibbs said that if Bro Kneape called him a blackleg he would knock his (Bro Kneape's) twatting head off. He would remind branch that he (Bro Gibbs) had taken part in more industrial action than

Bro Kneape had had hot dinners. If Bro Kneape would listen for a bleeding change instead of shooting off his bleeding cake-hole, he would know that all Bro Gibbs was saying was that there was industrial disputes and industrial disputes. Instead of all-out strike, thus taking wage-packets out of the mouths of wives and kiddies, what was wrong with a bit of selective action, nudge nudge, wink wink, say no more?

Branch chairman asked Bro Gibbs what he was rabbiting on about.

Bro Gibbs said werl, what about No, 17, Hugh Dalton Approach?

Branch chairman asked what a-bleeding-bout it?

Bro Gibbs said werl, he (Bro Gibbs) had a works docket, didn't he?

Branch chairman said so bleeding what, why didn't Bro Gibbs tell the branch something it didn't bleeding know. He (branch chairman) would bet he could tell Bro Gibbs what works docket it was, as well. It was that job he should have done two bleeding weeks ago: replace cracked toilet, connect to waste pipe, seal, adjust to existing cistern, replace tiled surround where rotted or cracked, and make good.

Bro Gibbs said right then, what was wrong with not doing it?

Branch chairman said Bro Gibbs *hadn't* done it, that was the point he was trying to make.

Urging branch chairman to use his loaf, Bro Gibbs said that what he meant was, make it official. Black the leaking carsey at No. 17 Hugh Dalton Approach until such time as Liver-sausage agreed to take decisive action as regards the carsey at No. 3 Gravel Depot. If that wasn't poetic justice, Bro Gibbs did not know what was.

Bro Kneape said stone the bleeding crows, he would ask the secretary to delete



"Ah come fer mah boy."

from the minutes all he had said about Bro Gibbs, he was a bleeding marvel.

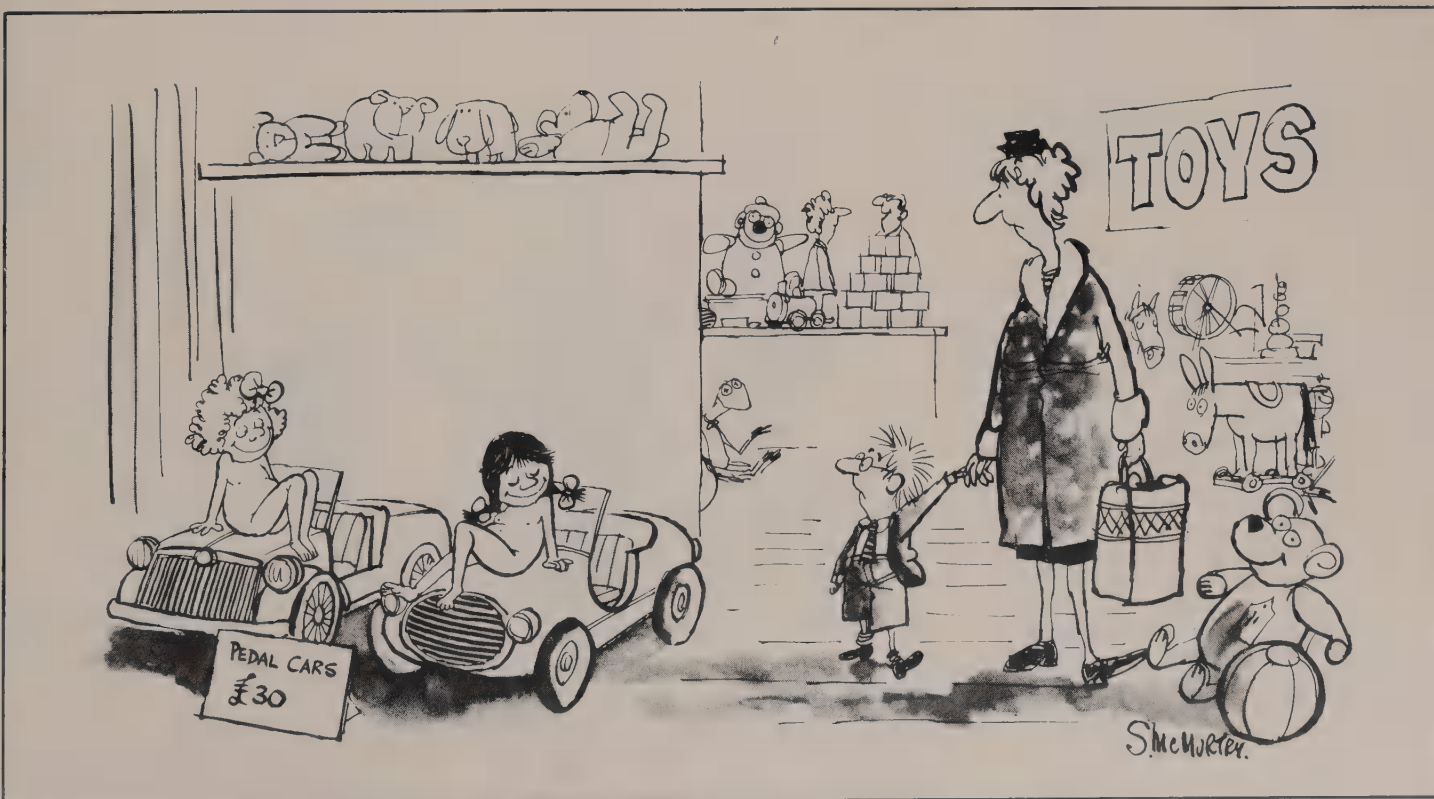
On a point of order, Bro Tompssett asked through the chair if Bro Gibbs happened to know who lived at No. 17 Hugh Dalton Approach.

Bro Gibbs said he did not know, some old cow.

Bro Tompssett informed branch that it was his (Bro Tompssett's) mother.

Bro's Kneape, Ratchet, Cooney and Gibbs and the branch chairman concurred that that was it, that was all it wanted, talk about laugh, they (Bro's Kneape, Ratchet, Cooney and Gibbs and branch chairman) could have died.

On an overwhelming show of hands, branch recommended that leading carsey at No. 17 Hugh Dalton Approach do be blacked forthwith.



BASIL BOOTHROYD:

What the Paupers Say

England built an extremely Cornhill Test against India at strong position in the first Edgbaston yesterday.

The Guardian

DON'T you find you're beginning to talk like iT?"

"Hot that I've noticed."

"I think I am. Bound to happen, the stuff they pirnt nowadays. It's well known that language changes with suage. Have butter some."

"I'm find, thqnks."

"You're not sliming??"

"Not lilkey, old b.oy. I suppose it's the newt echnology."

"But they're not using it, are they£. If they were we'd still have the good old *Tomes*. Sorry, that was meant to be a question mark."

"What was question meant to be a mark question?"

"That £ sing."

"It didn't metter."

"That's the dagner. Thinking it doesn't matter. It's just a clam acceptance of reduced standards all round. People not swearing letters. Flithy carriages on bRitish Rail."

"And no stumard."

"So sorry. I've given up asking for it. Wailer! Have we come mustard can, please!"

"No, no. Don't broutle."

"It's no trouble."

"I'm managing with the Rowcester sauce."

"Rubbish. You're my gust, after all. I'll catch his eye in a minute. Water!"

"I've nearly finished."

"All the same."

"Thinks very muck, then."

"Besides, it should be on the table with the salt and pepper and the rest of the truce. It's just slockness. What do you think of the brugundy?"

"Excelllent. Cheers."

"Choors. One of the better years, 19333. Do you and Shrilly news many of the papertakes?"

"We teak them. Can't say we read them

from coven to coven."

"Dose anyone?"

"The train with the time on them pass, of course, I."

"Quile, quile."

"And Shirley puts after I believe her breakfast ten feet up for in the morning minutes. Before she starts the housework. But she only reads the *Snu*. By the way, this is very gold steak."

"The food's pretty gold here. It's the service that's so diabocally. WaiTer."

"Don't bother, shonetly. I've fished now."

"Frightfully rossy about that."

"It wasn't impotent."

"If he does finally come over we can order the sweats. They have quit a god trolley here."

"Thoning more for me."

"Nothing? Crap Suzette? Fruit solid?"

"oN, really. Of course, the trouble with the papers—"

"Wartsbeeries are still in season."

"I haven't a very sweett toot. The rou- bles with the parpes—"

"The chooseboard, then."

"Not hanks. But don't let me sto% you."

"If you're quite sore."

"Absolutely. With quite happy I'd quite be coffee coff couf cojjee."

"Gool. You were s@ying?"

"Only that the trouble with the papers is the same old stories day after daaay."

"I couldn't argue more. Nothing but wag claims and prising rices pirces. Never mind the same old borin.g names. Moss

Ovens, Moggie Thatcher."

"President Crater."

"Jack Lunch, Ian Parsley. Still, let's not get on to Northern Iceland."

"Isn't he Southern, actually, Jock Lunch? Not that its matter."

"It should matter. That's I was saying what. You're put off reading. Get out of tough. It's mainly the sports the report sprot pages with me, then mostly crocket."

"Same here. Life's too shot.r. You saw we built an extemely Cornhill?"

"At strong position in the first Edgbaston, yes. According to Joan Arlott."

"Otherwise I've more or less gone back to reading navels."

"They're better printed than newspapers."

"On the whale, yes."

"Except they sometimes stop suddenly in the middle of a. Ah, there you are, walter. Just coffee, please. Unless my guess would my guest like barndy a glass of randy?"

"Well, a small eno."

"Twot hen. And my bill. What cards do you take, American Empress, Dinners Clu?"

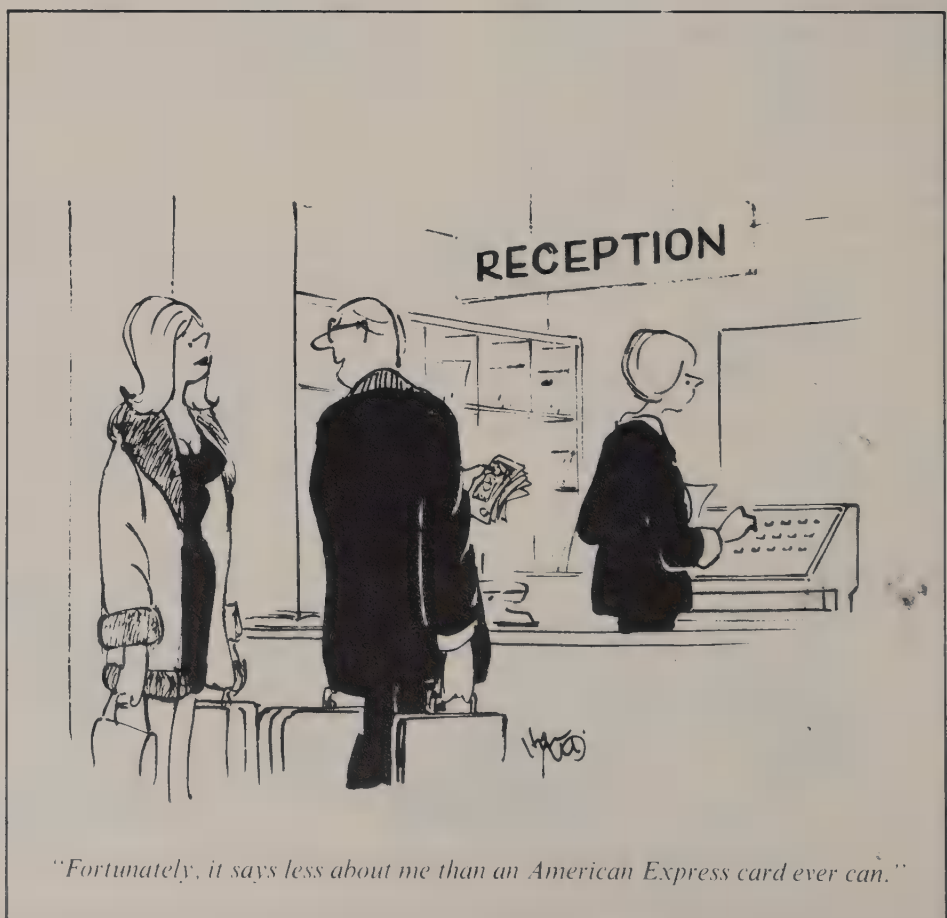
"Well, thank you, Gorge, I enjoyed that. You must chuln with me soon."

"Name the da₄."

"Next Tuesday?"

"The sixteenth? I'll look froward."

"Let's note a make now of it, shrdlu we? We can have a good another talk good klat another good tal. k."



"Fortunately, it says less about me than an American Express card ever can."

ALAN COREN:

Sunday Times

Dear Diary: Wife gone off on 4.58, saw wife onto train. Thank God corridor train, since two men in wife's compartment; do not want wife raped in tunnel, wife just spent £18 on hair.

Drive Mini back from station, Mini go clunk-clunk-clunk, could be big end, bloody mad spending £18 on hair when big end going, not to mention £85 on weekend, plus new outfit, underwear, Madame Rochas refill, all that. Could be looking at wrong

Pull into drive. Mini go dong-dong-sigh.
Sit for a bit.

Parkinson etc not fancying Myrna anyhow, Myrna slightly bandy, Parkinson etc got pick of crop, not going to risk reputations for slightly bandy woman from Pangbourne.

Go into house. Daily sniffs, gives long peculiar stare. Nigel (12) giggles, Amanda (9) falls down gasping, Nigel gives me sharp poke in ribs, Mum gone off with Parky,

editorial assistant person waiting downstairs, we're all going out for dinner. Click.

Finish second scotch.

Editorial assistant. Well, of course. Parkinson etc all waiting to see if something better than Myrna turning up. Editorial assistant, pimples, eyeshield, nipping in quick; fell on his feet, never look a gift horse, these slightly bandy women from Pangbourne can be very grateful, har-har, catch my drift?

LEAVE YOUR MATHS HOME. The fame John musical Chicago, meeting the to help him look after the Express coach too. Last week We c ndle onto Life Si-

end of two hundred quid, can't understand women, wife could spend weekend with sister in Reigate, nice walks round Reigate, don't need platinum highlights for sister, Gucci tote-bag, perfume, Janet Reger bra. Just packet of garibaldi for sister's dog, 25p.

Stop at lights. Mini go clunk-wheeze-
ping. Come to that, why wife need new bra
for *Sunday Times*?

Glad train non-stop, no risk wife will get off at Reading, meet Trevor Howard in buffet; different these days, wives not going to Odeon with Trevor Howard, wives nipping off to Railway Hotel, chop-chop, thank you, Trev.

Lights go green, Mini go oink-crunch-clang, lurch into High Street, stop at zebra for Felicity Hewitt, Felicity Hewitt give strange grin, what the hell Felicity Hewitt know? Felicity Hewitt regularly popping off for weekend Cordon Bleu courses, and I don't think, pull this one it got bells on, ha-bloody-ha, Felicity Hewitt can't even boil kettle. Charlie Hewitt need head examining.

Myrna not like that, though. Myrna decent sort, flat heels, Ovaltine, furniture always spotless. Oxfam collector. Preposterous, idea of Myrna leaping into sack with Parkinson, Harold Evans, Barry Norman,

then, nudge, nudge, wink, wink, know what I mean?

Smack Nigel's head, Nigel shrieks, Amanda says if there's a divorce can she have two-wheeler and calculator and toy cooker that really cooks? Nigel says can he go and live with Mum and Parky, Parky knows Kevin Keegan and Geoff Boycott and Muhammad Ali, you don't know bloody anybody.

Daily comes for money, sniffs, fag-ash falls on just-Hoovered carpet, daily wishes to inform me that if wife does not come back I should not expect her to do no extra, daily only got one pair of hands, daily never seen ■ house without self-cleaning oven before.

Cook dinner. Nigel says what's this black stuff in the beans, Amanda says cor, poo, ugh, *liver*, wurgh, Nigel says when Parky sets Mum up in her penthouse they'll have McDonalds sent in every day.

Amanda does cartwheel.

Send kids to bed, pour large scotch.

8.15. Phone rings, well here I am in the hotel, just had nice bath.

Another bath? You had bath this morning? What do you need bath for? Where's Parkinson? Is that Harold Evans laughing?

Who? Look, I must go, there's this

Pour third scotch. Feel small vein in temple beginning to pulse, like hot lugworm: what the hell *Sunday Times* playing at, *Sunday Times* should be up Khyber Pass phoning copy under fire, should be scouring Government ineptitude, commercial corruption, union anarchy (Who Is This Man They Call Red Robbo?), managerial blinkerdom; *Sunday Times* should be hammering IOC, explaining failure of CAP, profiling Botham, exposing Kennedy (Who Is This Man They Call Yellow Submarine?), dissecting Liverpool midfield. What *Sunday Times* doing in Laker market, packaging Slightly Bandy Tours from Pangbourne at £85 ■ nob?

Go to bed. Dream. Parkinson, Norman, Evans chasing Myrna round Viking Exhibition, Myrna go clunk-clunk-clunk, slowing down.

Dear Diary: Up early, dawn chorus, spring coming, everything at it like knives, birds, worms, dogs, fish. Journalists.

Letterbox clacks. Bring in papers. Major new series in *Sun*. Enliven your marriage by wearing funny hat in bed.

Is this all journalists bloody do all day?

Kids come down for breakfast, urgh.



"I think we're lost. This is the same country
we went through an hour ago."

what's this fat on bacon, why's my egg broken, this toast tastes like coal, bet the butler brings you breakfast in bed at Parkinson's; bet there's sausages; bet there's pancakes; well I bet Barry Norman has Smarties for breakfast, *by the pool!*

Kids rush off, whispering, giggling, to watch TV. Kids *real* dream is Myrna running off with Noel Edmonds. Or possibly Kermit.

Wash up. Why all heroes now TV heroes? What about quantity surveyors? Alternatively (better), why no prime-time TV series called *Quantity Surveyor and Hutch*? Thrill-packed episodes, will fifteen hundredweight cast-iron guttering arrive in time, is this a case for double-glazing?

9.45. Phone rings, allo, Meestair Dodsworth?

Jesus, oily foreigner! South American correspondent? Restaurant critic?

Yes?

I have your wife.

What?

Hello? Roger? It's me. Look, what's your Access number? I'm here at Yves Saint Laurent, they've got this absolutely marvellous, well the fact is I've left my cheque-book at home, but they'll do it against an Access number. Roger? Hello?

Think fast. Myrna going mad, could buy up shop, but if Access number withheld, what Myrna doing next? Myrna running weeping to Parkinson, there, there my dear, pray allow me, bah goom, etc. Next thing, Myrna in changing cubicle *with* saviour...

Give number. By the way, Myrna, who...

Click.

Walk into garden. New buds greening. Is this Myrna re-birth? New underwear, new overwear, all those movies, someone whipping off Myrna's horn-rims; why, Mrs Dodsworth, you're *beautiful!*

Is today day Myrna having lunch with Jilly Cooper?

If so, no problems there, can settle down

to scarifying lawn, put down Evergreen 80, dig over the

All Cooper's articles about ex-lovers.

What happening to Cooper's ex-lovers?

Are Cooper's ex-lovers at loose end, no pun intended?

Hello, Myrna, I'm Jilly, this is the Hon. Dudley Fink-Gargleberry, he's been absolutely *dying* to meet you, Myrna's from Pangbourne, Dudders!

No! I say! Pangbourne? My absolutely favourite spot!

Before you know it, they're off on Myrna's Red Rover ticket, back seat upstairs, 29 bus, takes two hours to get to South Mimms, I say, Myrna, isn't this *toppin'*? On a bus!

Throw down fork.

11.20. Pubs open.

Get in Mini. Mini go burp-clatter-groan.

Get out. Kick Mini. Fink-Gargleberry probably got scarlet Ferrari, doesn't need Red Rover ticket, probably in Brighton by now, I say, Myrna, isn't this *toppin'*? In a pedalo!

Grind teeth, Walk down towards Rat & Cockle. Pass fishmonger. Fish would be nice for lunch, grilled sole, all kids like fish, be all right here, fishmonger known us years, no rubbish.

Morning, squire, on your tod? Being mum? Where's the better 'alf, then?

Off for the weekend. Can you do three nice...

Off for the weekend? Did you 'ear that Kevin? Mrs D's only off for the weekend, isn't she?

Allo, allo, allo! Off for the weekend, Dennis? Lovely woman, Mrs D.

Radiant, Kevin. You're a lucky man, Mr D.

I hope he is, Dennis, har-har-har!

Har-har-har! Three soles was it, squire?

Walk back with fish, slowly. Gone off pub.

Cook fish.

Fish? Yegh, poo, vomit-vomit! Fish for lunch?

Sole misses son, hits wall, large oval stain on Sanderson, bang shin on chair in grab for son, kids out of room, split left and right like clay pigeons at front door, hobble to door, kids vanished.

Pick sole shards out of shagpile.

Take bottle of scotch to bed.

Dream. Radiant Myrna, rising out of Brighton foam, naked as Botticelli's Venus, but standing on grilled sole. Brighton's nude beach packed with *Sunday Times* contributors, stitchless, cheering.

Wake up, muck sweat, phone ringing.

Roger? Just had to ring you, Viking Exhibition absolutely stunning! Wish you'd been here. Can't wait to get back and tell you about it. Must ring off, only got one five-pee. Click.

Good old Myrna. Wishes I'd been there. Myrna all over. Here was I worrying! Green-eyed monster!

Go downstairs, kids gazing at *Doctor Who*, might take kids to McDonalds, great sense of humour, my kids, all that Parkinson stuff!

Doorbell chimes.

Charlie and Felicity Hewitt, with bottle.

Thought you'd be lonely, old man, Myrna away, all that.

Me? *Lonely*? Me? Wonderful to see you, though, come in, sit down, chuck coats anywhere, Myrna just phoned, said Viking Exhibition was great.

Viking Exhibition? She told me she was going to her sister in Reigate.

What?

No, no, Felicity, she said she was going on that Cordon Bleu course.

Charlie, I've just remembered, I left the oven on; must dash back, Roger, sorry, come on, Charlie, don't want the house to burn down, ha-ha-ha!

Slam.

Pick up Hewitt's bottle. Going to be a long night.



"Now, here are the news headlines again, with subtitles for viewers who are unable to believe their ears."



ON THE HOUSE

WHAT a formidable group of women we are sending to the European Parliament! People say that our delegation will be unbalanced, but the Europeans are certain to get an extremely vivid impression of British womanhood in full cry. They make Simone Veil, France's top woman at the Assembly, look like Miss Tiggywinkle.

Take Mrs Janey Buchan, the wife of Labour MP Norman Buchan and now in the Euro parliament. She doesn't just talk the hind leg off a donkey—she could reduce an entire herd of Highland cattle to complete limbleness. But, like her countrywoman, Mrs Winnie Ewing, a lovely lady. Bumpers of champagne flowed in the bars of Strasbourg, I gather, when Mrs Ewing's victory was announced. Mrs Barbara Castle could demolish a gang of Gaullists or Walloon Christian Democrats or whatever with one flick of her fetching red wig. And there is a special pleasure for the new parliamentarians with the arrival of Mrs Elaine Kellett-Bowman, complete with husband. Mrs Kellett-Bowman is already MP for Lancaster, and has a voice so high-pitched that only bats can hear the more forceful passages. Whenever she speaks in the Commons, Labour MPs imitate the howling of dogs and can keep up the noise for several minutes if necessary.

The word from the Cabinet is that the most dynamic woman of all, the Prime Minister, is in firm command. Sturdy Ministers with years of political combat training quail at her every word. When she visits the Members' Dining Room hordes of sycophants cluster round her, anxiously hanging on her lightest utterance. One Tory MP said that talking to her was to be trapped, like a rabbit in headlamps.

Apparently the knack is to let her start the conversation. This will often be upon some surprisingly banal topic, such as school holidays or the weather. You then agree firmly with her, perhaps expanding on her remarks, but never letting the faintest hint of controversy creep into what you say, e.g. "Oh I don't know, I think you can often lay a patterned carpet with striped wallpaper." This is what the Americans call a no-no, and will be remembered and held against you.

The promotion of Harold Lever to the House of Lords recalls the famous story about his rich wife, Diane. This is one of those apocryphal stories which is never actually denied. Lever is supposed to have

been asked, "Would you have married your wife if she hadn't had £2,000,000?" and replied "I would have married her if she had had only £1,000,000."

He is an addict of both bridge and backgammon. He will play backgammon until he is so tired that he has to ask his opponent to shake the dice for him. He is also an incurable optimist. His main job in the Labour Government, in which he was Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, was to tell Jim Callaghan that everything would be all right in the end. He was, of course, mistaken, but the job is still a valuable and necessary one.

One of the delights of the European elections and the low turnout was the suffering it caused the Euro-bores. Whatever your views on British membership (a colleague, Mr David Flintham of the *Northern Echo*, is so opposed that he sent off for a postal vote in order to spoil his ballot paper. He wrote across it "This election is a nonsense" in two languages), whatever your views, there is something peculiarly awful about the Euro-bores, their assumption of greater moral virtue than the rest of us have, the way they can discuss goats' cheese intervention prices in four languages.

Recently a colleague from *The Times* was attending a stupendously boring Euro-reception given by the Liberals. Up hove one of the great Euro-fanatics, Lord Gladwyn, who used to be called Mr Gladwyn Jebb and was once our ambassador to Paris. He immediately harangued the *Times* man, for some

unfathomable reason in fluent German. After fifteen minutes he said something in a clearly interrogative tone which required an answer. The *Times* man panicked for a moment, then said in English, "I don't know, I think you just help yourself." Apparently Gladwyn's fury was gratifying to see.

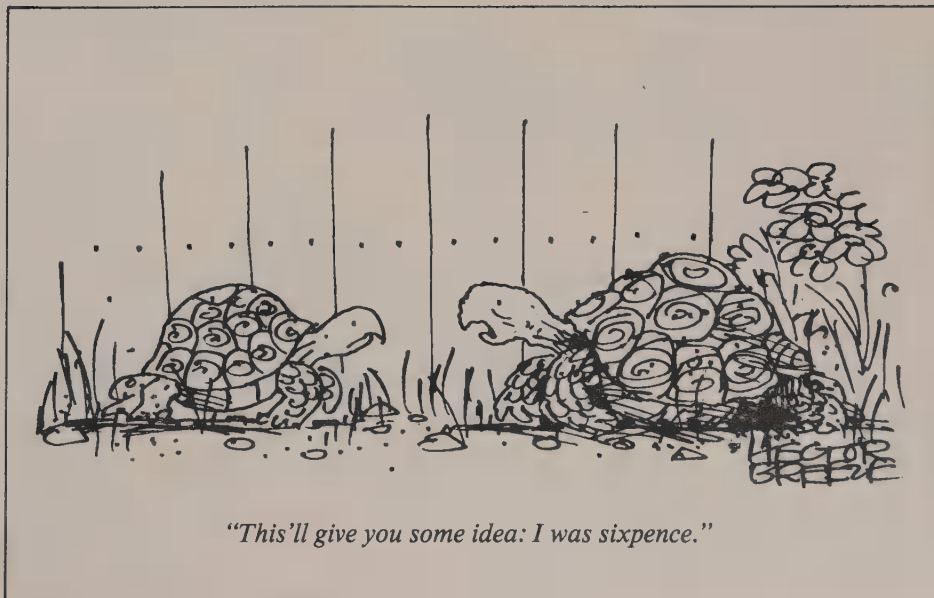
I gather that he did not make much more of an impression on General de Gaulle. The late Sir Peter Kirk, who was leader of the British Tory delegation, had a saying: "Le raison pour le 'Non', c'était le Gladwyn Jebb."

More about the toffs in the Tory party, and the theory that the more upper-class you are, the scruffier you can afford to be. Willie Whitelaw turned up for the Derby looking dreadfully dishevelled in ancient topper and tails. He refused to give any tips. "I never discuss losers in advance," he said. This is not true. He used to talk at length about Ted Heath in 1974.

Politicians are getting a fit reminder of their place in society from a story going the rounds now about the playwright Tom Stoppard, who used to be a journalist. When he was being interviewed for his job on a local paper on Bristol, the editor said: "I see you have listed politics among your interests. Tell me, what is the name of the Home Secretary?"

Stoppard drew himself up to his full height and replied: "I said I was interested in politics, not obsessed."

SIMON HOGGART

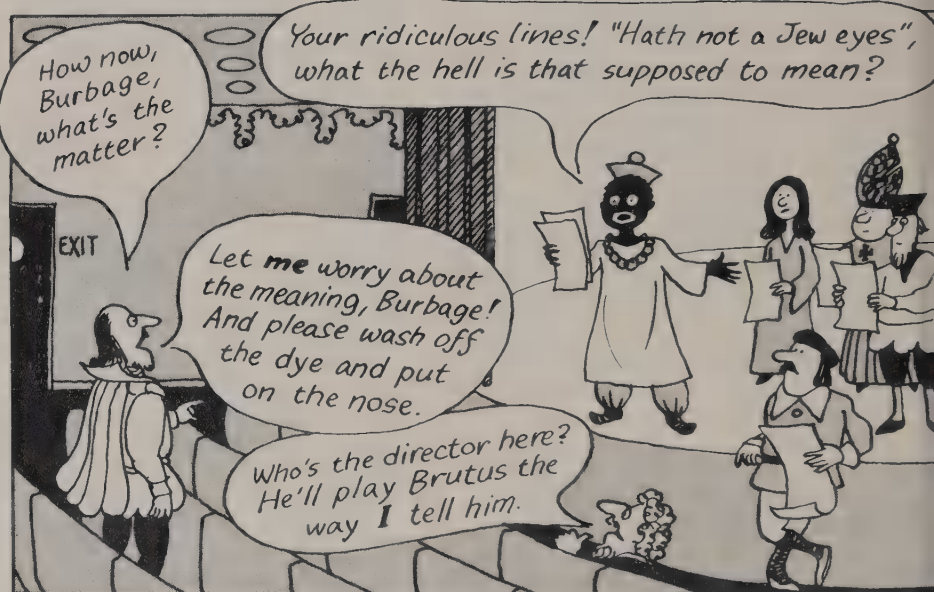


"This'll give you some idea: I was sixpence."

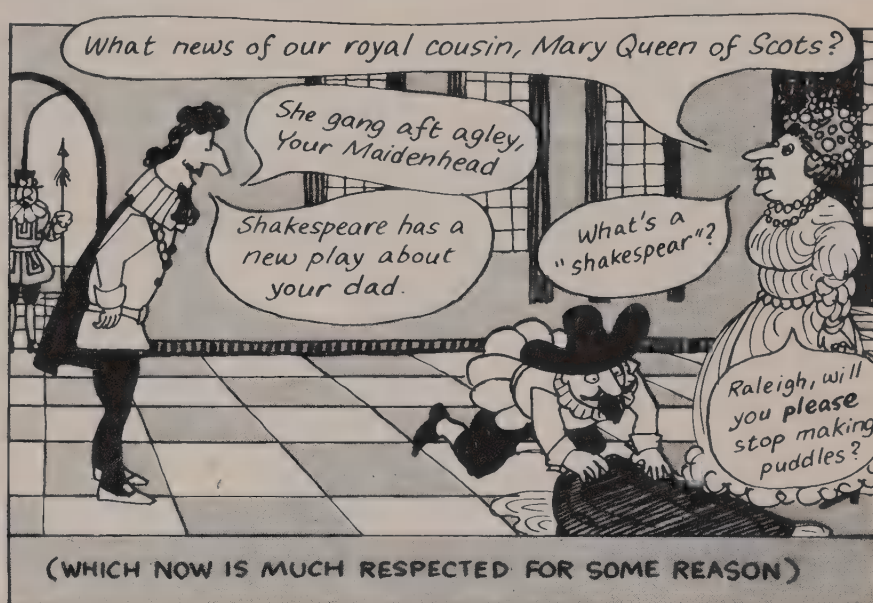
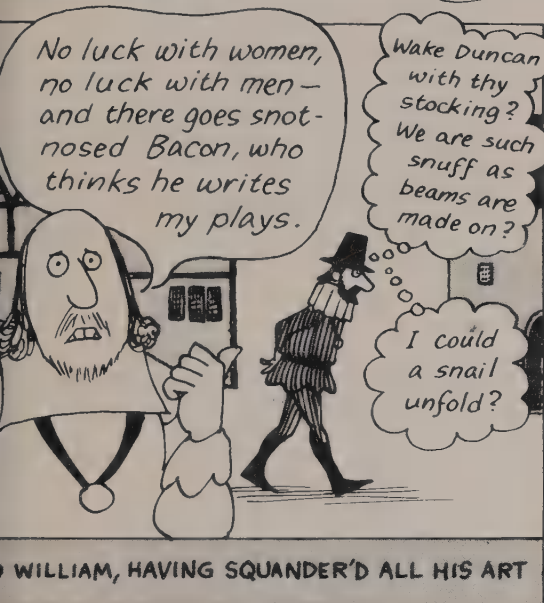
A Summer's Day

or, Find the Hidden Sonnet

WILL SHAKESPEARE'S LADY NEVER COULD BELIEVE THAT HE WAS AS IMMORTAL AS HIS BOAST;



FABLE by HANDELSMAN



WILLIAM, HAVING SQUANDER'D ALL HIS ART

(WHICH NOW IS MUCH RESPECTED FOR SOME REASON)



The Complete Child Breeder

IT is easy to bring up the perfect child, from the age of sitting on the pot to that of smoking it.

Observe three simple principles—

1. *Whatever you do is probably wrong.*
2. *This does not matter in the slightest.*
3. *No child must ever interfere with the personal life of its parents.*

There are 10 *Practical Problems of Pediatric Perfection*. As children change violently every 3 years in their tastes, whims, lusts, hates and savageries, it is necessary to rear 6 entirely different people.

1. Feeding.

Breast milk is purpose-made babyfood, delivered at the right rate and correct temperature, germ-free, with neither Government subsidy nor advertising overheads, in instantly recognizable containers. Suckling is simple. If you give too little, the baby yells. If you give too much, it is sick.

Breast feeding has a disadvantage. The mother cannot detach the breasts and leave them in the fridge while she enjoys a barbecue in the next-door suburb. There are so many surrogate mothers pressing so many artificial foods, that any woman who can mix instant porridge becomes an instant expert in infant nutrition.

A *wet nurse* is needed only by handicapped children in swimming-pools.

2. Poo-poops.

Parents are obsessed with their children's orifices. They buy little dumbbells of cotton wool on cocktail sticks, which they poke curiously into the baby's eyes, ears, nose, umbilicus, etc. They inspect the nappies with the profundity of Caesar's soothsayers the entrails of fowls. Such preoccupation is unnecessary and troublesome. God Himself has wax in His ears, and the nappies are not the Rorschach ink-blot test of the emergent personality.

The old-fashioned way of toilet-training was Nannie plonking the pup on the pot from birth. This so violently disturbed the psychology of our ruling classes, that Britain has suffered many decades of political constipation. Modern mums buy a yellow plastic pot from Mothercare, and hide it from their offspring in the bathroom like the family contraceptives. Never grow anguished, or even faintly bothered, over your infant's ever becoming dry and clean in the sump. I know hardly anyone of 21 who has failed to manage it.

3. Sleep.

It is essential that every parent enjoys adequate sleep. This may be achieved by not dozing too often during the day, a quiet bedroom, avoiding a heavy meal at

night, and if necessary taking some safe sedative. The same advice may be applied to the child.

4. Illness.

All illness in children is caused by books about child care. These have created the multimillion-pound baby industry from rough and scattered raw material, like the bright, slick folders which created the package-tour industry from insanitary and inhospitable shores in Spain.

All books are useless. They over-elaborate to the complexity of nuclear physics an activity which great-grandma slipped into her domestic duties, between doing the Monday washing and cooking the Sunday joint and cleaning father's boots. They are bafflingly, stultifyingly comprehensive. Spock's *pocket* edition has 627 pages. Quite a load to hand down on stone tablets.

Books on child-rearing give parental nightmares of the little one suffering from such widespread pediatric conditions as strabismus, convulsions, ventral hernia, rat-bite fever, strawberry naevi, lead poisoning, Oedipus complex and infantile Herculesism.

There is only one infantile illness.

The symptoms are going purple, screaming and throwing fits. This may be indicative of anything from total internal strangulation to bloody-mindedness.

It is best to summon a qualified baby-farrier.

5. Child Psychology.

Children do not have psychology. They have nasty habits. All of which are inherited from your spouse's side of the family.

The treatment of child psychology is to ignore it. Reflect that your friends have aggravatingly revolting habits, which must be painfully tolerated as the alternative to social quarantine.

Remember the adage, that children enjoy their infancy as much as adults enjoy their adultery.

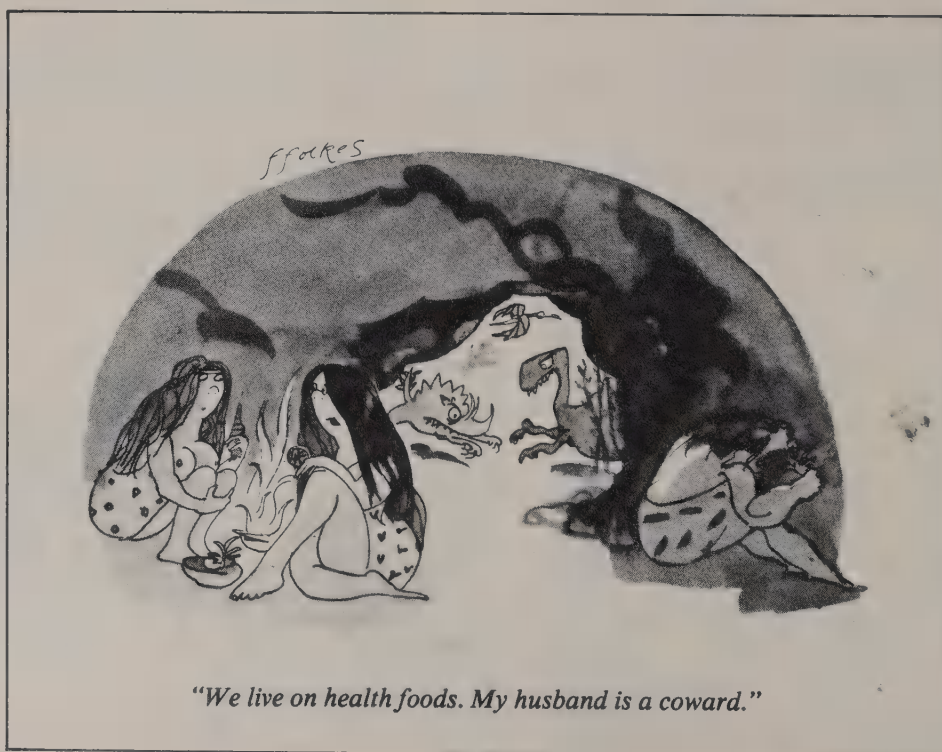
6a. TV.

It is deeply regrettable that so much sex and violence fails to reach British television screens. Characters are mugged, or made, in our very own sitting-rooms less frequently than Match of the Day, and never with action replay.

No wonder our little ones go straight out and try it, just to see how it feels, like playing cowboys. If the BBC provided nothing but sex and violence from Open University to the Late Film (at 7.20 with sub-titles for the hard-of-hearing), children would find it as boring as adult advice and other continued irritations. The whole world would grow up being sweet to one another, and population growth would be zero.

6b. The L-Plate Syndrome.

The amount of TV permitted for child viewing is a variant of this syndrome, endemic among parents. For infinite gene-





**"Hang on . . . Yes . . .
yes . . . I've got a message
coming through from
an Uncle George."**





**“Look at it this way—
if you’d gone elsewhere
you could have paid a
bomb for a nose job.”**



rations, parents have been agonizedly restrictive towards their children's indulgence in late hours, rich foods, alcohol, dirty books, copulation and other entertainments. This is not a clear-headed suppression to prevent children growing like their parents, all moulded by an excess of these agents. They are proscribed as a scaffolding of privileges, by which adult maintains a shaky advantage over child.

Thus parents teach their children to drive from their seventeenth birthday. As cherished an heirloom as the family car passes so promptly to the coming generation only to provide the final exercise of parental authority. The child may be surly, scruffy, sex-sodden and Socialist Worker, but is returned firmly to place, isolated with father, stalled facing the wrong way on a roundabout in rush-hour traffic.

7. *Morals.*

Parents should never tell a lie, nor perform an underhand act, to a child. Unless with as reasonable a chance of escaping detection as among their friends in everyday life.

8. *Education.*

A waste of time.
The school-entering age must be raised to the present school-leaving one. All modern maths, netball, French, sex education, religious instruction, Nature study, handicrafts and free expression can be absorbed by the young *adult* brain in a couple of terms. Education is only a system of progressively removing children from their parents' company, without over-maltreating them. Academically, there is nothing to it. "An education," said Professor Stephen Leacock of McGill University, "when all written out on foolscap, covers nearly ten sheets."

9. *Children and Divorce.*

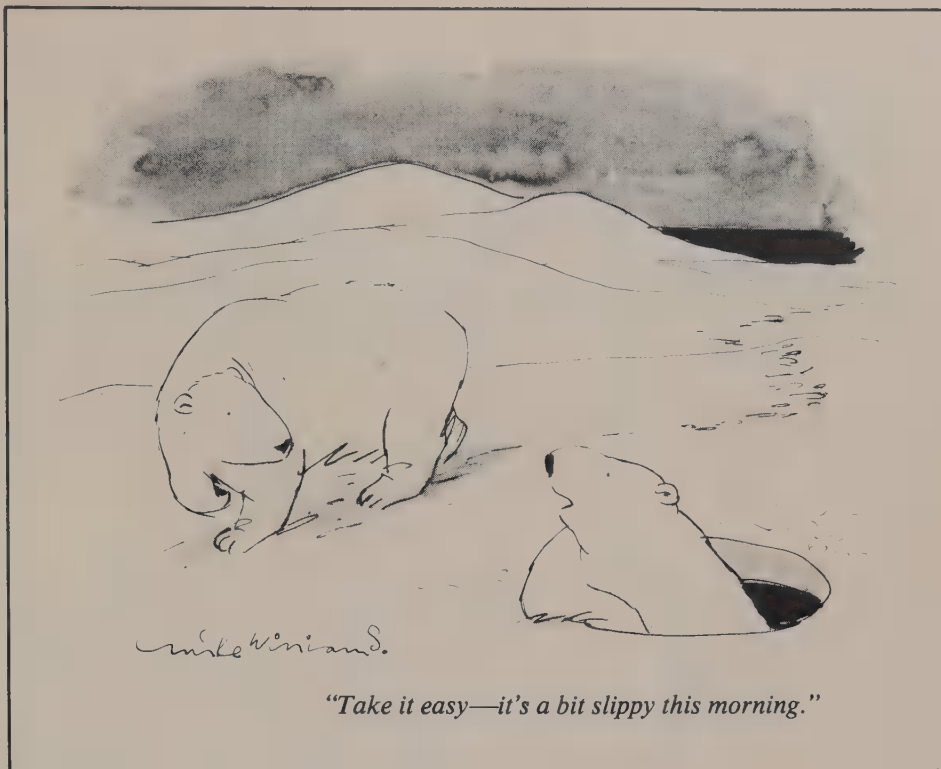
It is tragic when a couple with young offspring decide upon divorce. It allows the children to behave like Mr David Steel and his Liberal Party.

10. *Clash of Personalities.*

The price of family harmony is eternal vigilance. The parents will otherwise have no life of their own. The children will progressively and irritatingly claim everything in the house, from the attention of all visitors to the Scotch. They will be using, precisely when their parents want to, all domestic appliances from the bath to the tin-opener. They will monopolise the TV, radio and affections of the dog.

To forestall this, I run my house like a ship. I am the Captain, travelling through life with the First Mate, first-class. The children go economy. I seldom inspect their quarters, though I hear they are perfectly comfortable. The crew are periodically invited to dine at the Captain's table. They invariably accept, because the Captain's quarters are licensed premises. Should they require anything, they pass a signal to the bridge.

We may have raised four perfect children this way. I cannot say. We do not know them very well.



Stout Fellow

A Centre for Australian Studies is to be opened in London in memory of Sir Robert Menzies. It will include a library of Australian books, a reception room and a collection of Menzies memorabilia. A Menzies Fellow in Australian Studies may also be appointed.

BBC News

17 Copenhagen Terrace,
Tulse Hill,
London.

Dear Mum,

Well, here I am, finally installed as the first Menzies Fellow. The trip over was uneventful, except for a Black Widow spider which probably came aboard the 747 at Tullamarine when they were loading the peanut butter sandwiches for First Class. After take-off it crawled up the strides of this chap queueing for the dunny and, from the screams and the way he frothed at the mouth, you'd have thought it had circumcised him. I must say the cabin crew were wonderful, handling the situation with tact and diplomacy. The chief steward quietened him with a karate chop to the throat, and then he and this very nice air hostie called Raylene—whose dad is a Holden dealer in Wattle Park!—stuck him in a cupboard up the back, with the coats.

I was met at London airport by a Mr Stannisopolis from our Cultural Attaché's office. Before his UK posting, he was doing Darwin Disaster work, organising martial arts classes for the surviving senior citizens. He is a pleasant, helpful sort of bloke and, having rounded up my luggage, he drove me to a boarding house in a place called Tulse Hill and introduced me to the landlady. Her name is Mrs Klopstock and her terms are quite reasonable—radios forbidden after ten, no use of the garden and a bath on Saturday nights only. All this for a mere £200 a week, cash in advance. I pulled all that Pommy funny money out of my flight bag and said, "Is that two hundred of the green ones?" She said, "No, mate, the blue," and, having wet her thumb and counted them off, she handed a few to Mr Stannisopolis, rather to my surprise. He

gave me a faint smile and a free Tube map and then she showed me to my room, which is smallish but cosy, with a bucket thoughtfully placed on the floor to catch the leaks. She told me that if I was ever late with the rent a friend of hers called Eddie who, sadly, is mentally defective, will take me down behind the abattoir and batter me to death. I like a lady with a sense of humour, though I have still not worked out why she walks around with a bayonet stuck in her surgical stocking.

The next room is inhabited by a gravedigger named Clive, who hasn't much to say for himself. Whenever I speak to him, he just bares his teeth. Still, it is not a bad place, apart from Mrs Klopstock's mad African lover who watches television covered in chicken blood. Mrs Klopstock says this habit upsets her, and sometimes makes her varicose veins go into spasm.

The Menzies Centre is smack in the middle of London but, on my first day, I got a bit muddled up with the buses and finished up in a place called Epping Forest. Have now found my bearings, however, and am

settling into quite an agreeable routine. Each morning I open the place up, Hoover the carpets, sharpen the Visitors' Book pencil and wash the glasses left by the Oz House Cultural Attaché's staff who break in here after the pubs have closed, one of them somehow cracking the lock with his teeth. Then I dust the library, and I'm sorry to say it doesn't take long. So far we've only got one book—*Blinky Bill*, the kiddies' classic—though I'm told that a copy of Banjo Patterson's poems will arrive as soon as the authorities at Rangoon let the ship, the MV *Frank Ifield*, discharge her Boat People and get under way. Still, the tale of the grumpy little koala is proving immensely popular and, when it's raining or the Colour isn't being Trooped, large numbers of expatriates come in for a Fozzies, a read and a good cry.

My next little chore is to check the memorabilia, which are tastefully laid out under bulletproof glass. There is a cricket boot, an old rates demand, a pair of unmatched socks, a Christmas card from Harry Truman addressed to New Zealand

"Good Grief! Her conduct is even more outrageous than last year!"





"The rather long, thin bill and high forehead are distinctive, as is the flight, which makes a high whirring sound. And for the true gastronome nothing can rival it roasted in brandy."

by mistake, a stuffed dog presented by the Mayor of Brisbane to mark our victory in the Battle of the Coral Sea, a set of throwing knives from the Adelaide Arts Society, a gum nut woggle presented by the Bendigo Brownies, a copy of *An Illustrated History of Central Heating* given by the Returned Servicemen's League, and a six gallon can of anti-freeze from the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

All in all, it is an impressive display, though yesterday a sharp-eyed Ballarat woman who had the tresses of her long auburn wig tied under the chin against the blustery weather, pointed out that the name tag sewn to one of the displayed socks did not say Menzies at all; it said Pugh. I can only assume that the people in Canberra who assembled the display got some of the items mixed up with the memorabilia of Lew Pugh, the man who ran a sub-four minute mile carrying a dead wombat in a bucket, and destined for display at our Washington embassy. I am wondering whether Washington have also got the 120 mph Yamaha Grand Prix motor bike presented to Sir Robert on his retirement by

the House of Representatives. There is certainly no sign of it here.

For the remainder of the day I just see that things run smoothly: cashing traveller's cheques, selling items from the snack bar and the souvenir shop. The latter is a very popular feature of the Centre, specially the inflatable life-size Nellie Melba dolls that we introduced at the insistence of the Cultural Attaché, and which will give you three bars of Percy Grainger when blown up and embraced.

I should say that *was* my routine; now, suddenly, things have changed. The fact is, Mum, I was starting to get a bit bored and despondent. There I was, with my doctorate and my dream of a Chair at Monash, spending my time dispensing beer and cup cakes. Then, a couple of days ago, who should walk in but Raylene! From the 747? She recognised me at once and yelled, "Hey, you're the sex-crazed bugger who laddered my tights over Bangladesh!" I explained that sudden turbulence had caused me to lose a contact lens, and that I was scrabbling for it in the dark when she happened to walk by. She laughed good-naturedly and

gave me a friendly thump on the back that made me bring up a little blood. The dear girl watched me coughing with some concern and then one thing led to another though, to spare your blushes, I shall not elaborate further here.

Suffice to say that she has given up her job and moved in with me, and has virtually taken over the running of the Centre, leaving me to pursue my researches into the resurgence of pole-vaulting during the Ned Kelly era. I am slightly concerned that she is carrying out her duties topless, but it seems to have had a dramatic effect on attendance. The queues start forming outside at 7 a.m. and the Cultural people at Oz House seem well satisfied.

Well, mum, must rush. She's just brought in a troupe of Sicilian midgets to perform tableaux from the Great Referendum of 1949, and the villainous little fellow playing Ben Chifley is demanding money with menaces from one of our visitors, the Lady Mayoress of Frankston. Oh, dear! My love to Auntie Mabel and the cats,

Your affectionate son,
Stan

SEPARATE TABLES

ffolkes eavesdrops



Are we insured
against Zabaglione?

Three billion dollars
sounds a lot but remember
we have to throw in
five hundred concubines

Darlings, I hear
she's just opened in
Melbourne, wherever
that is

There isn't a part
for you right now but
it's possible Hedda will
have to go in for
gallstones

ffoures

Last week, Menachim Begin replaced the Israeli pound with the shekel, taking yet another of those fundamentalist Old Testament steps of which he seems increasingly fond. Can it stop there? Do us a favour!

ISRAELIS CONSIDERING BOIL WARFARE

"Frogs we're also looking at" - Gen. Yitzhak Putz

Tel Aviv, Tuesday

In a major speech today at the Isaac Wolfson Banqueting Rooms, General Yitzhak Putz of the Israeli Defence Staff thanked the bride's parents for the three-piece suite and the cutlery canteen, and said that the country's defence policy would now be firmly rooted in the concept of plague warfare.

"Anybody attacks Israel," he told relatives and friends, "they're gonna get boils, lice, hail, the whole shtick. A locust capability we got, you wouldn't believe, we can put ten million locusts down at five minutes notice. As for boils, you should pardon me where I'm bringing it up at dinner-time, we got enough big boils stockpiled right now to infect an area of five thousand square miles."

In answer to a question about frogs from Mrs Millie Rappaport, a second cousin on his mother's side, General Putz replied:

"Frogs? You're asking me about frogs? Listen, if I started to

(continued p.8)

Still no Sign of Finance Minister

Belly of Fish Horror Not Ruled Out

After two days, there is still no sign of Mr Simcha Ehrlich.

At Prime Minister's question time in the Knesset this afternoon, Mr Begin rose to answer the question as to whether he had any plans to visit Tarshish. He explained that the Government's economic predictions for 1980 had already proved to be totally inaccurate, and that God's anger at this had manifested itself in a 26% inflation rate. Two days earlier, therefore, the Cabinet had drawn lots in order to determine whom the Almighty wished to bear responsibility for this, and the lot had fallen upon Finance Minister Ehrlich.

The Cabinet had accordingly cast him into the sea.

At this, fighting broke out in the public gallery, and two members of the Save The Whale movement were forcibly ejected.

LAW REPORT

Lev Ginsberg v. The Almighty

Summing up in the case of Lev Ginsberg, 42, accused of partially blinding a man in a brawl, Mr Justice Bloom poked the defendant's eye out. (Reuter)

HAIFA RING ROAD EXTENSION STILL HELD UP

Transport Ministry may ask public for requests

Work on the much-needed Haifa motorway box is still seriously delayed because of the stubborn refusal of the old Menorah Biscuits factory, lying across the intended route, to submit to demolition.

"We've tried everything," I was told by demolition foreman Satchmo Grodzinski, "Some of These Days, Dippermouth Blues, King Porter Stomp, you name it, but this is a really tough one. The trombone section has been playing round the clock, under floodlights, without dislodging one lousy brick."

Told of the delay, Mr Begin fell down and bit the carpet. It is understood he is considering calling up all saxophonists of military age.



Lovely Esther Horowitz, 19, whose hit single *Psalm XXXVIII* is rocketing up the charts, says, "Come on in, the water's fine!" Her teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, her lips are like a thread of scarlet, her neck is like the tower of David builded for an armoury, and her two breasts are like two young roses that are twins, which feed among the lilies. She likes fast cars, disco dancing, and aerial gunnery.

OX-COVETING BILL GETS THROUGH COMMITTEE STAGE UNOPPOSED

Going to House of the Lord next Monday

A Private Member's Bill seeking to re-establish the death penalty for ox-coveting has successfully negotiated the committee stage. The Bill has the Prime Minister's full blessing (which lasts three hours, not including hymns and Grace), and went

through with only one MP dissenting, Mr Harry Feld, who was subsequently taken outside the walls and stoned by Elders of the Home Office.

Next Monday, Mr Begin will take the Bill up Mount Sinai for ratification.

My Lords, Ladies, Posterity

by PAUL JOHNSON

The Voice of History

Great speeches of the English language

Selected and introduced by Lord George-Brown.

Sidgwick & Jackson £7.95

HERE is Lord George-Brown's personal selection of great speeches. Or rather, as he disarmingly admits, it is his choice from among "the scores of speeches unearthed by my diligent researchers"—yes, it is that sort of book. All the same, it is as good as most anthologies on a notoriously difficult topic. Lord George-Brown says that, of the speakers he actually heard (apart from Laski, who was a lecturer), Churchill and Aneurin Bevan were the best. Churchill reproduces in print fairly well, for his speeches were carefully written—not least with an eye to future publication—and memorised. Bevan does not reproduce at all, and the two extracts George-Brown prints here merely emphasise the point. Yet he was a far better orator than Churchill, generating tension and excitement which was quite absent in Churchill's Augustan rhetoric.

Here we have the central dilemma of written oratory. A speech is normally delivered to influence a particular group of people at a specific time. Its effectiveness depends on a good deal of foregoing knowledge and activity, voice and personality, face and gesture, place and audience—yes, even time of day, temperature and alcoholic intake of speaker and hearers. A particularly important factor is the tone and success of the immediately preceding utterances. Thus, a lively orator following a couple of real dullards has it made for him; while a serious speech following a good knockabout turn—particularly in the evening—is likely to come a cropper, unless the speaker takes the audience by the scruff of its neck from the very first sentence. Expert orators always go to a lot of trouble to get these circumstantial factors in their favour—so far as it is in their power. In order to judge why a speech worked it is important to know about the detailed context.

There are a few cases where speeches did not work at the time but succeeded in print thereafter. The classic instance is Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. It is an excellent example of the brief ceremonial speech, and most American children know it by heart. At the time Lincoln said: "That speech fell on the audience like a wet blanket. I am distressed about it. I ought to have prepared it with more care." *The Times* sniffed: "Anything more dull and commonplace it wouldn't be easy to imagine." Far better received was the main address on the occasion, by the professional orator Everett. George-Brown prints an extract: it is florid—and dead.

A speech must be judged by its particular objective. F. E. Smith's 1906 maiden—the most famous maiden, perhaps, in Commons history—was designed to raise the spirits of a party which had just suffered the worst election defeat on record. It succeeded brilliantly, but reading it today it is hard to see why. A successful speech may be a kind of oratorical fraud, like Nixon's broadcast on his dog Checkers; Palmerston's "Don Pacifico" speech falls into this category. Or it may be designed to encourage, exhilarate or fortify. The speech Shakespeare wrote for Henry V before Agincourt is a model of the genre. George-Brown gives a real-life example: General Patton's rhodomontade to his GI's before D-day. It made his officers "uncomfortable" but the troops loved it. It ended:

There's one great thing you men can say when it's all over and you're home once more. You can thank God that twenty years from now, when you're sitting around the fireside with your grandson on your knee and he asks you what you did in the war, you won't have to shift him to the other knee, cough, and say: "I shovelled shit in Louisiana."

The best speeches are rarely oratory. Even in the age of Burke and Fox, Sir Samuel Romilly correctly observed: "... the proper eloquence of the House of

Commons is plain unsophisticated reasoning expressed in forcible but familiar language, and delivered with clearness and energy but without apparent artifice or affectation." From what we know of his speeches, Walpole, the first great Commons manager, proceeded on such a basis, and he finds no place in this anthology; nor does Peel, another man peculiarly adept at appealing to the business-sense of a great assembly. The only statesman of the type who does is Baldwin. He had a great bent for words, written and spoken—his cousin Kipling called him "the literary one of the family"—and he is among the few orators whose speeches convey in print some of the slow mesmerism they exercised over their hearers.

George-Brown's is a wide ranging selection. It includes some good courtroom speeches, mainly American, and a few sermons. Here, even Newman shows up badly, and it's impossible now to see what congregations liked about Wesley or Whitefield; as for Brigham Young, his most famous discourse, which George-Brown quotes, makes no sense at all. Donne, on the other hand, evokes great beauty and power.

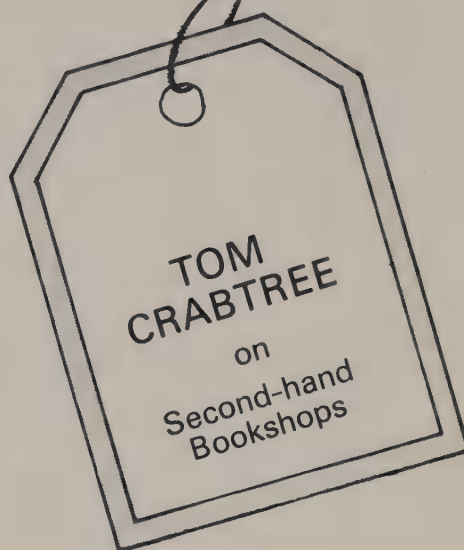
There are very few women. I am glad to see that George-Brown includes Elizabeth I, and in particular her splendid outburst of 3 November 1566—she was always at her best in a temper, and too angry to engage in the elaborate Italianisms she favoured. He also gives two extracts from Mrs Pankhurst, but nothing from Lady Violet Bonham-Carter, the best woman speaker I ever heard. She was mistress of the pre-war oratorical style which nobody practises today, with the sole exception of Oswald Mosley.

The House now favours the rather bleak, staccato style, used by Enoch Powell (in its formal version) and by Michael Foot (off the cuff). The best real orators of recent years have been Nigel Birch, John Mackintosh and Brian Walden. None of them got very far up the greasy pole—a portent?



"That's not what I've heard about band singers."

SHOPTALK



THERE'S a rule in second-hand bookshops that, if you ask for, say, Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, the owner replies: "There's no call for that kind of thing." Ask, on the other hand, for *The Flora and Fauna of the Alimentary Canal*, and you'll be told: "There was a copy here yesterday but we sold it."

Dispiriting, yes, but not as bad as that chap in Bloomsbury who would never let you into his shop. Sometimes, you could get one foot in the door and shout your order to him. "Reserved," he'd wheeze, amidst the dust, or "Not for sale."

It is futile, when faced with this ultra-soft sell, to remark that this is hardly the attitude that made Lord Sieff and Sir John Sainsbury what they are today. Bibliophiles are men of secret vices and purple passions; it is hard to fall in love with a woolly cardigan or six bread rolls.

The cost of bibliomania, a sub-section of covetousness, can be high. A first edition of Thomas Hardy's *Desperate Remedies* will set you back £1,000 plus. (It had a first run of 500; didn't sell terribly well; was heavily remaindered.) A modern first, such as J. D. Salinger's *For Esme With Love and Squalor* (published in America as *Nine Runners*) will cost you £250.

There is nothing rational about buying books. They, unlike silver, have little intrinsic value: it's very much all in the mind. The buyer thinks 1. Like. 2. Have Got The Money. 3. Must Have. He's unlikely to be swayed by you telling him, for instance, that first editions are often the worst and will (unlike gold) be worthless if the Russians invade Charing Cross Road.

The authors to pant for are Wells, Kipling and Conrad: terribly cheap. Modern firsts, such as Waugh, Hemingway and Rupert Brooke are becoming increasingly expensive. If your tastes are more esoteric you may be in deeper financial waters.

The oracles of the second-hand book world, *The Clique* and *The Bookdealer*, give an indication as to who is lusting after what. Somebody, by now, will have snapped up *The Irish Wolfhound* from Doggie Hubbard's Bookshop, Buxton Spa. If it's *Reminiscences of the Monks of St. Giles* you're after, or books on Falconry, Birds of Prey and Hawking (or an ibis containing bird of prey material) you could be disappointed.

My own passion is phrenology, the study

of the shape of the head. I have hunted throughout the land for *Heads and How to Read Them* (I have three copies), *Servants and How To Choose Them* (no well-intentioned butler will object to having his bumps felt). Did Neville Chamberlain practise phrenology? I have his copy of *Mr Midshipman Easy* (in which Easy, Snr., kills himself with a machine designed to flatten unwanted protuberances). I, for one, am willing to believe that N.C. had an off-day when he ran his hand over Hitler's head.

No bibliomaniac buys books for profit but I've had the thrill of the bargain with my bump reading. George Combe's *The Constitution of Man*—fourth on the list of Victorian best-sellers, after *The Bible*, *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Robinson Crusoe*—for £1, Spurzheim's *Phrenology* (1826) for a fiver, W. Pugin Thornton's *Heads and What they Tell Us* for 10p. Should phrenology make a come-back, editors will beat a path to my door.

In search of phrenology, and books about a chap called Polycrates, I've lingered in bookshops in many places. I haven't yet made it to Elysian Fields, N.Y. but I have been to Shakespeare and Co., Paris, where the lady recognised me and invited me upstairs (which is more than you can say for any of the assistants in our local W. H. Smith).

In Athens, whilst people are crowding into coaches to go and see statues, I'm heading for the Acropolis, turn right down Andrianou Street—I know exactly where it is. Bought a splendid book there called *The Tunnel of Eupalinos*. I remember it was a blazing hot day.

Canterbury, Bath, Liverpool, Lincoln. I know where they are.

"What do you think of Cardiff?" people ask me. A marvellous place. Go to the market square. Somewhere on the left. *Physiognomie et Phrénologie (Rendues Intelligibles Pour Tout Le Monde)* par A. Ysabeau, (£2). You don't get bargains like that on the Costa Brava, or Nassau.

There's the bread and butter side to all this which doesn't interest me much but which I ought, in all honesty, to mention. The second-hand bookshop near here, whilst keeping a look-out for me, does most of its business selling Mills and Boon, James Bond and Leslie Thomas. It's rather like films on TV and unlike wives. If you don't mind waiting they're much cheaper the second time round.

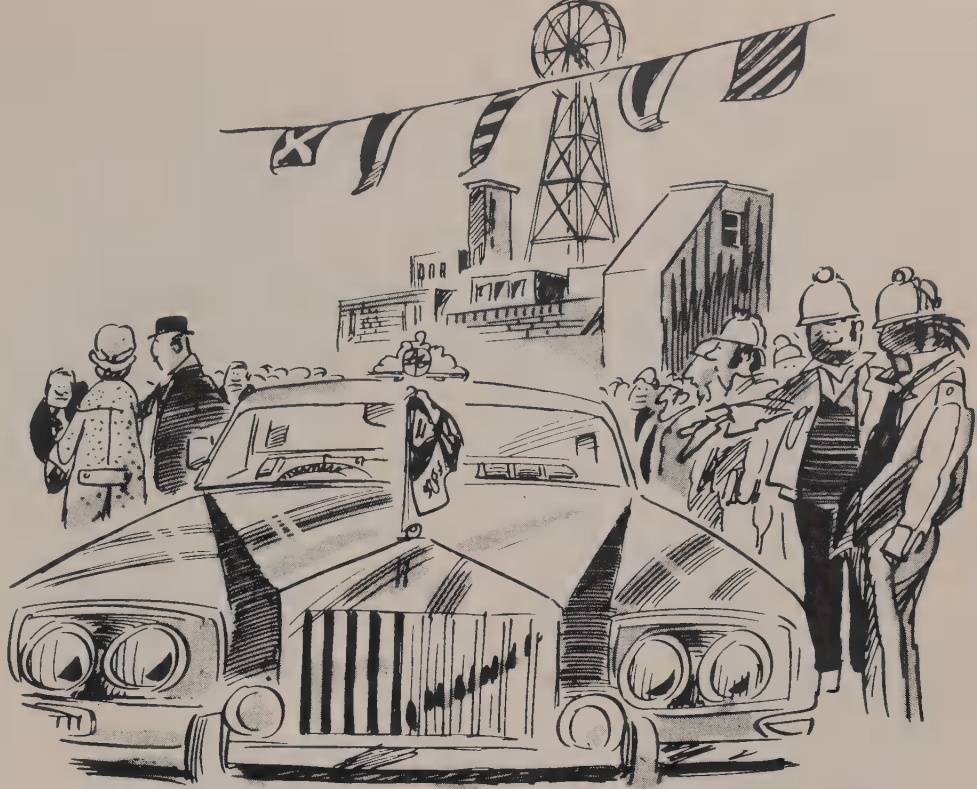
Most owners of 2HBS's are slightly distracted, odd. Why this should be I don't know. They'll let you browse all day if you wish; it's only when you purchase something that a faint air of resentment, suspicion, pervades the atmosphere. Perhaps it's lack of fresh air, or the sight of so many remaindered authors, or the feeling (which one sometimes gets playing Monopoly) that one is about to make a terrible mistake.

How did that chap in Salisbury market—who sold, for a tanner, a book of maps worth £16,000—feel about it? Pretty awful, I'd say. I mean, it's difficult enough to define antiquarian books (those older than mid-XIXth century?) never mind guessing which of them will turn out to be gilt-edged.

What happens when Wells and Kipling make a come-back? Probably, with the thought of all those first editions having been sold for a song, a fair number of second-hand book sellers will despatch themselves to the Great Book Shop in the Sky. Crazy, poignant people.

And yet, you ask, you ask what about new books and the latest novel (£6.99p)? *Those* I borrow from the local library. They are not a part of this gloomy, magical world. Indeed, keep anything too well lit, too new, out of it. This summer, as the tourists are keeping away the wasps on sun-drenched beach, in country cottage, I shall be there, in Brighton, and in lovely Hay-on-Wye, looking for *The Reflective Head*. It is, I'm told, fractionally easier to find than *As the Falcon Her Bells*, given a good bump of location.

*"Homing pigeons?
No, Mr Grimsditch, this
is the dorm!"*



*"Aye, they give you money but they still keep
you down. I've got no flag on mine!"*

BILL TIDY:

MILLIONAIRE MINERS



*"Cave-in—Eric Drummersdale's
overtime fell on him!"*



*"Your lift's
ready, sir!"*

(continued overleaf)

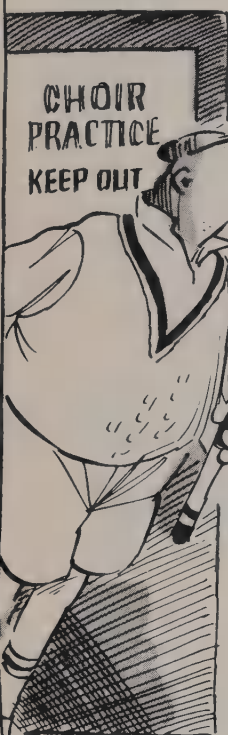
MILLIONAIRE MINERS

continued

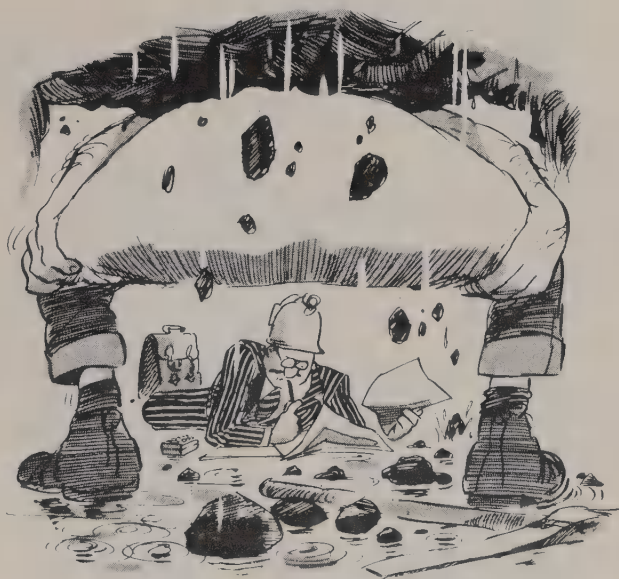


"I say, chaps—anyone for tennis?"

"You know what they say—
you only have to whistle down
a Scottish pit and an
international polo player
pops up!"



"Call that a turn!
I've seen better at Vegas!"



"Financially, and taking your tax into account, you'd
be better off if you let that roof fall in!"



*"No thanks, luv.
Just a sauna and a massage."*



"He has to live part of the year in the Seychelles."

*"According to Mark McCormack,
he's doing fractionally better than Borg."*



*"Miss Keaton, Mr Gormley has very kindly
offered to put up a cup for ferreting!"*

E. S. TURNER'S

Garland of Valentines

For a Prime Minister

Dear Lady of the Thousand Cuts,
Redeemer and Retrencher,
Cast eye upon that worst of butts,
The unfulfilled back-bencher.

Oh I will wield ■ snickersnee,
A rapier or ■ bludgeon,
If you will but make use of me,
And save me from my dudgeon.

Dear Lady, I await the call,
Your mystery heart donor!
And I'll ask nothing but ■ small
Hereditary honour.



For a Guardian Lady

My love for you is tender,
My love will never die.
You do not know my gender,
And frankly, nor do I.

"Dear God," I hear you mutter,
With well-concealed distress,
"Another raving nutter!"
But some day you'll say Yes.

The world can't do without us.
We'll bitch and bite and rage,
And you will write about us
Upon the Woman's Page.



For a Lover of Jargon

Now is the Interface of Love and Lust,
And old Parameters are lost in dust.
Our Ongoing Viable Relationship
Takes off today and it is bed or bust.



For a Turncoat Politician

Dear Valentine, sweet Valentine,
You first betrayed this heart of mine,
Then, warming to your grand design,
You next betrayed the Party Line.
Oh, keep it up, you're doing fine!
But do your eyeballs prick with brine?
Or wear the old dishonest shine?
Dear Valentine, sweet Valentine!



For a Jet Set Lady

You kiss and tell I know full well.
 You still look pretty nifty.
 Your past, of course, is black as Hell,
 And all your friends are shifty.
 So kiss away, and I will tell,
 And we'll go fifty-fifty.



For a Bunch of Chat Show People

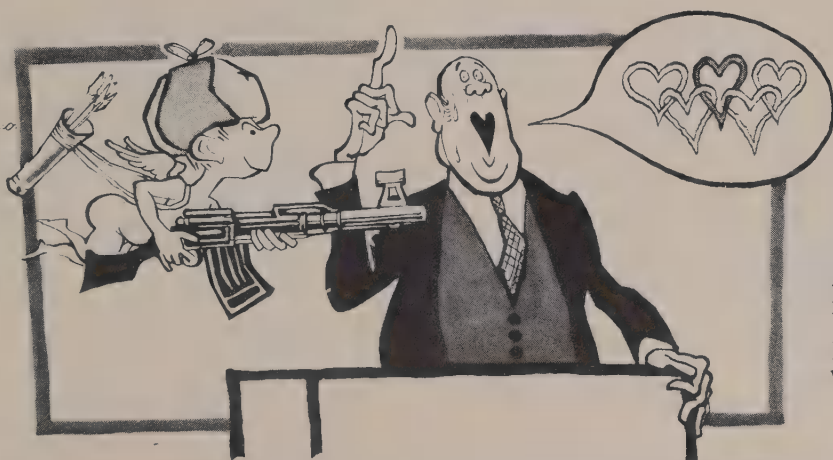
You are our hearts' delight!
 We've always fancied
 The brave, the brash, the bright,
 The really rancid.

For a News Reader

O goddess of the Lively Arts,
 I rather hoped we'd meet,
 But twenty million bleeding hearts
 Are lying at your feet;
 A spectacle so gross and vile
 I think I'll take mine from the pile.

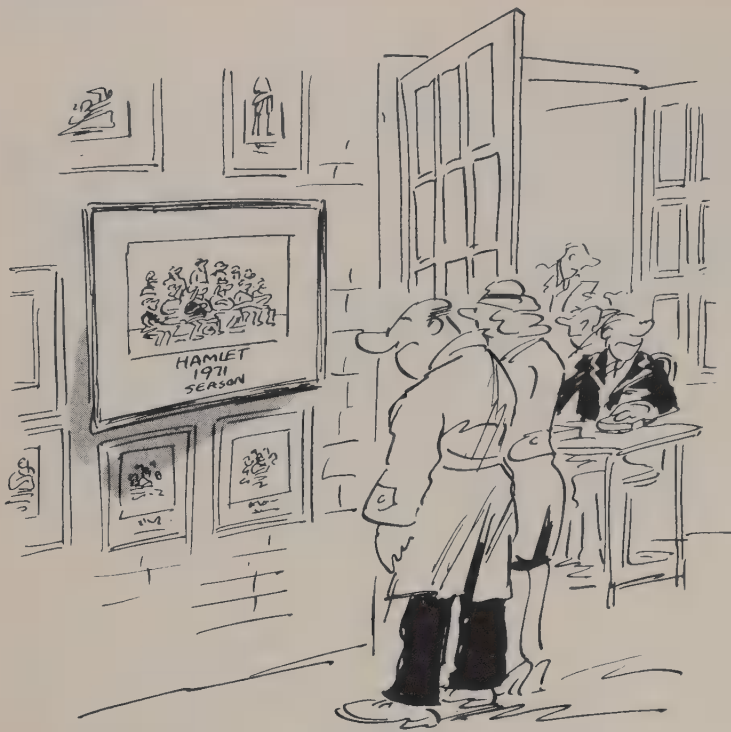
For a Loved One Behind Walls

Alone I wander by the mere,
 Your ever-loving lass.
 One far-off Spring we dallied here,
 And you were bold as brass!
 The crocuses, new-risen, shone
 Like jets of high-speed gas.
 What super grass we sinned upon—
 Remember, Supergrass?



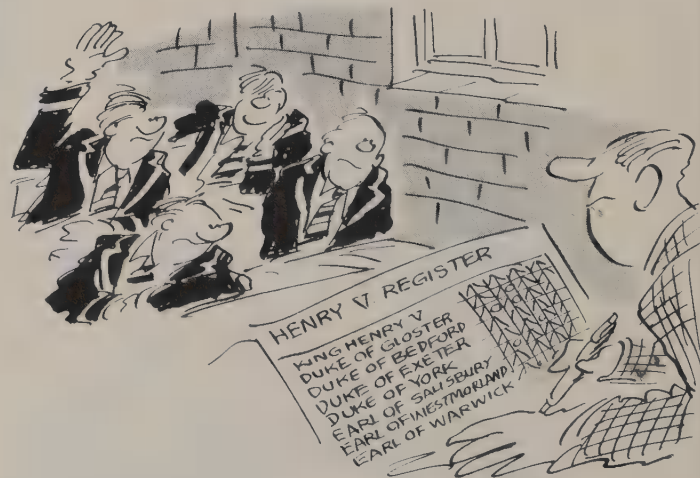
For an Olympics Spokesman

No Cupid's dart could pierce your heart.
 You posture in a world apart.
 But when the fiery Cossacks ride,
 Who knows what darts may pierce your
 hide?



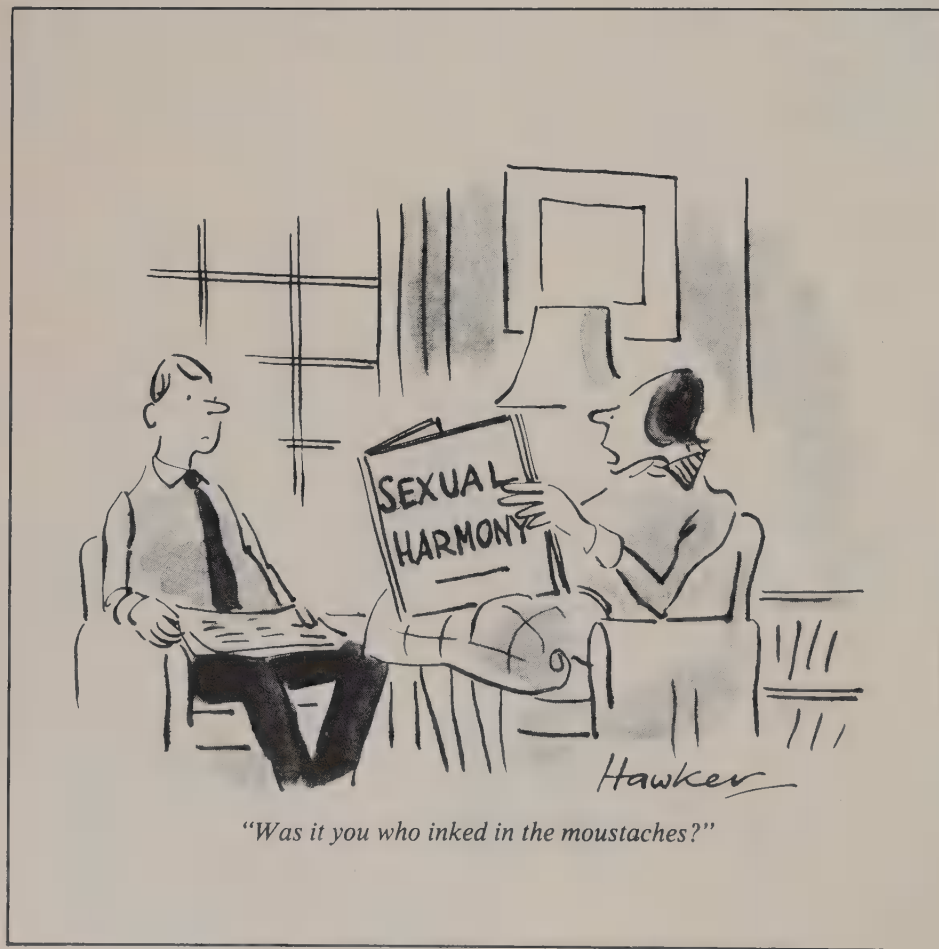
LARRY:

LITTLE WILLIES





By the way, I was born in September. I'm not hinting.



Tinker, Tailor, All Fall Down

A TV Thing in Several by **BASIL BOOTHROYD**

LE CARRÉ, an Author
HOPCRAFT, an Adapter
CONTROL, a Control
SMILEY, a Guinness
POWELL, a Producer
IRVIN, a Director
Lamplighters
Scalphunters
Mothers
Housekeepers
Viewers
Spies, etc.

Some Room or Other

Le Carré: There was a degree of jealousy.

Hopcraft: Over the Polish girl?

Le Carré: Belgrade.

Rises, examines a painting

Hopcraft: I have to ask these questions.

People will want to know.

Le Carré: It's where Control buys his shirts.

Hopcraft: Not if he's dead.

Shifts a heavy script to the other knee.

Le Carré: That isn't certain. Is this Russell Flint genuine?

Hopcraft: It's your house, I thought.

Le Carré: In a manner of speaking.

A MOTHER looks round the door, carrying a workname index.

Mother: Oh, sorry.

Exterior. A distant footbridge, very likely in St James's Park or Hungary.

A MAN approaches from the far side, very small. Pauses on bridge, seems about to throw something to ducks.

Camera pans to a tree.

An Office

Powell: Remember it's seven.

Irvin: Morning or evening?

Powell: Episodes. We have to stretch. Spread it thin.

Irvin: Up to Hopcraft, then.

Powell: Not like a one-off, all tied up in fifty minutes and the culprit explaining why in the last three.

Irvin: Do we know who?

Powell: I think Le Carré does.

He makes a note on a heavy script

Irvin: I'm keeping Smiley wearing the same overcoat. And expression.

Powell: We need more confusion.

Irvin: There's the Mystify Report, source Cantilever, workname Custard.

A telephone rings.

Another Office

SPIES dressed as schoolmasters at long table, CONTROL at head. Litter of scripts, files, copies of Rude Pravo, yellow BBC pencils. Some with reliable teeth smoke pipes.

1st Lamplighter: But that was routine. Bread-and-butter surveillance.

Control: (sceptical) In Banking Section?

1st Lamplighter: Ask Acton. Or the housekeepers.

1st Scalphunter: It is not to be inferred, I hope, that we are reduced to the stage where an agent in the field launders his own money?

Some laughter

2nd Lamplighter: It was a different woman.

Control: Not at Moscow Centre. Isn't that so, Peter?

2nd Lamplighter: He's not here.

Control: You, then, Bill.

1st Lamplighter: I'm Roy.

2nd Scalphunter: It was the same woman. She boiled down the microdots. Neugebauer's sister.

2nd Lamplighter: Not if Toby told George Smiley that Peter said he saw her in Brno with Gulov. That's all on file under Antimacassar.

1st Lamplighter: Let's not go back to sixty-nine, for God's sake. They hadn't rolled up the network.

2nd Lamplighter: Then the letter-box was different, unless it was chummy who worked it, and Lisbon was Warsaw Pact.

1st Lamplighter: Laughs all the way.

2nd Scalphunter: We shouldn't overlook courier links, now that Miculescu and Fojtik may be said to have been blown. Matches, please, Oliver.

Control: Thank you, then, gentlemen. (He closes his eyes) Or would George Smiley care to favour us with a view?

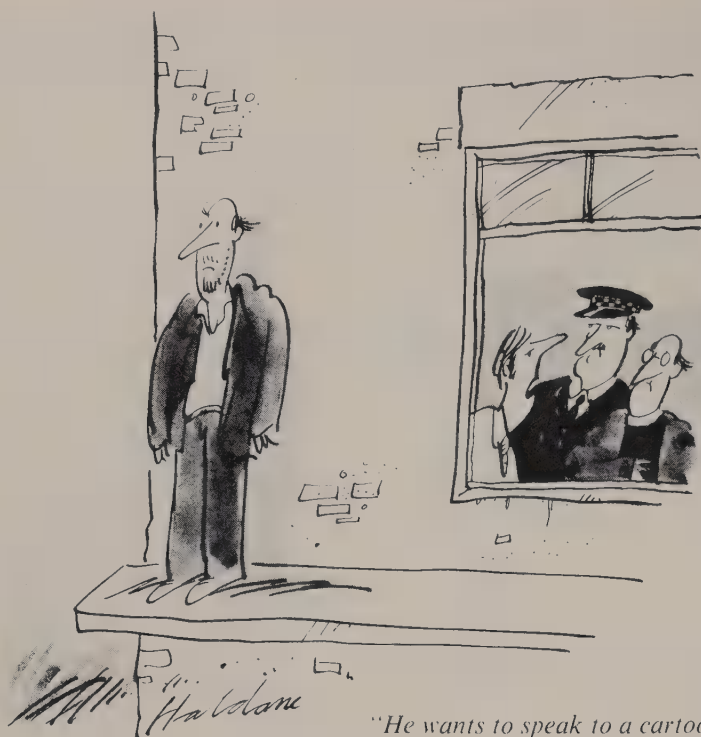
SMILEY smiles a smile of great sweetness into his necktie, thinks of taking his glasses off.

A Sittingroom in Tenby and Elsewhere

MRS X is watching television and making a rug.

Mr X: (entering with two mugs of cocoa) I hope this is all right. Had to rush it. It's a sod not having the commercials. Have I





"He wants to speak to a cartoonist."



"Hello! Bernard and Deborah Follington—apparently, if we'd ever managed to get away from Gatwick to the Hotel Paella in Spain last summer, we would have been in the room next to yours..."

missed anything?

Mrs X: Someone's been blown in Banking Section, he says. Rolling up the antimacassar.

Mr X: Who says?

Mrs X: They all look alike to me.

Mr X: Is Control dead yet?

Mrs X: Something about boiling letter-boxes. Did you remember to write to Mr Hicks?

Exterior. Foreign Office, London. A dog goes past.

Mix to a villa in Brixton. Two good shoes climb steps to front door. Rain is falling from somewhere. Off, a flute being practised.

Quick mixes: Luton airport. British Embassy, Caracas. A lane near Taunton. Oxford Circus. Cambridge Circus. Billy Smart's Circus. Television Centre, Shepherd's Bush.

Fade reluctantly.

A Bar in Shepherd's Bush

TV personalities, many of them Barry Norman, carry trays and drinks.

Le Carré: That's what secret agents are. Secretive. Cheers.

Hopcraft: No, I mean, I have to ask these questions. Cheers. Don't I, Jonathan?

Irvin: He has to ask, Mr Le Carré. Cheers.

Powell: Cheers.

Le Carré: It's all there in the book.

Hopcraft: I worry about Jim Prideaux.

Le Carré: Everybody's read the book.

Irvin: Basically very simple, Arthur. You got that across all right when you did the trailers.

Hopcraft: Who's Steed Asprey?

Le Carré: I agree with our eminent director. It's disguising the basic simplicity that's the main challenge, of course. Otherwise we risk being understood.

Powell: The flashbacks are a help there.

Irvin: Like this one.

Hopcraft: Well, I'd like captions up. "A Forest near Tisnov, 1970."

Others laugh uncontrollably

Le Carré: (recovering) Hello, there's Sir Alec. Excuse me. (Goes out of shot, waving)

Hopcraft: What's a low-grade Marine network?

Irvin: Drink up. Mustn't keep the actors waiting.

Powell: You two go ahead. I have to preview a thirteen-part American epic about famous slaves.

Exterior. Night. Probably a forest near Tisnov. JIM PRIDEAUX or PERCY ALLELINE or somebody is heard crashing through foreign-sounding undergrowth. Distant rifle fire. A groan. Distant washing-up.

A Sittingroom in Tenby and Places

Mrs X: (calls) I said leave the mugs till morning.

Mr X: (calls from kitchen) What was the shooting?

Mrs X: Couldn't see. I've gone over to show jumping.

ROLL CREDITS
MUSIC UP AND OUT

JOHN WELLS:

LITTLE VICTIMS

IN the days when I was a beak there, I had rather mixed feelings about the Fourth of June. On that date, or nowadays on the nearest convenient Saturday, the boys' parents and sisters come down, as every gossip columnist knows, to hear Speeches, visit various exhibitions, and watch a cricket match on the great playing field, celebrated in song and story, called Agar's Plough.

On the one hand the theatrical spectacle, culminating in quaint activities on the river at dusk and a gigantic firework display, was irresistible: on the other, like the dance performed by the burglar anxious to pass himself off as an authentic guest at the hunt ball when the spoons and forks begin to cascade out of his sleeves and fall with an unseemly clang and clatter on the polished floor, I couldn't help thinking it ought to be stopped, if only for the school's own good.

The distinction between Upstairs and Downstairs at Eton is one not easily glossed over. Anyone unwise enough to refer to the Young Masters would be left in no doubt as to whom the term referred. Our noble little employers might "cap" us—raising preferably any other combination than two fingers to their now no longer existent top hats when they passed us in the street—but we were well aware that our true place was behind the green baize door, somewhere above the butler

and somewhere below the man from Christie's who came to value the pictures.

I suppose I was luckier than some, in that I was known to have appeared at the opening night of the Establishment Club and got back in time for Early School at seven-thirty the next morning, and to contribute to a newly founded satirical magazine. But this also had its disadvantages: various successful attempts were made by my lustre-lending friends in London to embarrass me—the entire editorial staff of *Private Eye* hired a horse-drawn vehicle from Windsor Station and behaved appallingly in Eton High Street, I received letters addressed to me at the School Office prominently marked "if undelivered please return to the British League of Homosexuals, Cable Street, Slough," and, after one holiday engagement in cabaret at Ilford, the *Daily Mail* ran a leading article saying Eton Master Peddles Smut in East End and demanding that I should be sacked.

But as far as the boys were concerned, beaks were beaks, and it was little consolation to be present when two members of Pop—a mutual appreciation society for boys in the Sixth Form who are allowed to wear embroidered waistcoats with their Little Undertaker outfits—sprawling on the sofa of a colleague who was himself an Old Etonian and a member of an ancient and noble family, described him, as he left the drawing room for a moment to fetch them a drink, as "such a ghastly middle-class little man". We were all ghastly middle-class little men, and we accepted it.

Nevertheless, huddled in the equivalent of the Servants' Hall—the bachelor masters' "colonies" or the married staff's cautiously furnished homes—we dressed each morning in a similar uniform to that worn by our betters—in our case a charcoal grey suit fraying at the cuffs, yellowing cel-

luloid stick-up collar and a rust-stained made-up white bow tie—and dreamed our dreams of petty bourgeois grandeur, meeting at night to tell familiar old jokes—"You tell it, Kelsall!", "No, no, Richard, you tell it so much better!"—all of which seemed to end with some fellow-menial in an MA gown being called "Sir" by a Viscount.

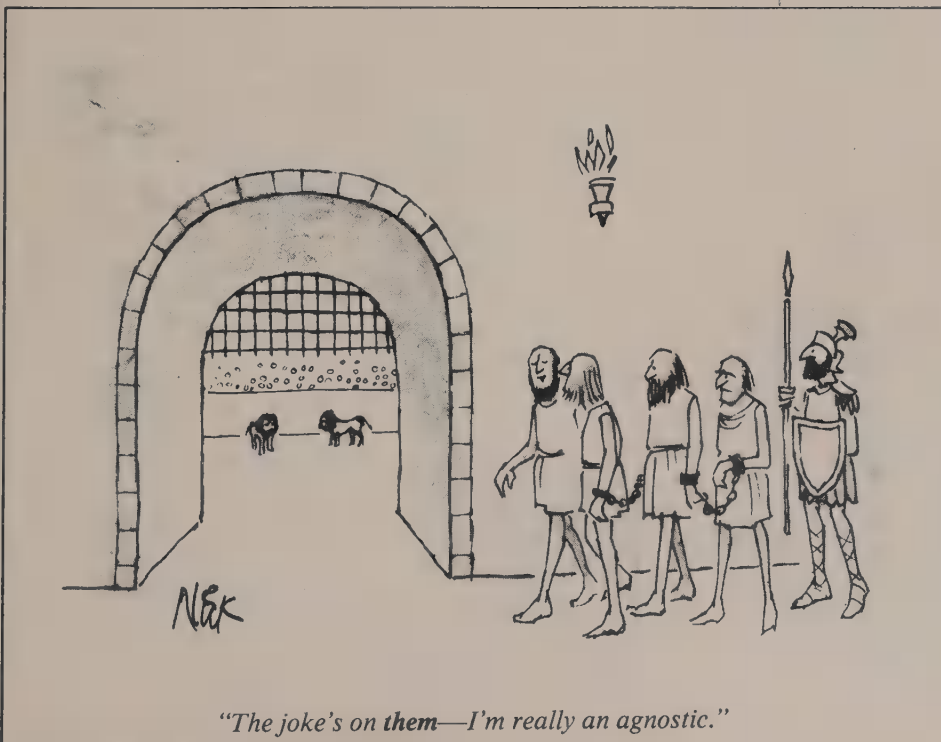
On the Fourth of June any such phantom consolations were cruelly dispelled. The sheer weight of money on Agar's Plough hit you like a wall of liquid platinum. Who Agar was and what he did with his Plough I never discovered: presumably he was driven off, patronised and condescended to, by the first Fourth of Juners ever, advancing in their braying waves from ranks of golden carriages, the historical equivalent of today's rows of glittering Rolls-Royces, laden down with hampers and champagne, every last axle-bolt breathed on and buffed up by a uniformed chauffeur. But the field now seemed to burn a brilliant green against the old red brick of the school as if every blade of grass had been placed there by an art director and lit by a privately hired sun: tens of thousands pounds' worth of cosmetic dentistry flashed California white, toupés blown and coaxed into perfection by exorbitant French wigmakers, every fragile summer hat and long white glove, every button-hole and square inch of polished leather hand-stitched and fussed over regardless of expense.

For the teaching staff it was Waterloo, standing there like tramps in the middle of a major production of *Der Rosenkavalier* at Covent Garden.

But the economic give-away was not just the immediate vulgar extravagance, it was the dramatic manner in which it reflected these unseen millions of pounds spent over the years since old Agar fled to Slough on transforming the foul-mouthed, swivel-eyed cut-throats—great-great-grandfathers, grandfathers, or in some cases obviously fathers of present Etonians—into that perfect fashion parade, chins raised and implacably confident, that takes the field today.

It would be tempting, in the Year of the Child, to summon up the spectre of spiritual or emotional impoverishment, hollow-eyed and rattling its begging bowl, behind every well-fed infant as they pace across the green: but there is more distressing evidence to be seen in reality. Double chins beginning to show in some young Tweedledum in a short jacket and a deep collar, or a member of Pop, inherited deformities apart, loping along with all the dignity of a self-made man of seventy: as if, having been bombarded with particles of bullion since conception, he had become a gold-plated image of premature self-satisfaction, all ambition fulfilled, with nowhere to go but down.

Parents wishing to ensure that their child has a more Equal Start in Life are invited to send their school-fees to me at the Derelict Old Masters Benevolent Fund, c/o Punch Publications, Tudor Street, EC4.



"The joke's on *them*—I'm really an agnostic."

The NIPPERKRAFT catalogue

EVERYTHING FOR MANIC MUMS AND LITTLE HORRORS UP TO TEN

*All garments feature NIPPERKRAFT's simple POO sizing system—Just three measurements: Premature, Ordinary and Obese for a more-or-less perfect fit on Baby every time...

SAFETY NOTE: Remove Baby from Washable Snuggfit Cozygown before boiling.

BABY'S FIRST LAYETTE

Planned with care to keep Baby free from disease

6 PACKS OF NIPPERKRAFT NAPPIES in hard-wearing, scrubbable, no-chafe, form-fitting, half-elasticated cotton and Molebdopolypropylene mix with 28 rustproof, anti-wriggle toggle-clasps and Xelcro integral Poo-Trap for tidier, fresher Number Twos.

600 PACKS OF NIPPERKRAFT DISPOSABLE NAPPY-INNERS—supersoft enough to soothe-red-raw, inflamed or suppurating buttocks, yet sturdy enough to stand up to uric acids or a bio-wash programme. Fits most drains without clogging or messy rodding and copes easily with 2 full-size stools and up to 42ml of wee.

250 PACKS OF NIPPERKRAFT "BOILERSUIT" NAPPY-OUTERS—featuring a Velbicene popped bilge tank that helps prevent night "seepage" or ruined carpets and obviates the need for Mums to wear a wet-suit when "slopping out" before Brekky-time.

*SAFE FOR USE IN HYPOCHLORIDE AUTOCLAVES.

The **LITTLE SHERPA**—BABY'S FIRST SICKPROOF MATINEE JACKET with stitched-on mittens to keep inquisitive fingers out of power-points, botties, honey or turpentine jars etc and with a non-allergenic, quilted, rich vermilion *Fleecifluffex* lining to keep Baby snug for those trying times when harrassed Dads leave them to cry themselves to sleep in the coal-shed.

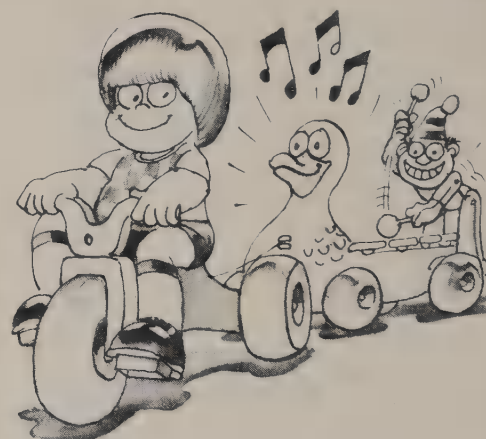
PRODUCT PLUS: Does not come apart in normal use.

The **COLICKY-WOLICKY WIND-TUNNEL**—just pop Baby into this 70mm anechoic tube when tiresome tummy upsets disturb your night's rest and watch his little face light up when he sees purple mice, Bugs Bunnies and ephelump-dragons in non-toxic high-gloss pictures inside. Comes complete with padded lid.

And **BABY'S FIRST SLATTED BUCKET**—finished Flamingo Mauve, Jungle Tangerine or Pelican P Triethopropyledbolene for firm, hygienic support of sodden nappies, soiled bed linen, sicked-on pyjamas, waxy ear-buds etc 'twixt Baby's cot and Mummy's washing machine or Daddy's dustbin. Buy thirty or forty and keep the whole house fresher!

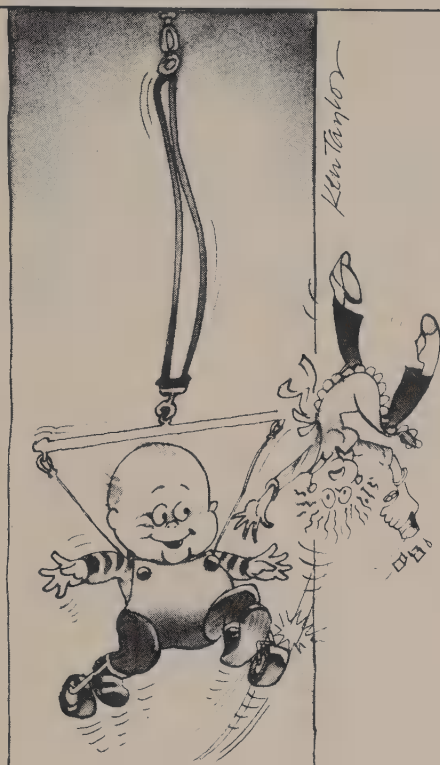
FOR THE GROWING TODDLER

From **NIPPERKRAFT** comes a whole range of seamless, non-choking, fire-resistant toys and appliances for Your Baby with a Whole New World of Wonder to discover as Ten Little Fingers and Ten Little Toes go binkling off to explore the Environment with its cornucopia of sounds and smells, shapes and tastes. You'll watch with pride and fascination the endless fun of scrubbing exact replicas of everyday household objects up Baby's nose or down Baby's little ears, the boundless curiosity of your child's fingers eating dust or insects, the hours of pleasure playing with Daddy's mud or Daddy's pincers, or trying out **NIPPERKRAFT** Whacky-Quacky range of boisterous xylophone ducks. Ma



with care in Malta and Hong Kong, **NIPPERKRAFT** toys help build sound bones and teeth free from decay or periodontal inflammation, cannot cause infant eczema, croup, scarlet fever, tonsillitis or stubby toes and many are impervious to rain.

The **WILLY WHIZZALONG BANSHEE BUTTERFLY AND WHISTLING FIRE-ENGINE** is always a favourite with toddlers up to eight and helps develop eye co-ordination and a sense of rhythm. Just press the trigger and out fly six gaily-painted butterflies, each emitting a piercing screech guaranteed to delight little folk yet under 86 dBA to conform with local noise regulations. Press again and the fire-engine whistles *Raindrops Falling On My Head* continuously.



BABY'S FIRST ACTIVITY WINCH is Step One on the road to walking—a high-quality, steel-look cradle with no sharp edges that simply rivets through the ceiling to your roof rafters and supports Baby well-supported for a few fun-filled minutes of muscle-building “knees:bend” exercises. Optional **ACCESSORY CAST** for Step Two toddlers contains a pair of omni-directional roller castors that strap to Baby’s ankles and encourage exploration further afield. **SAFETY PLUS:** Luminous orange finish warns other road-users not to expect hand-signals.



The Nipperkraft **MINIMOMMA DOLLY** is a life-like replica of a d-d-working Mummy—stoops just like the real thing, sobs uncontrollably when turned over. Unremovable glazed, staring eyes, wavy hair and chapped hands are 100% authentic. Get Daddy to press Minimomma’s plunger and she says “I can’t go on without a stiff gin” just like Mummy does. Silicon-chip circuitry gives a host of features—just shout or wail at Minimomma and she says “I’ve had it up to here with you” and walks out of the room to leave you to it.

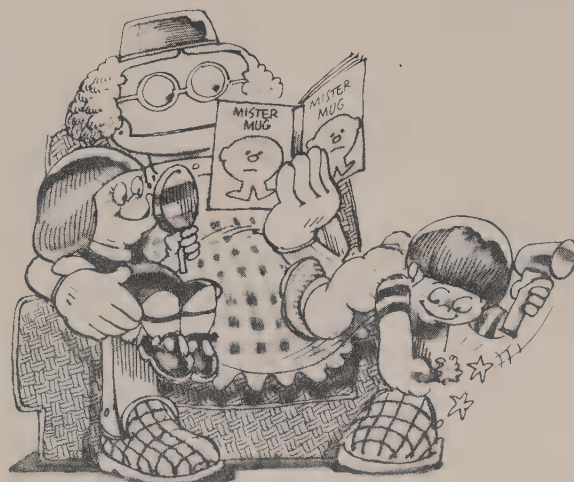
Choose from NIPPERKRAFT’s range of prettily practical clothes for youngsters

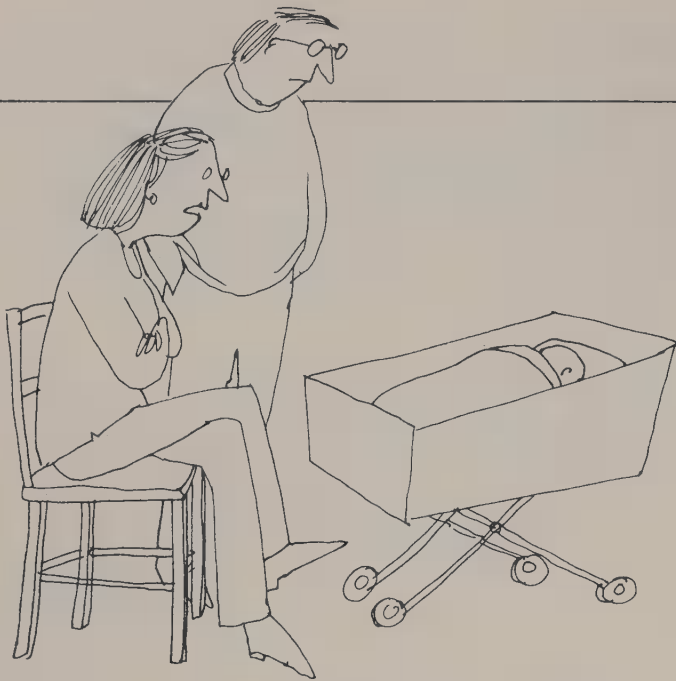
The **SNO-BUNNY** angel top and co-ordinated trews set easily converts into a pretty straitjacket for naughty tantrums at the tug of a drawstring. Reversible, foam-padded leggings set gives firm support if Baby really gets mad and tries to kick Mummy’s teeth in whilst the matching vinyllette mob-cap features quilted ear-muffs so Baby cannot be shocked by Mummy’s remonstrations or Daddy’s terrible words.

The **KRY-BABY** cot net is a boon for noisy non-sleepers—100% toothproof sisal netting is held in place over Baby’s cot by fifteen sturdy non-toxic lead pom-poms and if used in conjunction with Nipperkraft’s special high-density rubber cot bumpers, prevents lasting damage to Little Ones having a bit of a turn at Bydies time.

And an idea from Lapland—The Nipperkraft **ESQUIMETTE ROMPER SUIT** is a one-piece totally unstainable outfit with a spring-loaded back flap that saves vital seconds when training Baby and six stitched-on clasps for taking the NIPPERKLAMP pram parachute harness or bolting to a structural part of your car. Impervious to snow, wasps, axle-grease and molten asphalt. **PRODUCT PLUS:** Cannot be made into shapes by garden shears.

A space-age home-help from NIPPERKRAFT Nurseryonics—The **WOTSDAT ROBOT GRANNY** takes the strain when real-life Mums and Dads and grandparents collapse or “go off their trolley” under intensive questioning from lively little minds. Fully programmed to read Mr Men books up to 2,000 times without pause, will also chase away house-flies, postmen, wiggly worms, passing aeroplanes, cheeping birds or scrunchy gravel whilst singing up to 3,000 choruses of *Pat-a-Cake* or *Lavenders Blue*.





HARPUR:

PREGNANT PAUSE

Harpur

"I wonder how long it will be before we can start testing its IQ?"

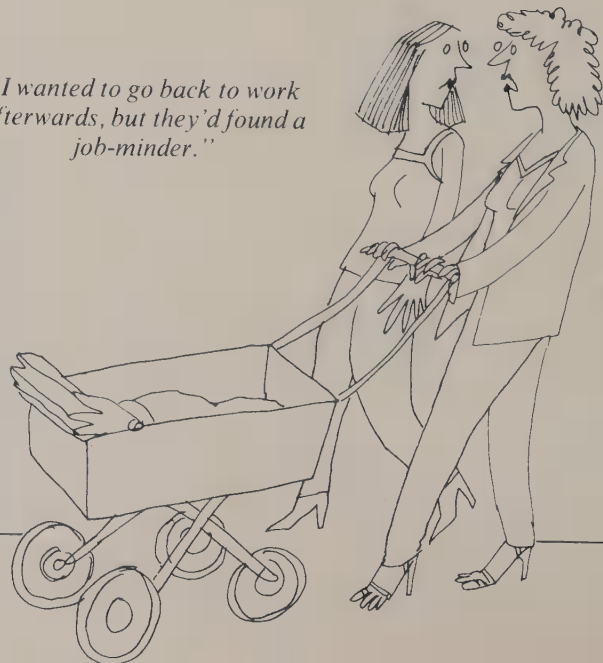


*"I think I felt it kick just then—
don't say it's going to grow up to be
a policeman."*



"Darling, from now on I shall be drinking for two."

*"I wanted to go back to work
afterwards, but they'd found a
job-minder."*





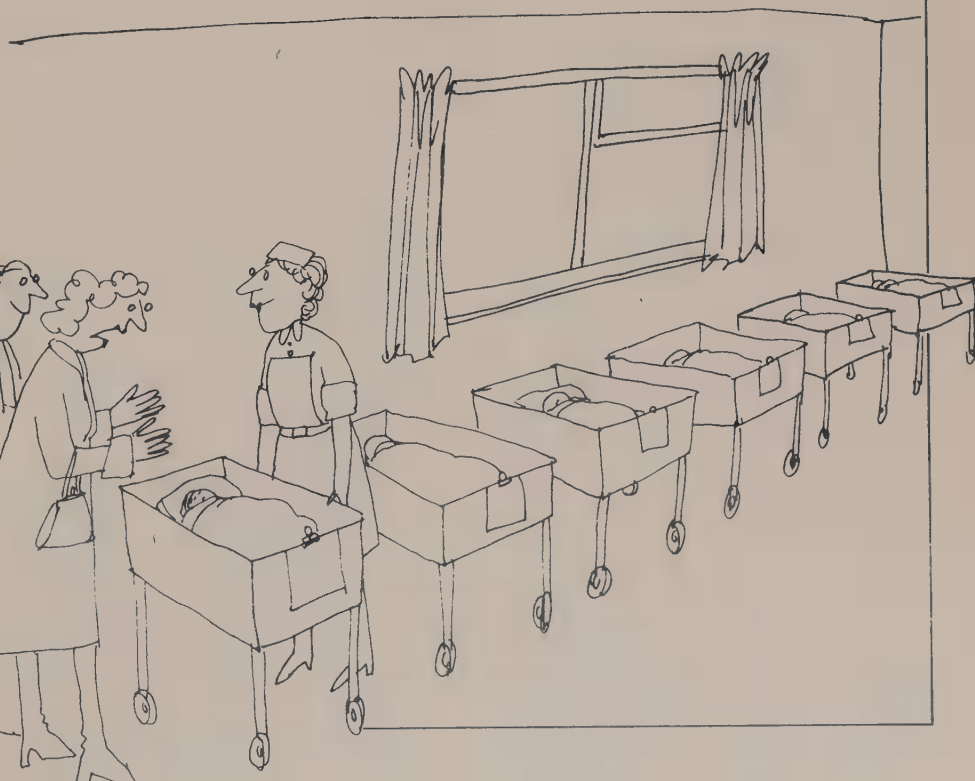
"Jennifer's taking a **suspiciously** long time discarding last year's pregnant look . . ."



"Just think—one day whoever's in there will be scorning all my little jokes."



"He focussed!"



"What—just pick it up and walk out? That can't be right."

Just Williamson



With a reputation for great acting and a great temper, **NICOL WILLIAMSON** takes time off from filming to talk to **DAVID TAYLOR**.

INTO the oppressively over-furnished, claustrophobic gravity of the *Wig & Pen* private snug, accommodatingly sited slap opposite the Divorce Courts in The Strand, tumbles a boisterously cordial Nicol Williamson—*bless my soul, fellah just charged in's a whatsit, actor—to wring hands, command Champagne, take up smoking again, extemporise affectionate impressions of Otto Preminger, chat chummily over the nature of film, art, vitality and stuff and—in short—conscientiously rout his reputation for fitful grumpiness or, from time to time, raising Cain.*

He's a natural actor. Surrounded by so many semi-comatose, Rumpole look-alikes and what appeared to be homeless litigants, this was an Entrance, centre stage: as if Holmes, held up in traffic, had finally arrived to make an address at a conference of Watsons kept waiting all afternoon. Off-stage, off-duty, Nicol Williamson still maintains a presence, appreciates an audience. Sit up straight, then, and hear all about *The Human Factor*.

What started as a Graham Greene thriller became a Tom Stoppard screenplay and is now an Otto Preminger motion-picture, three-quarters in the can, that's no end entertaining, very much appreciated, terrific experience, challenge to do, thank-you, for Nicol Williamson, 41 in September, as the hero double-agent, called Castle. It's work on a proper film

after less-than-testing spot appearances in *The Word* and *Columbo* on TV and will, fans fervently hope, match Williamson's first-rate performances in such as *The Bofors Gun* and *The Reckoning*. I wonder what's next after *The Human Factor*. So does he.

The definitive Williamson role that everyone remembers is Bill Maitland, the disenchanted, cracking-up solicitor of Osborne's *Inadmissible Evidence*, first put on stage some fifteen years ago (arguably creating the play's reputation, or even Osborne's, in the process) and which was his first big film success. Last year, Williamson was again on stage as Maitland in a triumphant revival at The Royal Court. As a study in disconsolation, Nicol Williamson in *Inadmissible Evidence* is rated by most critics as one of the high-spots of post-war British theatre, no less.

He's excelled in a disproportionate number of unsympathetic parts on stage in both Britain and America, he points out, from *Hamlet* and *Coriolanus* to *Uncle Vanya* and *The Ginger Man*, and he goes on to imply that it perhaps accounts for the seemingly widespread fallacy that he's doom-laden, or at any rate crotchety, in real life. Labels, once attached, are devilish difficult to shrug off. He might not be Bruce Forsyth but Christ, all it takes is one ill-considered rejoinder or a written-up raucous party and he's down on file as a volatile bruiser. Do you know, which I did not, he's only ever been hired to do pictures by directors? It'd seem he puts the breeze up film producers.

Nicol Williamson is by no means shy. He shares with Otto Preminger an urge to speak his mind and the two of them don't half communicate on set. Preminger looks exactly the way people called Otto are popularly supposed to look, which is totally bald, Teutonic, substantial and a bit sinister. He has an absorbing habit of whipping off and replacing a pair of black, juggernaut spectacles every ten seconds or so, compounding the effect, and of letting slip tart asides in a thick Vienna accent. Williamson can hand it out too, affecting a weary look of experienced disdain that stops just short of menace, as befits professional standards.

Williamson can turn on the jolliness (he was convincing as Little John in *Robin and Marian*) and plainly has a sentimental streak, near maudlin on occasion, but it is suppressed by pressures of work, professional commitment to assuming a fictional skin. He claims to know at the moment of shooting whether or not a scene is working, has no inclination to agonise over the rushes, indeed seldom bothers to go and see the finished picture.

His private life hasn't been an unqualified success (he's divorced from Jill Townsend, lately of the long-suffering *Poldark*, and is more or less homeless) but the fact that he's a public name—near as dammit a superstar—does not imply any obligation to bare his soul, he points out pointedly. Not an overly self-conscious conversationalist (which would be difficult in the *Wig & Pen*) he makes no attempt to bullshit his way out of awkward questions, hoping to God and the laws of libel not to be betrayed and sent up rotten. Deftly he chips in on what a great man Otto is, and yet so vulnerable. What with the hell-raising, tax exile and awkward divorcee images, he repeats, he can live without brash publicity.

He retreats to Greece. It isn't his place but it isn't cadging either—friends, good friends, ask him over to unwind and he's not so proud as to turn it down. His wants are simple, he stresses, and though Otto takes a shine to gadgetry and pricey toys, Williamson doesn't and doesn't miss it. His idea of a damn good time is playing soccer with his indefatigable six-year-old son, Luke—Cool Hand Luke, according to some people working on the picture, with all of his dad's aplomb. Home for Williamson Sr is right now a rented apartment in London but after the picture—depending on what comes up—he'll probably re-discover home in America and memories of Shakespeare and singing Dixieland or Presley in Jimmie Ryan's Bar or the Eastside Playhouse to let off steam—and, damn it all, of being called (by *The New York Times*) "the terrible-tempered tiger of the English stage, smiter of David Merrick, scourge of critics, accused assassin of *Hamlet*, carouser, brooder, pub-crawler and brawler". They don't mince brickbats on the *NYT*, but the way Williamson re-tells it, aren't so choosy checking their facts either. OK, so once he did lose his temper and pour a beer over David Merrick (Broadway producer/manager) but only after he'd been extraordinarily rude and graceless. The world should belong to sane and reasonable people. That *Hamlet*, incidentally, was acclaimed as an inspired, if controversial, *coup-de-théâtre* in this country, even if it bombed on Broadway and sent Nicol Williamson into a slough of despair. On the other hand, he was asked to do a solo turn at the White House.

He wouldn't call acting an art; for him it's a testing craft in which you bear the responsibility to transmit others' intentions, demonstrating as sharply and keenly as you can what has been written, what's being said. On an exceptional day that task may take off into something close to art—like instant Mozart—but it is always the script that counts and that's why you thank Christ right now to be doing a Tom Stoppard version of Graham Greene. With that mix, worked over by Otto, it'll click. Williamson won't see the picture, but it'll click. Nearly twenty years since he started out at Dundee Rep., he's learnt to spot winners. He's still working on playing them, one after the next.



JONATHAN SALE:

Blithe Spirits

THIS winter, why not take yourself spiritually to the cleaners? Why not pick up a leaflet about something called "Insight"? Why not go to a meeting at the Café Royal in Regent Street to learn more? Was this my chance to be like Bernard Levin and Arianna Stassinopoulos, mentally retextured?

Arianna Stassinopoulos was just a Greek lady who cropped up on radio and television all the time. Now, she is a Greek lady who crops up all the time on television and radio, speaking in broken accents of that thing for which Western Man is currently searching (believed to be copies of her latest book, *The Other Revolution*). And Bernard Levin...

But Bernard Levin was on the stage of the Napoleon Suite—the name was a coincidence—to explain what Insight had done to make him a new, improved person. At meetings where two or three hundred are gathered together to be born again, there is always a token Loony Lady on the long march to further insanity (I was sitting behind her), there are always a few token dissidents come for a laugh (they were in the row in front of her), there is always someone whose invitation card does not bear his name (that was me) and there are generally well-heeled and attractive seekers after truth (they were everywhere).

To us all, Levin explained why he was there. "I speak solely from the point of view of someone who has taken the Insight seminars," and, he might have added, the

close friend of Arianna, who had imported Insight from America and was even now gazing sweetly at him. "I asked myself the question—what have you got to lose? 50 hours of my time, and £150 of my money."

The dissidents—a couple of used-car salesmen and their dates, a pair of not quite identical twins—out-mimed Marcel Marceau in their expressions of shock horror. "There are," Levin added hastily, "some scholarships."

This was certainly a new Levin. This was not the iconoclast of *That Was The Week That Was* who called Alec Douglas-Home a cretin. This was not the *Times* columnist who piled clause upon clause to confound the atrocities of the Soviet Union and the North Thames Gas Board. This was not the purist for whom Alexander Solzhenitsyn was one of the few worthy of a five-star rating, a man trapped, like himself, in long sentences.

Here was Solzhenitsyn's most public admirer coming out with a price list and special cut rates, like the most persistent of vacuum cleaner salesmen, without even specifying how his model differed from other brands or even that it picked up the dust. They must be falling about in the Kremlin, hugging themselves at the Gas Board, to see their scourge thus dissipating his energies.

Meanwhile, Levin was recalling his first session, when he assembled with 99 other seekers after the truth elsewhere in the Café

Royal. (A mathematician writes: $100 \times £150 =$ fifteen grand. Another mathematician adds: This had better be good value.) The "trainers" asked the participants to observe—Cubs' Honour—certain rules: no smoking, no taking of notes, no blabbing about anything said. Then they began, like spiritual Lollipop Ladies, "guiding us in the direction they hope we will go. There were group exercises like 'icebreakers' at children's parties. There were one-to-one exercises. There was a sharing of the experiences in the exercises. That's the form. That's all."

That's all. We had come on a wet night all the way to the West End. I had, as it happened, cut short a yoga class and my feet were still trying to float up to seat level. The Editor of *The Times* had made it his business, in the midst of negotiations that could have stopped his presses for ever, to listen to his chief columnist exposing himself. Others may have missed their evening shopping at boutiques or left soirées early.

We had come to be better people, plunge into the hidden depths of our souls, spend the long winter evenings wisely, gain Insight, if not insight. And the best he could do was babble about kids' party games. My daughter was six the other day, but she didn't charge £150 to her little friends who came in to play Hunt the Slipper and Puke on the Carpet. And they got free jelly.

These were not all the words (not by a



long shot; the dissidents were soon miming deep slumber, until the Loony Lady told them to belt up) but it was the end of the on-the-spot reportage. We had a lot of negatives: "Nobody's asked to make a fool of themselves, to take their clothes off." The dissidents looked disappointed. "Insight is not a religion of any kind." Dissidents cheered up. "It is not psychoanalysis of any kind." Dissidents looked relieved. "It is not a learning process like extramural studies." Nor, one gathered, does it prolong active life in dogs, nor beat as it sweeps as it cleans.

We had to take its effects on trust. There was a new openness about Levin. In the old days, he would deny his identity to strangers accosting him in the street. Failing that, he would be rude. Now he stretches out the hand of friendship to all comers. Some of us may manage that without spending the equivalent of a working week within the confines of the Café Royal, but something has clearly happened to Bernard Levin.

Arianna Stassinopoulos is one of the things that has happened to Bernard Levin, and she was now about to happen, in a dissipated form, to the audience. In sharing with you the meaningful experience of listening to her words, I had better begin by agreeing that my Greek accent isn't what it might be. In fact, I sound pretty dopey in the tongue of the Hellenes, mainly because all I know is Ancient Greek and then only enough to say, "Wherein lies The Good, O Socrates?" So it is with no false sense of superiority that I state that Arianna Stassinopoulos sounds like the Greek cousin of Manuel in *Fawlty Towers*, which is fine if you are auditioning for a comedy series but awkward if you are trying to drum up business for a new mental movement. To overcome your disadvantage, your words had better be pretty convincing.

I wish I could say that hers were. She spoke of freedom—rather oddly for one who

was not in the forefront of international condemnation of the Colonels when they were tramping all over her native Greece. No, this was a mental freedom she had in mind, and came in four parts.

"The first is getting free of the melodrama that goes on in our heads, or at least, goes on in my head, a B-movie." Now she still has the film show in her cranium, but she watches more as a paying customer than a participant, without guilt. "The second is getting free of images, self-limiting images and ego-images of perfection." She mentioned Maria Callas in this context, about whom she happens to have written a biography—a piece of information which by a strange coincidence is also to be found in the leaflet on Insight.

"The third; what most of us do is play the victim. It is an amazing freedom to realise that we are not the victim." Maria Callas was also quoted in this context, as Arianna's publishers will be pleased to hear.

"The fourth area is perhaps the most significant. For centuries we have operated almost exclusively from the head." (It probably sounds better in Greek.) "Now we are realising that there is another centre, the heart centre." (Ditto, in any language.) "I thought that the greatest gift God gave me was my mind"—a view not universally shared—"and I was utterly trapped in my head." It must have been standing room only inside her skull, what with B-movies, guilt complexes and now Ms Stassinopoulos herself. After Insight, you will be overjoyed to learn, she has been granted an unconditional discharge, now that she is "living from the whole of my being".

Having experienced Insight in America, she wanted to share it with her friends, and 100 had taken up this unbeatable offer; there were now vacancies for the next session. But first, any questions?

The dissidents clearly didn't know where

to begin, but the man from the *Sunday Telegraph* asked how Insight differed from another type of encounter group, EST? Answer: In the strict EST regimen, you can't go to the lavatory when you want to. In Insight, you can go to the lavvy whenever you like.

The Loony Lady stood up, but we had someone else's question: Aren't you exploiting people's insecurity for profit and other meaningful and hard-hitting remarks aggressively delivered? Answer: It is non-profit-making, for Heaven's sake, and how many times do I have to tell you that this is a labour of love and joy on our part so get your facts right. The Loony Lady stood up, amid cries of "Over here!" from the dissidents. But the question came from over there: Are you sure we can go to the lavatory when we want to? Answer: Bladders could be emptied ad lib, on the house.

The Loony Lady stood up, brandishing the question she had been adding to while waiting. It now ran to several pages of notebook, of Levinesque proportions, and halfway through she had a fit. This turned out to be the overture to a mammoth sneeze, at the end of which she snatched the hem of her dress and in one graceful notion blew her nose on it. Her question, about the point of being spiritually free if you were politically enchained, was lost in the cabaret. She gathered her wits together and floated out, as, later, did the dissidents.

Levin made thank-you-for-coming noises, but a girl in a red dress leapt to the microphone and told us that she had been conducting a training with some 90-year-olds and "came out very rich in heart"—as opposed to pocket—and "I haven't got enough words to say what a wonderful experience it has been for me." Levin had words enough to say that if anyone did want to register, there was a table with forms and the next session started on . . . but alas, gentle reader, it has just finished, so you will have to restrict yourselves to popping round for a look at my copy of the Insight leaflet, which contains:

1. Colour picture of four trees and a cloud by Bernard Levin.
2. Authentic passenger statement by Solzhenitsyn: "If you wanted to put the world to rights, whom would you begin with?" (The answer is not: A. Stassinopoulos and B. Levin.)
3. Reprint of article by Arianna from *Observer* plus—exclusive—the bits they cut out.
4. Picture of Arianna, either by B. Levin or not.
5. Picture of B. Levin.
6. Article by B. Levin.
7. Picture of Agapi Stassinopoulos (believed to be a sister of the author of a biography of Maria Callas).
8. A note that Small Ads ("Dog walker needed, etc") cost 50p in the Newsletter.
9. Not a lot more about what Insight actually consists of. Why on earth don't its organisers have a public meeting and tell us all about it? They could hire the Napoleon Suite for £325, or a local school hall for twenty quid.

In an ideal world...



JEFFREY BERNARD dreams of Ideal Gambling

A CYNIC might well say that, as far as gambling goes, it is already an ideal world in that bookmakers win and punters lose and we all of us amateur psychiatrists know that punters want to lose. Edmund Bergler, an American psychiatrist and one of the very few men ever to have made a serious study of gambling, says it's all down to those childish feelings of omnipotence. We want to be naughty but, when we cry, we want immediate forgiveness and a pat on the head and assurance that all is well with the world and that the Almighty loves us after all. (I can imagine Mr Bergler delivering just that message with a thick, guttural, German accent.) Well, if he is right then I suppose it's fitting that bookmakers should holiday in the West Indies while the rest of us scratch our heads over the form book, looking for the one last "getting out of trouble" bet while the holes in our socks get bigger and bigger. But that's not my idea of ideal.

I'd like to see bookmakers fluctuate their odds in a way not dependent on the weight of money on a horse or on the quality of a horse, but in accordance with the idiot rating of the punter concerned. I'd like to propose that all punters be given this idiot rating. This could be worked out by looking at a man's track record. For example, anyone who could prove to a special betting committee that he had consistently and for some time not only made a fool of himself, but got himself neck high in muck and debt, should then be given a point or two over the odds. Just how many points would depend on how many witnesses he could bring

forward to vouch for his lunacy and optimism.

A few years ago—this should illustrate what I mean—the late lamented Victor Chandler, the first gentleman of the book-making profession, took quite a few bob from me over a horrendous two months. Towards the end of that time, I approached him one day at Sandown Park to place a bet and I heard him turn to his workmen—clerk, tic-tac man, bag holder—and say, "Here comes the lunch money." He was, in fact, always good enough to give me the best price available about a horse since he regarded me as someone who would invariably pay most of the firm's expenses for their day at the races.

Another thing that would be a must in an ideal gambling world would be that bookmakers should be made, by law, to accept any sum of money provided they could cover it. At the moment, they've lost their nerve and, like taxi drivers, they're picking and choosing their clients far too readily. If they're granted a licence to stand up and make a book then they should stand up and take whatever they're given. D'you know, it's almost impossible to get more than a lousy £1,000 on a horse on the course these days? Life is very difficult for the dedicated horse player and I just don't know what the hell to do with my next £5,000.

Life is also pretty difficult for the dedicated card player. Ideally, there ought to be card booths scattered all over big cities and towns. Many's the time I've been standing by a bus stop or been aimlessly wandering along window shopping when it's suddenly struck me with a bang that I'd like to be dealt five cards. This almost primeval urge could well be assuaged by the setting up of these Government sponsored card playing booths. They should simply comprise a round table, seven comfortable chairs, a dealer and a well-stocked bar run by an attractive female and one would simply pay a nominal sum for sitting in. Years ago, one of the nicest things about Soho—Chicago nostalgia—was that you could always get a game of gin rummy in any barber's shop in the district. All the spivs, market boys, and myself would pop in during the morning for a shave and hot towels and then we'd play Italian Aldo gin for the bill. I once owed him for fifteen shaves and as many hot towels at an age when I hardly had a hair on my face.

As far as football pools are concerned, in an ideal world, I would have certain classes of people debarred from entering these ridiculous 20 million to 1 against chance raffles. Then you or I might stand a chance. What I mean is, you may have noticed that only certain sorts ever scoop the jackpot. It seems to me that fate has decreed you may only win the pools if you come under any of

the following categories. Sheet metal worker from Hull. Housewife from Merthyr Tydfil. Panel beater from Middlesbrough. Retired ironmonger from Sidcup. Bournemouth widow. Anonymous Carshalton Beeches bachelor and retired schoolteacher in Glasgow who does not want any publicity. Scrap that lot and we'd be in with a fighting chance. I can see it now. "Drunken Soho hack wins £500,000."

I would also like to suggest that Her Majesty's Government might give grants to those of us who would like to spread gambling to less intellectual fields. It might even help the tourist business and attract a load of foreign currency. You see, you don't really need casinos and racetracks only for gambling. Pubs are very good places for that. I'd very much like to spend half an hour with an Arab in a pub betting on whether the next person through the door might be male or female. Over the years I've worked out the odds on this one—yes, of course it's more likely to be a man—but I haven't sufficient capital to put it to the test with an Arab. I also need Government aid in finding mugs to bet me that I don't know what won the Derby in 1937.

In an ideal world punters would be encouraged, not persecuted with taxes. When was England last great? I'll tell you. When people like Fox, Pitt, Sheridan and Byron were dropping or picking up British Leyland's Chairman's annual wages with one throw of the dice and we still beat France 6-0 in 1815. The fact that we're now a nation of losers has very little to do with industrial disputes. It's a deep seated malaise that can be seen, though, in an industrial dispute. Fancy standing in a picket line when the betting shops are open. It's disgraceful.



"This is a recording... Mrs Braithwaite isn't in at the moment, but here is an update on the Mrs Hyslop/lodger/double-glazing salesman situation..."



Mr William Whitelaw, in a written reply, said: Most houses in this country offer a reasonable degree of protection against radioactive fallout from nuclear explosions, and protection can be substantially improved by a series of quite simple do-it-yourself measures. The material is ready now for an intensive publicity campaign if war should threaten. There may well be advantage in offering more advice to the public in normal times, and this is one of the matters we are considering in the current review of home defence arrangements. This will cover all aspects of public protection, including evacuation.

Oh, Well

WORLD WAR III: What to do

EVACUATION PLANS

Many of you have written to your Government asking how to get out of urban centres in the event of nuclear attack.

This is quite straightforward. There is a Home Office pamphlet entitled *How To Get Out of Urban Centres in the Event of Nuclear Attack*. You will find it easiest to remember it as HTGOOUCITEONA. We have thought it wisest not to release it yet, partly because we see no good reason to panic the population, partly because it hasn't been written. When it is, it will be available from your nearest Nuclear Attack Evacuation Advisory Pamphlet Centre (NAEAPC). You will find instructions on finding your nearest NAEAPC in the Home Office pamphlet, *How Do I Get the Pamphlet Explaining How To Get Out of Urban Centres in the Event of Nuclear Attack*, or, for convenience, HDIGTPEHTGOOUCITEONA, which will be available as soon as the Next Lot breaks out, upon written application to the Vehicle Registration Office in Swansea, if you intend evacuating yourself by car (unless you are registered for VAT), or the DHSS in Dundee (unless your PAYE forms are held at either Manchester or Portsmouth, with the exception of those eligible for Supplementary Family Benefit, who should consult their local CAB first) if you intend leaving on foot, and are under 65 on January 1, 1981, or unmarried. If you are registered for VAT (excepting Scotland and all non-patrials with fewer than two (2) grandparents living), then you must apply to HM Customs & Excise, Southend-on-Sea. If you have claimed, or intend claiming, exemption from VAT under Section 18b, you must get a form from your nearest post office, which will, when taken to your local Town Hall together with your birth certificate and P45 (where relevant), entitle you to a Travel Warrant Application Form (Nuclear Attack), or TWAP(NA). This permits you to travel ONLY on Public Transport; there may be heavy penalties for attempting to leave urban centres on foot or by car for those holding only a TWAP(NA). The TWAP(NA) is valid only when signed by a JP or officer of a recognised church.

DAME VERA LYNN EMERGENCY STATION

Many of you have written to your Government asking where Dame Vera Lynn fits into all this.

As you know, Dame Vera Lynn made a considerable contribution to our victory in the Last Lot, and we shall once again be calling upon her inestimable services in the Next Lot.

When the siren goes signalling the start of the Next Lot, members of the public will proceed to the Albert Hall (buses 52,

73, 9a; nearest tube, High Street Kensington), where Dame Vera Lynn will sing as much of *We'll Meet Again* as is possible in the time available. Should that time be longer than is presently anticipated, she will also sing *White Cliffs of Dover*, unless these have been destroyed, in which case the programme will be amended, in the interests of taste.

For those of you living outside London, your local Civil Defence offices are holding stocks of *We'll Meet Again* records (south of Derby) and *Gracie Fields' Now Is The Hour* (north of Derby). At the outbreak of hostilities, ONE of these per household may be applied for on buff form EP/978/cd/6-42.

THE WHITELAW SHELTER

Many of you have written to your Government asking where the Morrison shelter fits into all this.

Well, nowhere, is the short answer. During the Last Lot, the Morrison shelter served a useful purpose, its stout iron frame affording reasonable protection from falling chandeliers, stag heads, and so forth. However, time has moved on forty years, and the Morrison shelter is totally inadequate to the demands that will be made by the Next Lot, which, as you know, will be a Nuclear Lot. In a Nuclear Lot, there will be a lot of radiation blowing about which would get in round the corners of a Morrison shelter.

The Whitelaw shelter has therefore been designed with curtains. At the first sign of a nuclear holocaust, get into your Whitelaw shelter, and *draw the curtains!*

All jolly well, I hear you say, but how do I get one of these Whitelaw shelters? Simple! The WS 1 (already affectionately known at the Home Office, by the way, as a Willie) has been



That's All Right Then

stockpiled in convenient kit form at three secret depots Somewhere in England. At the outbreak of the Next Lot, you will be sent a plain envelope, telling you the number to call, if you are one of the lucky ones: simply ring up and make an appointment, and we shall give you the Willies.

CONFUSING IVAN

Many of you have written to your Government asking what you can do to confuse Ivan.

This is jolly encouraging! As in the First Lot and the Last Lot, the British people clearly want to do their bit in the Next Lot.

And this time, it's going to be much easier.

Let's assume (one ought always to be realistic) that the Nuclear Holocaust hasn't gone our way, for some reason. Ivan will then invade, but with everything flattened, he's going to be a lot easier to spot. If you see him coming and you are still alive, remove your bicycle pump and hide it, and let down the tyres.

It will not be necessary to turn signposts round the other way. Unlike Fritz, Ivan does not use a normal alphabet. We at the Home Office have seen his alphabet, and it makes absolutely no sense at all. It therefore follows that *our alphabet makes no sense to him!* Dorking, to take one obvious example, has no Russian equivalent whatever.

Because of this, Ivan will want to stick to motorways. This will be his first big mistake! Your average Russian does not know that two lanes are always closed; in the ensuing jams, there will be ample time for your Government to fly to Bermuda.

Fifth columnists are slightly trickier. Unlike the Hun, they do not wear monocles or click their heels. The best way to spot them is to look in their tea. If there is a slice of lemon floating in it, they are Russians.

POTS AND PANS AND RAILINGS

Many of you have written to your Government asking where you should send your pots, pans and railings.

Well, we do enormously appreciate your eagerness to help the War Effort, but the plain fact of the matter is that in This Lot, old iron may not be a great deal of use. It takes quite a long time, despite modern technology, to build an effective anti-missile system out of old kettles, and the signs are that we may not have much more than about, say, eleven minutes to do it in.

Our expert advice is to save the saucepans to wear on your heads. They may not afford major protection against a direct hit from an ICBM, but for those of you lucky enough to be between ten and twenty miles away from the epicentre, the saucepan would be a valuable way of identifying your remains, provided you write your name clearly on the bottom.

TELEVISION SERIES

Many of you have written to your Government asking what will happen to major TV serials in the event of a nuclear holocaust.

Well, of course, this was not something with which we who went through the Last Lot had to cope; nevertheless, Henry Hall carried on, as I remember, and so did Al Bowly till a bomb fell on him, and we are assuming that it will be more or less the same this time. Not Henry Hall, naturally, he seems to have disappeared, but I see no reason why Bruce Forsyth, for example, should not carry on until a bomb falls on him, or, indeed, after.

As for series of a plotted nature, such as *Crossroads Street* and similar, there are contingency plans for winding these up satisfactorily so that loyal followers will not miss anything. Your Government has arranged for final episodes to be filmed in advance, such as the one where a bomb falls on the motel, the Rover's Return, Andy Pandy's house, the Tardis, etc., killing everyone instantly, and these will be shown on your screens immediately the Next Lot starts.



CARELESS TALK
COSTS LIVES

HONEYSETT:

LAST OF THE FEW



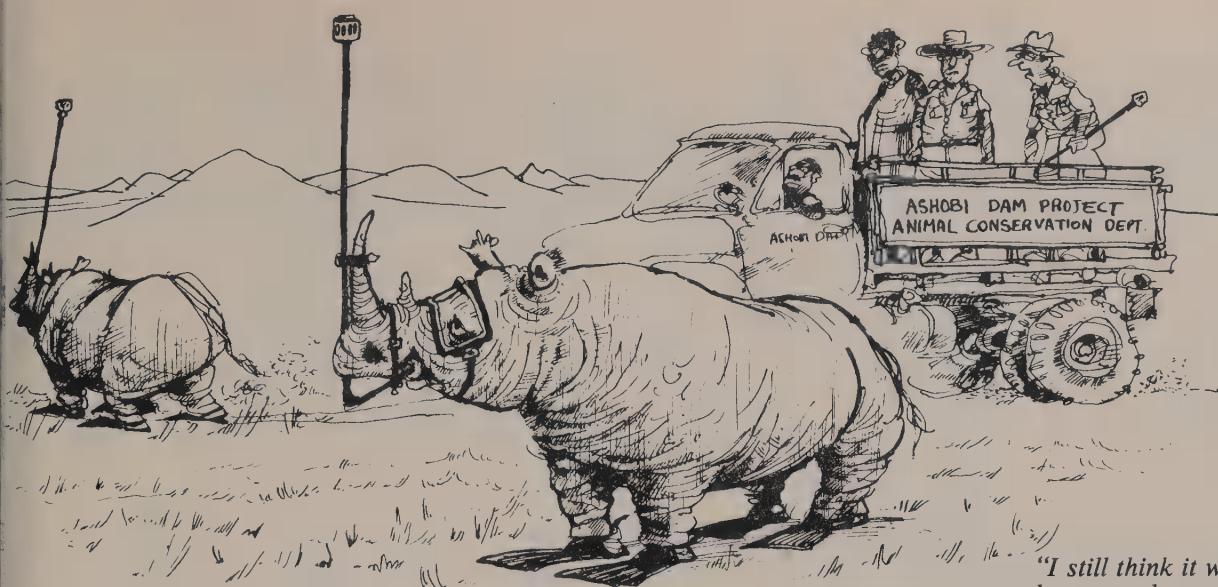
"There used to be hundreds of hippos in this area."



"As you can see, some have adapted to their reduction of territory quite well."



"Mind you, he's into conservation now and won't shoot pregnant ones any more."



"I still think it would have been better to have moved them to higher ground."



"It'd be terrible if they did become extinct—the cost of changing our symbol would be astronomical."



"Hang on a sec and I'll tell you."



"That makes it twenty-three known surviving examples."

WHAT IN THE HELL IS GOING ON IN THE WORLD?

AS SURMISED FROM NEWS REPORTS & PURE HEARSAY BY ARNOLD ROTH

IRAN: AN OIL-RICH LAND.

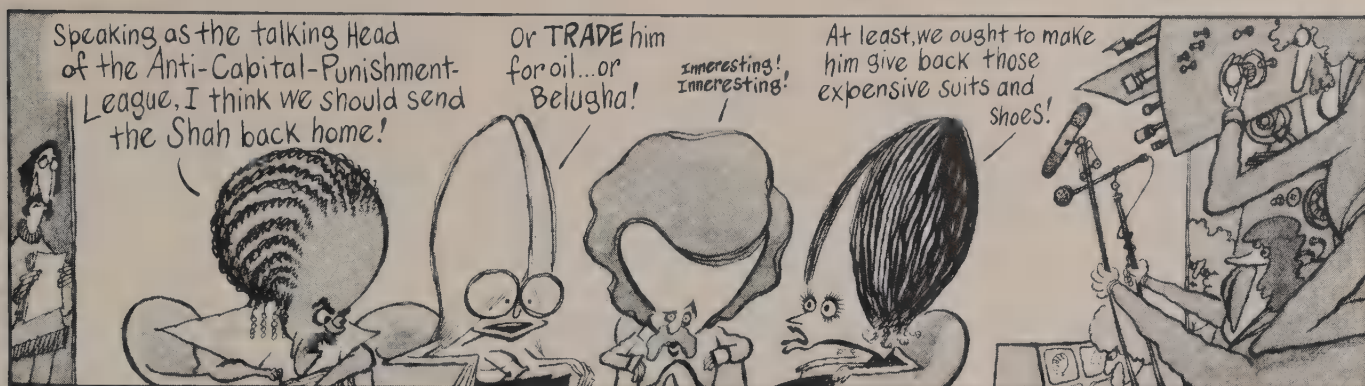


HIGH INFIDELITY.

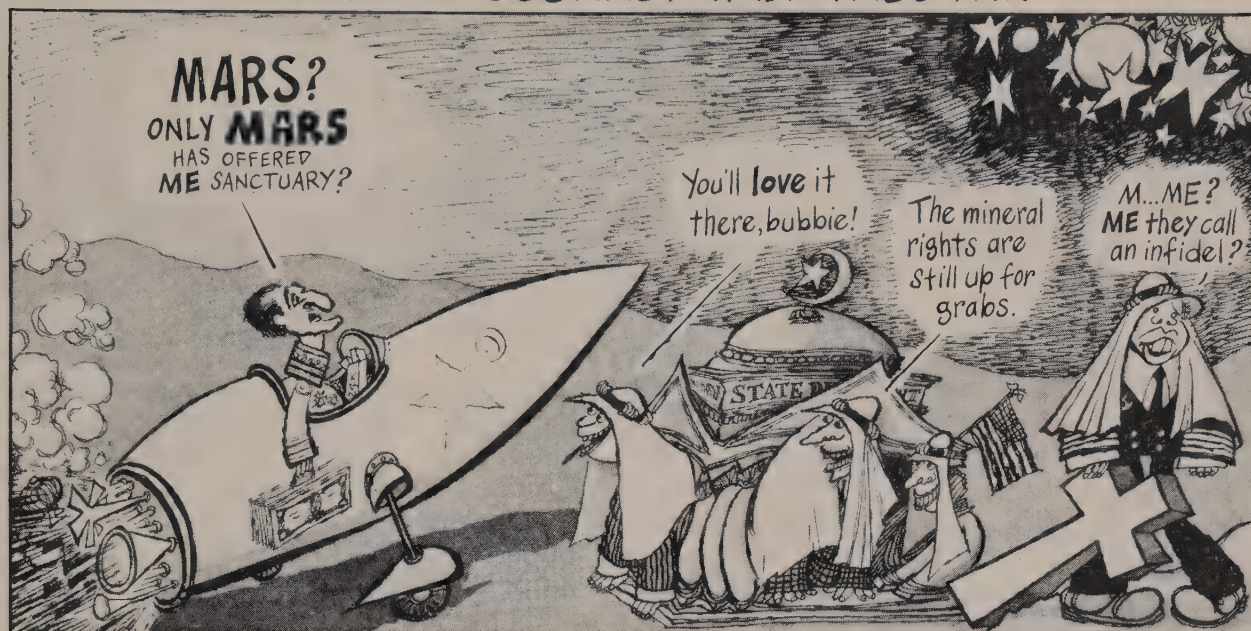


STUDENT SEIZURE ON EMBASSY ROW.

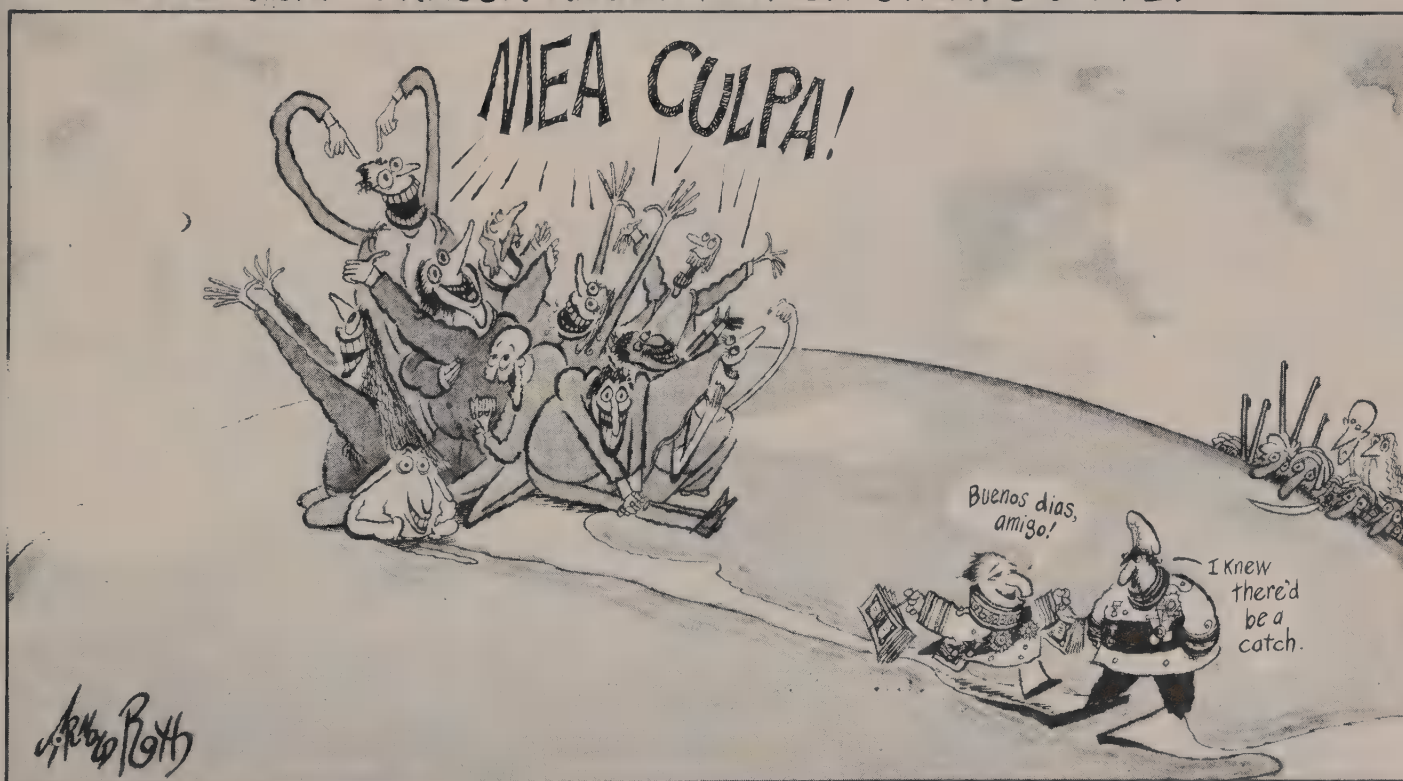




A SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY: WHEN PALS PART.

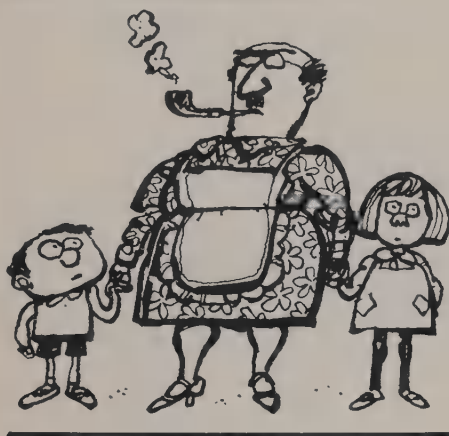


AMERICA: A KNOCK-KNEED NATION STANDS UNITED!



Art Roth

In an ideal world...



JILL TWEEDIE dreams of Ideal Motherhood

THE trouble with motherhood is that too many people, including some mothers, regard it as an exclusively female preoccupation, a worthy sort of woman's hobby like making patchwork quilts, much to be encouraged, of course, by bishops and politicians and other upright citizens but a hobby for all that and, as such, irrelevant to the realpolitik of this naughty old world. The result is that certain women wilfully misinterpret such kind of support and praise and, quite forgetting their station in life, keep asking for more money to be spent on their hobby, demanding that VIPs like employers and trade unionists and Members of Parliament—men, in a word—actually furnish facilities for the hobby in factories and offices and public buildings, even provide time off, *paid*, to pursue the hobby. I mean, it's one thing to be a dab hand at

crocheting doilies or making quince jelly but quite another to expect the rest of the world to discommode itself for your pastime. Absurd!

What is to be done about such reactions? The first thing, it seems to me, is to establish, full frontally, the little-known fact that for every mother in the land there is an equivalent father. Shock horror sensation! At present, Father's Day is a shabby backstreet event, mainly promoted for the profit of card-sharks. During Year One of an ideal world, every man who has a child should be required to wear in a prominent place upon his uniform, overalls, legal robes, City pinstripes, blue collar, white collar or scruffy T-shirt, a large badge proclaiming "I Am A Father". This badge would, I predict, massively complicate the lives of its wearers, particularly those involved in negotiations concerning children. One thing to point out, patiently, to a woman that there really are no funds available to start creches in multi-chain companies, that juvenile delinquents are entirely created by working mothers or that she does see, doesn't she, that he must ask her whether she intends to start a family before he offers her the job. Another thing to do it when the woman concerned has a beady eye fixed on his "I Am A Father" badge. It is likely that even the most hardened of males would occasionally feel his five o'clock shadow suffused with a dull blush.

Once the fact had been established, however painfully, that men are, despite their best intentions, intimately connected with motherhood, we could then proceed to the next and almost opposite task, which is to drive a wedge between being a woman and being a mother. This wedge is essential if we are ever to accord motherhood its proper status among other jobs. No-one

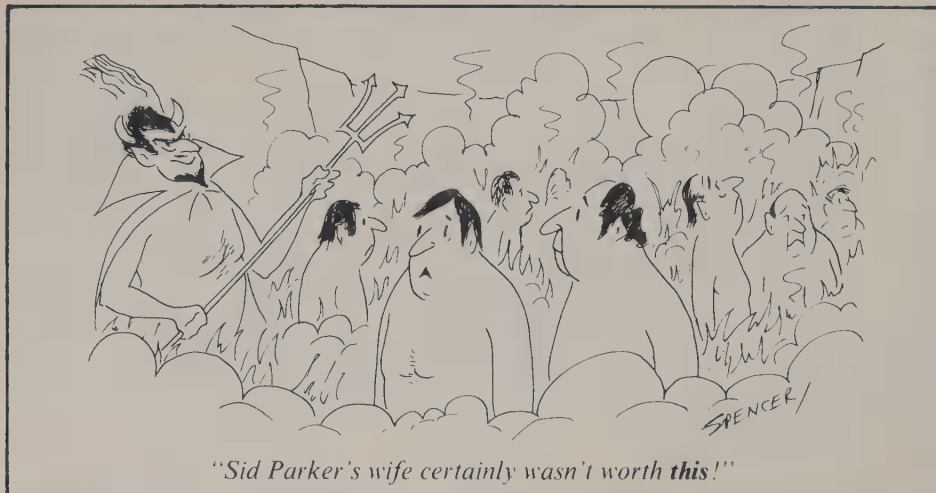
informs men that engineering, say, is deeply important, highly skilled and very wonderful work requiring unique talent and dedication and then, in the same breath, says all men can be engineers. But that is exactly the lip-service paid to motherhood—it is constantly defined as the vital cornerstone to civilisation as we know it and yet every appropriately-equipped woman is inevitably assumed to be willing and able to do it.

So the second necessity for ideal motherhood is to make it relatively exclusive and that can only be arranged by eliminating all social expectation that merely possessing a womb fits you for this inevitable and glorious achievement. This freedom will then allow those women who really are A1 Mother Material, by temperament and aptitude, to undertake the work with the proper measure of training, support and respect. It would immediately become obvious, too, that the act of giving birth is not a necessary qualification for such employment and the inability of some women, and all men, to do so should be no hindrance to their wish to care for children. Un-motherly women may then give birth but continue to offer their other talents to society in the guilt-free knowledge that evolution's interest in gene-diversity will be fulfilled without the penalty of their own discontented and inept tending of those genes twenty-four hours a day.

Thus the word Mother would be widened to embrace any member of the human race, of either sex and most ages, whose life's interest is in giving stability, affection and intelligent care to children, so that creches and after-school centres would not simply cope with kids but offer the very best (and best-paid) of parental talent to supplement other people's more limited abilities. This should mean not only the disappearance of such tragedies as child neglect and abuse and maternal isolation, depression and inadequacy but also solve the curious paradox that, while very young women are physically best equipped to give birth to healthy children, older women are better at bringing them up. Put the two together, include men in, and you have the ideal extended family.

There is another vital adjustment necessary to our present view of motherhood and that requires an extension at one end of the spectrum of childhood and an abrupt curtailment at the other. At the moment the very word "motherhood" conjures up, for most of us, pleasurable visions of gurgling babes, lacy shawls, gleaming prams and adorably rigged-out cots. Mothers mean women bending tenderly over sleeping toddlers or serenely breast-feeding pink-cheeked wee angels. Mothercare classes produce plastic doilies so that we can practise a mothercraft confined to changing nappies, sterilising bottles, making up formulae and discussions, on when to introduce solid food and, heaven knows, even that limited image has its dark side.

But in an ideal world, eager parents at the ante-natal clinic would be confronted, instead, with two excessively large, clumsy and grubby teenagers. The boy, covered in spots and black torn garments, would lurch



"Sid Parker's wife certainly wasn't worth *this*!"

about the room to an eruption of howls from his tranny, knocking over chairs, falling over tables and prepared to argue to the crack of doom about anything from why won't you buy him a Honda to why can't he live in a squat like *all* his other friends. The girl, electric hair purple with shock, spots obliterated with panda paint, would throw herself upon the floor, kick her stiletto heels in the air and have a five-minute screaming tantrum on the grounds that you won't allow her to stay out *all* night *all* the time like *all* the other girls she knows. This, too, is motherhood.

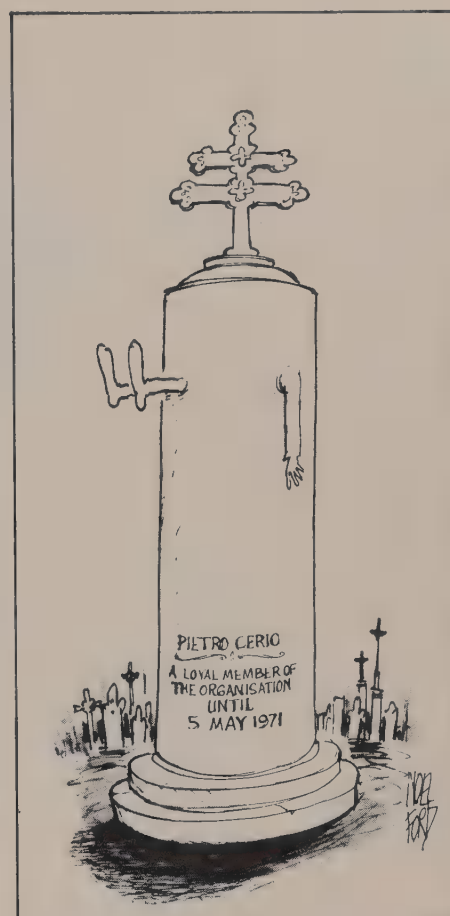
In compensation for this future shock comes the last reform needed: the formal cessation of all motherhood at age eighteen. Increasing longevity is something we have to face and is already posing problems in family life. There are, extant, adults in their mid-fifties who are still "sons" and "daughters" of spry and seemingly immortal ninety-year-old parents and all predictions of future life spans mean we must now envisage adults remaining somebody's "children" until they are one hundred and ten and their parents one hundred and thirty-five. To stretch childhood ties, emotions and deceptions this far is to risk all manner of psychological stunting, not to say terminal boredom on both parts.

Therefore, an ideal world would contain some socially sanctioned ritual whereby these ties are, for once and all, undone.

Something tasteful, I think, along the lines of a small family un-wedding, attended by the eighteen-year-old in question, the parents, relatives and friends and a select group of detached witnesses—a doctor, a town councillor, the local solicitor, the local bartender. The parents, preferably with tongues loosened by drink, would be asked to come forward and deliver themselves of a speech that revealed at least two of the sort of secrets normally withheld from "children" on the grounds that parental authority would be undermined. The eighteen-year-old would follow this with some true confessions, anything that has been concealed so far for fear of punishment, opprobrium or general upset, like a vote for WRP or even Thatcher in the last election.

Then, when the various parties have been revived from dead faints, the officiating figure would solemnly pronounce them no longer parents and child but three hopefully friendly adults with no other duties or obligations towards each other save those genuinely felt and sincerely undertaken. After that, a bottle of champagne would be broken over the sundered family, parenting would be brought to an end and adult relationships launched.

It may, of course, be possible that the ceremony will, at some point, disintegrate, with participants knocking each other to the ground with well-aimed lefts to the jaw but so be it. We reap what we sow.



"Looks like they stripped it down for spares!"

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
80th Birthday Tributes

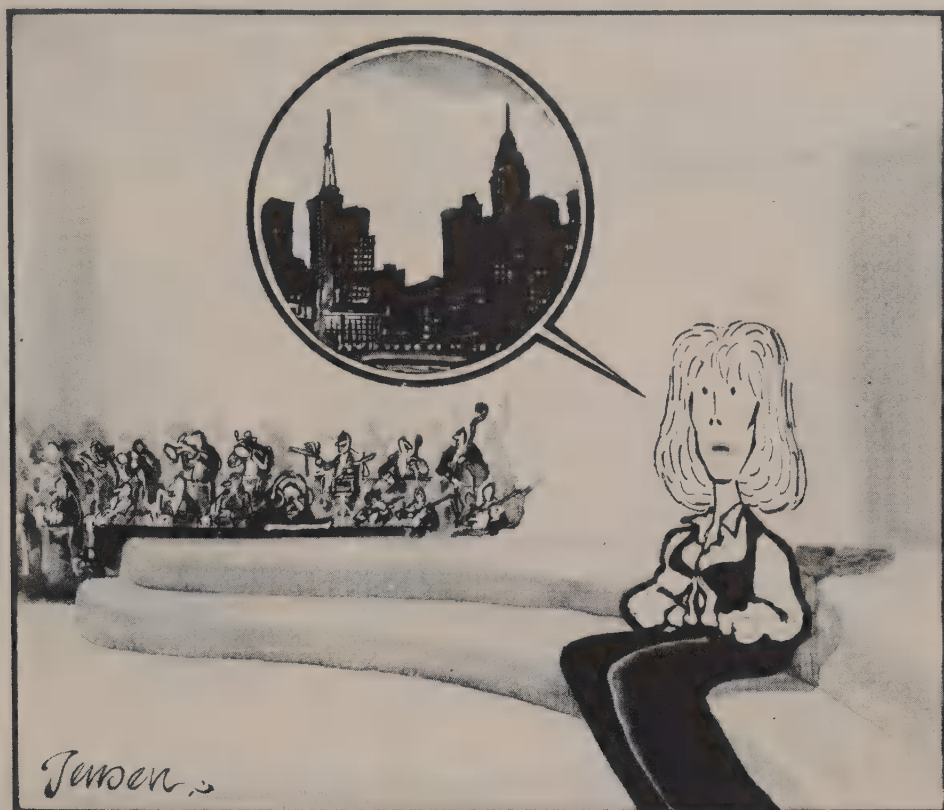


Jensen-television



THE DEVIL'S MUSIC
presented by ALEXIS KORNER

TELL ME ON A SUNDAY
singer MARTI WEBB



TRAINING DOGS THE
WOODHOUSE WAY
BARBARA WOODHOUSE



HISTORY IS DEBUNK

A Selection from the Winter Booklists

GOODBYE SAILOR! by E. F. Nobody *Fastbuck Publishing* £6.50

The long overdue study of the first man not to sail round the world single handed. Dr Nobody, the medicinal compound king, at last blows the whistle on the major BBC gaffe which wrongly announced to an amazed world that Francis Chichester had circumnavigated the globe, whereas what had in fact happened was that Francis Globe had circumnavigated Chichester. From then on, according to Dr Nobody, the cover-up was complete, including the scandalous knighting of Sir Francis Globe by royal look-alike Mrs Jeanette Charles.

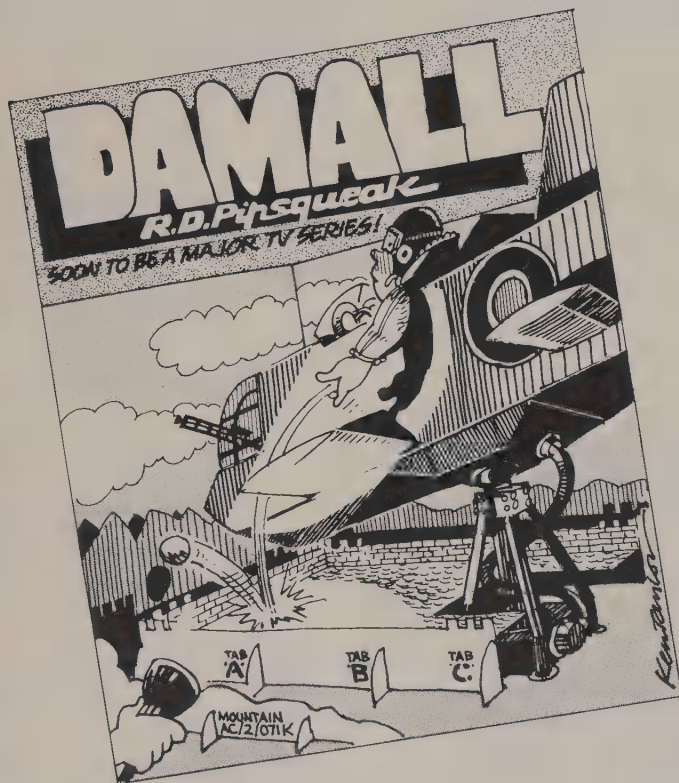
1,000,000 hardback printing! Major Book Club rights sold! Russell Harty fairly keen!



A RIGHT PAIR OF BUGGERS by Paul Who Cobble & Flogg £7.95

The true story of the appalling poofs Mallory and Irvine who ran away together up Everest in 1924. In this staggeringly controversial new study, representing days of research, Mr Who, a leading Assistant Lecturer at Barnoldswick Institute For Heating & Ventilation, delved into laundry bills and phone messages to prove conclusively his thesis that not only was Mallory a former lover of Roald Amundsen, but Irvine was terrified of standing on anything higher than a brick. Contains eight pages of formerly unpublished photographs of people who could very well be either of them.

Soon to be a major movie! Paperback rights sold worldwide! Parkinson really quite interested!



DAM ALL by R. D. Pipsqueak *Bandwagon Books* £4.95

Roger Pipsqueak, Reader in Baader-Meinhof Studies at the Northern Polytechnic, first had his attention drawn to the notorious Guy Gibson scandal while watching *The Dam Busters*. His trained eye noticed that the dams being ostensibly blown up were in fact cardboard models. From there, it was a short step to proving that what Guy Gibson actually attacked were cardboard models themselves, and that he never left Britain to do it, preferring to fly the entire sortie from the comfort and safety of his Link trainer, with the wicked connivance of Barnes Wallis, inventor of the cardboard bomb, and the Air Minister, Lord Beaverbrook, a former boyfriend of Fridtjof Nansen. Eight pages of incontrovertible drawings.

Now a major TV series! Whole range of bumperstickers planned! Esther Rantzen phoning back!



HERR EDITH CAVELL by Ronald Clone *Patriotism Is Not Enough Books* £4.75

In his mind-bogglingly argumentative new study, Professor Clone of Remedial College, Hackney, reveals the fruits of his massive weekend investigation of the so-called nurse shot by the Germans in 1915. Leaning heavily on contemporary graffiti and shopping-lists, Mr Clone proves conclusively that not only was Edith Cavell not a nursing hero, she was actually Herr Gunther Dreck, the ex-lover of Ernest Shackleton, who at the outbreak of the First World War put on women's clothes in the hope of finding himself a British sergeant for the duration. The soldiers "she" is supposed to have helped escape were in fact only those who ran off to avoid Dreck's nocturnal advances; he was shot by the Germans for bringing the Fatherland into disrepute and stealing camiknickers. Professor Clone, in an excitingly speculative appendix, also proves, more or less, that the statue in St. Martin's Place is not stone at all, but some cheap synthetic substitute!

Soon to be a major lawsuit! Nationwide advertising campaign! Obscene display packs! Shirley Williams not lukewarm about the whole thing!

SHOPTALK



HUMPHREY LYTTELTON on Regional Food Shops

TO TRAVELLING musicians, motor-ways and ring-roads are an almost unqualified blessing. One has only to look back on that six-hour slog from London to Manchester, through places whose names still strike a chill—Weedon, Towcester, Atherstone, Hinckley, Tamworth, Rugeley—to offer thanks to St Christopher, coupled with the name of St Macadam, for the smooth, grey ribbons of tarmac that now bypass the bottlenecks and halve the time.

But I have one regret. The new highways have elbowed into limbo those places that offer something regional and special in the way of food. There was a hotel in Rugeley—and my relegation of it to the past tense shows how thoroughly it has been wiped from my consciousness since they built the M6—where they served for lunch a geographically misplaced but accurately concocted Lancashire Hot Pot. And the sign up the A1 that reads “LONG BENNINGTON 1½” gives no realistic indication of the remoteness, to the driver cruising at a resolute 70 mph, of a pub where one could find delicious King Prawns among the bar snacks.

And the food shops. Nipping across recently from Newcastle to Carlisle, I found myself being wafted, on a brand new dual-carriageway, right past the picturesque town of Hexham where I had promised myself a browse among the Black Puddings and meat pasties of a splendid butcher's shop that lurks in the back streets. (Don't ask me for names—I can go like a homing pigeon straight to favourite food shops all round Britain, but I seldom take in the names. Well, that's my story, anyway.) As a Southerner, I hope I may be forgiven for saying that a little Black Pudding (dried pig's blood and oatmeal) goes a long way, especially the dry variety that comes in rich, Burgundy-coloured slabs rather than curved black sausages. But artistically displayed among all the other goodies, it inspires in me that sense of delicious anticipation with which a sculptor might look on a block of virgin marble. And the pies and pasties, too—lovely to look at, often mildly disappointing to eat, if only because no taste could fulfil the promise of that golden glaze and deft fluting.

You will gather from this—and I have a controlled waist-line to prove it—that I am, gastronomically, more of a *voyeur* than an athlete. Food tracked down to its region of origin, where its history and tradition can

be sniffed in the air, has a fascination for me far beyond the bounds of mere sustenance. As foxhunters will tell you with rather too much protestation, it's the chase, rather than the kill, that provides the enjoyment. Whenever I go to Scotland, I resolve to renew acquaintance with the Selkirk bannock—not the sort of shortcake biscuit that is called bannock elsewhere in Scotland, but a huge, cake-sized and fluffily-textured currant bun which, when I was a child, my father would have sent down from Scotland in small crates. What deters me from finally running it to ground is not just the fact that no sensible route to anywhere goes through Selkirk. It is rather my fear that, when I catch up with it, it won't any longer have the delicious taste that I recall.

Look what happened to Devonshire cream! Yellowish, lumpy and strong enough in flavour to assert itself in the company of scone and raspberry jam, it remains one of the most elusive of boyhood memories. Nowadays they call it clotted cream, no doubt because it is no longer exclusive to Devonshire, but is spread far and wide over the West Country. And a sad disappointment most of it is to me—pallid, with a consistency of Do-It-Yourself plaster-filler and with most of that superb taste frozen into extinction. I have bought it everywhere—at roadside farms, in filling-stations, at post offices—and it does me good to be able to say that the best I've found so far was in a good, old-fashioned dairy shop in Falmouth. If you're interested, it's a tiny place, half-way down the hill above the High Street, on the right-hand side. Only five hours from London.

One has to get used to disappointments in the food-hunting business (though a recent book by David and Richard Mabey called *In Search of Food*, published by Macdonald and Jane's, will help to avoid it). Having reached Carlisle on the aforementioned trip, I asked the hotel hall-porter where the best Cumberland sausage could be found. For the layman, I must explain that we are not talking about your familiar short-barrelled, ballast-filled banger, but an elongated, slithery affair, full of assorted meat and little else, that is bought by the yard and turns as knobbly and enticing as a Christmas stocking under the grill. He told me of a small family butcher in Wigton, thirteen miles off the direct motorway route back to London, whose sausages are a by-word.

Ignoring the blandishments of the M6, I drove off next morning on the absurd detour only to find, on arrival at Wigton, that since it was Saturday the butcher had run down his stock and had only a few sorry inches of Cumberland sausage left. All was not totally lost, however. Out of the blue, a fellow-customer introduced himself as someone who had promoted my band in the North-West some years ago. He took me to the second best sausage emporium, where magnificent specimens, yards long, were draped around like entrails.

And on the way, he said, “You see that gentlemen crossing the street?” I peered round discreetly. “That's Melvyn Bragg's father.” Wow, I said, deciding there and then that my roundabout trip had not been entirely wasted.

I'd better warn you now, before you put pen to paper, that I am unmoved—nay, faintly repelled—by the fact that you can buy Cumberland sausage from a freezer-store in Hendon. Gazing at exotic and evocative foods in the zoo-like surroundings of a supermarket or trendy delicatessen is not the same as finding them in the wild. I am at one with that great jazzman Sidney Bechet, who toured Britain in 1956 with his heart set on buying a York ham in York. In the event, we reached that city after closing time and left again next morning before he had a chance to explore. We consoled him with the information that he could buy one at Fortnum's when we got back to London. But he seemed to have lost interest.

"Have you got a **private** nurse's outfit?"



"Uncle Rupert is very good at expensive presents—it's the thought behind them he can't manage."

U and Yours

HARPUR checks out the Super mark

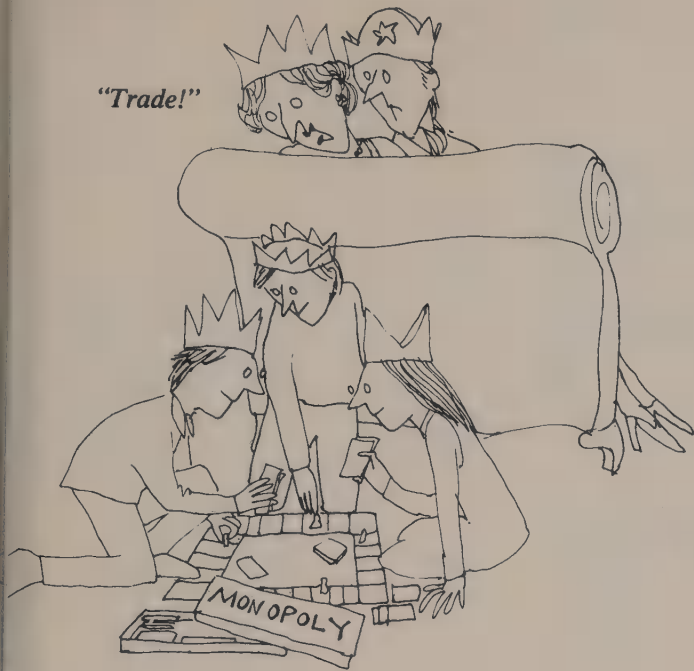


"Hopkins will take it to bits for you to see how it works."



"... And when you sit it up it says 'Nanny'."

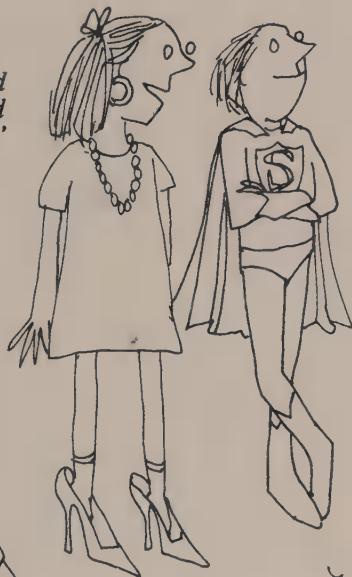
"Trade!"



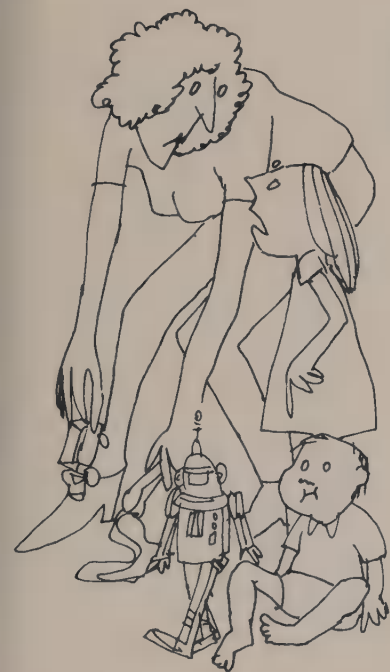
"It's Action Man's commanding officer."



"Isn't it super that carved wooden toys are out, and kitsch is in."



"Father Christmas has finally run out of ideas."



(continued overleaf)

"Mum, Toby has already swallowed the silicon chip."

U and Yours *continued*



"Haven't you got **anything** with genitals on?"



"They're manufactured with silver spoons in their mouths."



"He says he doesn't want an educational toy—he wants something he can show off at school."



"Don't the gilt-edged securities look pretty!"

WHEN my father came home from work he got instant attention. This was in the North, back in the olden days, and he would take off his pitman's helmet and climb into his tin bath in front of the fire and my mum would scrub his back for him and then we children would have to sit in silence while he ate his plate of tripe and trotters, hoping he'd leave some for us. Actually, he was a lower clerical officer in the Civil Service and wore a white shirt and suit to work and we had our own bathroom, inside, and he always had mince for his tea, but the effect was much the same. In those days, all dads, even humble little clerks, not only got instant attention, they got endless respect. And they got the biggest helpings.

We've just had tea and I've stacked the Miele in our pine-clad kitchen and I'm hoping for a few moments of peace and quiet, till it's time for me to make the cocoa and toasted cheese at ten o'clock which can't come soon enough as I'm starving. I begged her not to include me in the kids' tea. It's not that I don't love my children dearly. Eating with them can be very stimulating, but by Monday I'm over-stimulated, as we eat all meals together at week-ends, and I'm longing for my little weekday routines.

A quiet sherry, for example, about six o'clock with the *Evening Standard*, sitting upstairs in isolation while they're downstairs in the kitchen having their tea and shouting their rotten heads off. I always see them on their arrival home from school, so I haven't quite forgotten their little faces, but I do relish the child-free evenings. My quiet sherry often lasts an hour, give or take a few noisy refills, then I stagger downstairs, taking care not to be knocked flat as they rush upstairs to watch telly, and I then have my lady wife all to my own, just the two of us, mother and father, as nature intended.

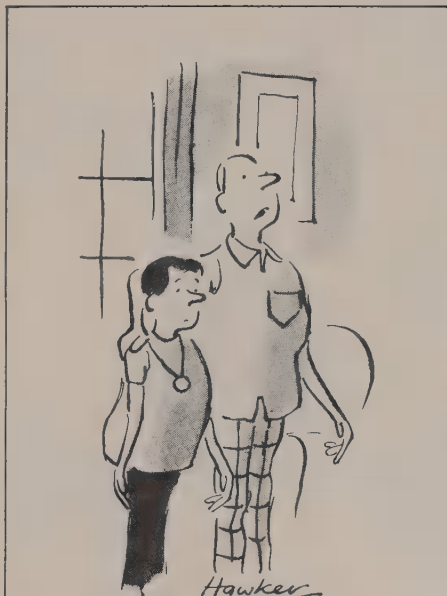
Tonight, she has some work to do, so she said she couldn't afford to mess about serving two identical meals then sit chatting to me all evening, so I either ate with the kids or made it myself. I can't actually make anything, apart from toasted cocoa with cheese, so I had no alternative. My mother only made one meal of an evening, for her horny-handed man, fresh from a hard day behind the filing cabinets, while we kids had bread and jam at four on our return from school. Kids of every class in those days had bread and jam for tea, great mounds of it. Kids simply didn't eat with grown-ups. It's a revolution that should have never stopped. No wonder they're so huge.

The meal was jolly enough, if a bit noisy. They're all so much quicker than me. It's true I do forget the names of their class



Confessions from the domestic diary of **HUNTER DAVIES**

teachers and which best friends they now hate and perhaps I do ruin their best stories by idiotic questions, but every time we have a family tea I seem to lose track of half the conversation. When I try to get things straight in my little mind, it usually ends in groans and big sighs and they leave the table early and my wife blames me for cross-examining them. You should let them do the talking, not stop their flow. Bloody hell, I'm just trying to be interested in my kids'



"Son, a man wears his blood group necklace inside his shirt."

worlds. My dad never spoke to me, at least not about me. I'm reduced at meal times to competing for my wife's attention, and I usually lose. You're just jealous, she says.

We didn't have the apple pie which she'd promised to make, even though I specially picked the apples myself from our tree. Jake, who is thirteen, announced he now hates apples, so of course apples are out. Well, it's unfair to make deliberately something which one member of the family hates when there are enough things we all like. But I love apples. Don't my preferences count for anything? Hard cheese.

The main course was fresh plaice, yum yum, which I'd bought in Kentish Town this morning, two lovely whole ones, enough for the five of us, but alas we turned out to be six. At the last moment, Caitlin, aged 15, asked if her friend Poo, or was it Loo or Boo—they all have these dopey nicknames—could stay for tea. Any friends of our friends are welcome here. Certainly, sit down there Poo Poo, sorry it's just plaice, ignore that old tramp, he can get another chair. We haven't got enough plaice, I hissed to my wife as I struggled with the broken chair from the bathroom, the one that hurts my back. Don't be such a baby, she hissed back. I can spin it out with fish fingers.

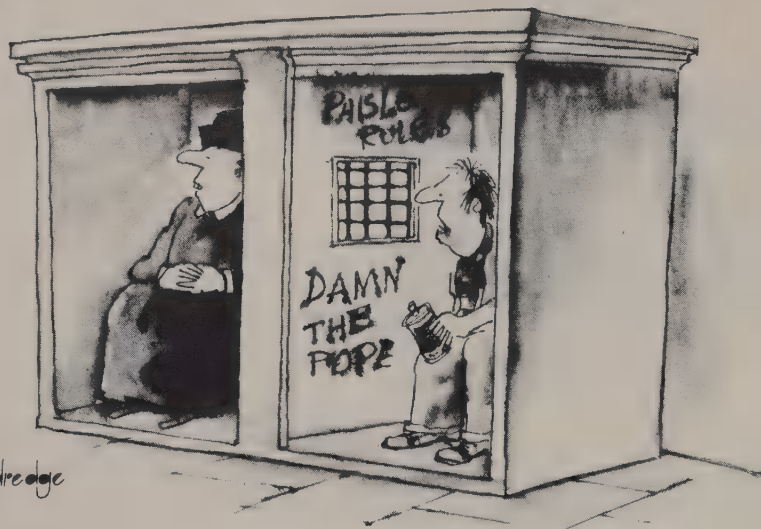
Guess who got the fish fingers. Yes, the last one to sit down. They were left-overs from last year, spun out in a spin-dryer by the taste of them, though Flora, aged six, did leave the skin of her plaice, the black stuff not the white stuff, which I managed to scoff when Lady Bountiful wasn't looking.

My wife read somewhere that it's only manual labourers who need a lot of calories. In normal nuclear families, the pecking order should be growing teenagers followed by pregnant mothers. I qualify on neither count. I keep on about anorexia nervosa, but she says blokes of 40 don't get that, and if they did, it would do them good.

My dad always got the first and the best and the biggest of everything. We really did often sit and watch him polish off the only bit of meat in the house. It was the same in all the houses in our estate. The woman next door, a right snob, used to shout out of the window to her eldest boy, "Come and get the top of your dad's egg." This was a complicated piece of one-upmanship, showing she had eggs in the house. This was during the war. The last war, of course. I may be emaciated, but I'm not that old.

Sod off, eh. If you're not going on about your boring old dad and his boring old life you're going on about the boring old war. Ignore him, Poo. He'll go away soon.

So I left the table early, putting on a



"I have just sinned again, Father!"

middle-aged huff, which with my doubled-up sore back had Flora quite worried, but I was quite glad to escape all the noise, though I came back dutifully, when all the young masters had quite finished, to clear the table.

"And I love apple pie," I muttered loudly to myself, wiping the table. "I dunno. You struggle to bring money into the house..."

"Why don't you belt up. Mum earns more than you."

"And fresh fish would have given me strength, after another exhausting day..."

"All you've done is hang about all day. Mum has three jobs. You've only got one."

My own mother never had a job. She was chained to the kitchen full time. I can't remember her eating with us. She just stood

there, at the stove, cooking away, or she was out in the wash-house, boiling away, getting the dollies clean. Dollies? She used to go on about this dolly tub, so dollies must have come into it somewhere.

My own dear wife runs a large house and three children, cleaning and cooking and everyfink, all on her own, with no help whatsoever. She's a legend in NW5. I don't know how the Pope missed her on his trip. Then she's a full-time writer, producing a book almost every year. Skip the rest of this paragraph if it's giving you a headache. And her third full time job is doing a weekly book review column in the London *Eve-in-Stan-ard*. Everybody go aaaaaah.

Perhaps I do hang about the house a bit, compared with her. I admit it. But is the economic emancipation of women the real reason for the decline in the importance of fatherhood? I do more than my father did, but I mean less. "Wait till your father comes home," was a terrible threat in my childhood. Now, it means laughs all round.

Mothers have taken over. You can't get moving for them, spread over every feature page of every newspaper, usually unmarried and doing unmentionable things, all on their own. I have to avert my eyes when *The Guardian* plops through the letter-box. I do hope fathers will make a come-back soon.

Or perhaps it's just me? I only mentioned the meals as a first if minor example, but it seems to me that in every domestic situation I'm an also-ran in my own house. Where have I gone wrong, I ask myself, very quietly of course. Fathers should be seen and not heard...



"Looks as if the talks with the Barons broke down."

Jacob Cracker

by BENNY GREEN

THE late Professor Bronowski was so consummate an actor that in the culminating performance of his life, *The Ascent of Man*, he seduced millions of viewers into thinking they understood the scientific mind and thoroughly approved of all the wonderful benisons of modern technology. When old Jacob crooked that left elbow and arranged those four fingers as though he was holding a soft-boiled egg in his hand, when he manipulated those eyebrows and slyly disseminated rumours of a grin as he looked away from the camera and gave a witty cameo of a polymath groping for the right phrase, the world was his. In the last show of the series, he even made a bold attempt to arrive at a philosophic credo for all human life, and finally came to the conclusion that on the whole, when you weighed it all up, Man was a pretty wonderful animal. I was one of his most devoted viewers, although not, I suspect, for the right reasons. It was the performer, not the pedagogue who moved me, and I was reminded of this most vividly the other night while watching a show with the pithy title of **The Second Jacob Bronowski Memorial Lecture** (BBC2).

A Professor Philip Morrison turned up at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he teaches Physics, and, after opening up with a brief extract from one of the programmes of his old pal Jacob, proceeded to deliver one of those speculative lectures of which Jacob was the complete master, and in which the audience is charmed, cajoled and beguiled into following the speaker down the primrose path. The Professor concentrated for about twenty minutes on certain aspects of insect life, bringing to bear the immensely powerful engines of his intellect, his academic experience and his scientific training, on the issues raised. And then finally he said he thought that on the whole, when you thought about it, when you took everything into account, he was inclined to think that purely on a conjectural basis, termites were not as smart as human beings. The audience, which had been sitting there in a condition of agonising suspense so long as the jury was out, heaved a sigh of relief when the Professor finally announced the verdict.

The Professor finally said that on the whole, when you came to sum it all up, it was clear that Man was a pretty wonderful thing, which suddenly reminded me of a remark by the Professor's distinguished countryman Will Cuppy, who observed, "It is because of his brain that Man has risen above the animals," and then added, "Guess which animals he has risen above?" But what is revealing about all this is that although Professor Morrison confined his address to two groups of facts, the things I already knew and things I had no wish to know, I enjoyed every minute of his performance. An ageing man with grave physical disabilities, the Professor did after all deliver a message of profound insight, which is that no matter what the physical facts, spiritual energy can sometimes transcend all; the Professor, who is venerable anyway to have been a pal of old Jacob, and who could cross the stage only with the aid of sticks, was so in love with his work that after five minutes you wondered if he was not a young man in disguise; after fifteen minutes you decided that he was handsome, and after thirty you were convinced that you were too. If this is science, the sooner we have more of it the better.

Now it so happens that, all unaware of the Professor's very existence, and pursuing an independent line of empirical investigation of my own, I reached the identical conclusion forty years ago, when it first dawned on me that the termites, for all their brilliant cultural achievements, had still not managed to adjust to certain changes in the LBW law. In view of all this, could it be, I asked myself the other night, that I was after all a scientific professor manqué? Was there indeed, I asked

myself, any other kind of scientific professor? But before I could formulate any answers to these questions, the Professor was giving us a guided tour of the great clock in Wells Cathedral in order to prove to us that digital watches were a bad thing. Of course he could have saved himself the pleasure of going to Wells and simply said that while digital watches only disclose the time if you read them, the old-fashioned clockface will give you the same information even though you only glance at it as if at a picture. But that, I suppose, is not a very scientific, or at least not a very professorial way of putting it.

What would the Professor's termites have made of the goings-on in New Jersey last Saturday night? The ring in Atlantic City was a place for strong men, as John Conteh challenged for the world Light-heavyweight title held by Matthew Saad Muhammad to mention just a few. The press had been saying all week that Conteh was sure to be carried out by the handles; in the event he was a shade unlucky not to get the verdict, fighting the good fight with wonderful skill and courage. His left jab ought to be on permanent exhibition at the National Gallery. On the whole it was, when you summed it all up and took everything into account, a superlative contest, lacking only the presence of Harry "Kid" Carpenter, the Wood Lane Thunderbolt, to make it amusing as well as exciting. But the Kid was unaccountably absent, and in his place we got Desmond Lynam, who deserves a title of his own for his blend of knowledge and unobtrusiveness.

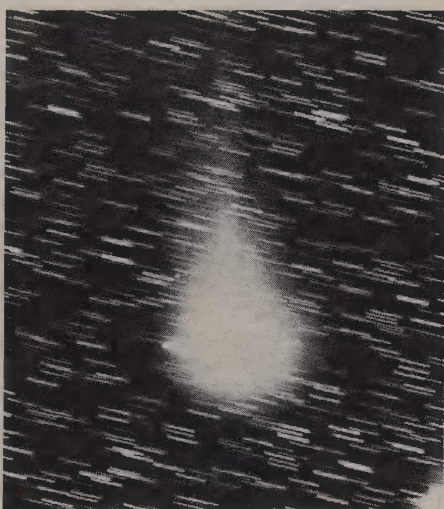
MATCH OF THE DAY SPECIAL

John Conteh Matthew Saad Muhammad



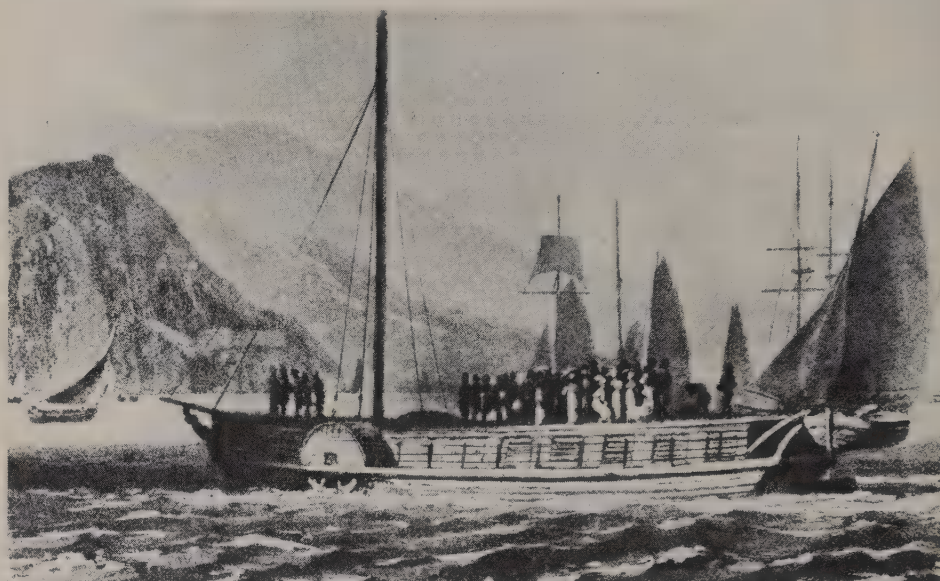
To celebrate the centenary of Fleet Street's first published photographs, we open the archives on some great milestones for press lensmen . . .

100 YEARS OF NEWS PICTURES



FIRST PICTURE RECEIVED BY WIRE

This startling impression of the opening shots at the battle of Rorke's Drift or, possibly, Edison's first light bulb, was received by wire at Reuter's Fleet Street office in December 1881. Unfortunately, the caption was lost in transmission but analysis of the image indicates that it may have been taken by flash, if indeed it is not a picture of the flash itself, or the result of electrical interference on the line caused by sunspot activity, of which it is just possible this is the first known photograph.



FIRST DRAMATIC PICTURE OF REFUGEE BOAT PEOPLE

Members of the Viceroy of India's whist circle were forced to abandon an away engagement in Rangoon during August of 1885 and, set upon by bands of ruthless *dacoits* in mid-rubber, determined to flee the Burmese tyranny of King Theebaw and take a cruise down the Malacca Straits. Four days out of Rangoon, the supplies of tiffin dried up and the native crew refused point-blank to fire the coke boiler, believing it to be a god. As a result, the luckless passengers aboard the *Marjory* were left to drift until a passing gunboat took this harrowing picture and sent it to the Admiralty who passed it on to *The Times* as a filler. Following a public outcry, the party was towed in to the Keeling Islands and formed a consortium for the export of pepper and sago.



FIRST KNOWN PICTURE OF INFLATION

Pictured on the day that margarine first soared to 4d a pound as a result of a general upturn in the price of vegetable oils and fats, this grim-faced 1882 provisions merchant seems to bear silent witness to a future when EEC butter would be priced out of reach of ordinary working folk, though he was in fact splashed across the front page of the *Wandsworth Examiner* in error, the night editor having spotted his filleting knife and mistakenly supposed that he had his hands on the first-known identikit picture of the man then wanted for questioning in connection with the Battersea Bacon-Slicer Murders of 1881.



FIRST PUBLISHED SIGHTING OF A UFO

Millions of sightseers flocked to Box Hill in March 1883 after a Leytonstone housewife reported seeing cigar-shaped flashing red lights over Southend way. In Denmark Hill, an off-duty police blacksmith sighted a similar saucer-shaped green glow, more towards Margate. A reader from Elephant and Castle sent in this picture to *The Dartford Despatch* but scientists later suspected it may have been faked.



FIRST UGLY SCENE DURING SECONDARY PICKETING

During a mass demonstration of solidarity with Balkan steelworkers demanding an extra 20% across the board for smelting during unsocial hours, these 1880s Rumelian miners were pictured in the overseas edition of the *Morning Post* after they clashed with militiamen in Sistova and overturned an ox-cart. The Sobranje, or National Assembly, resolutely refused to interfere in the dispute but the subsequent long-drawn-out battle finally got on the nerves of Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg who had the pickets rounded up and drowned in the Danube.



FIRST SCOOP PICTURE OF A TRANSPLANT OPERATION

The *Constantinople Sentinel* featured this remarkable picture in their *You and Your Doctor* column in May 1881 after surgeons had worked through the night to cure Anatolia's Crown Prince Otto of terminal toothache. The team, from St Botolph's Infirmary, Ipswich, had sailed with all speed on the fast overnight steamer from Yarmouth with the refrigerated head of a pedigree royal terrier, Fritz, run over by a brougham in the Mall. The patient awoke next day in good spirits, ate a hearty bowl of Winalot and asked how United had gone on, but died six weeks later after complications with distemper.

FIRST PICTURE OF CHAOS ON YOUR TRAINS TONIGHT

Snow on the points at Darlington caused the cancellation of all up trains from Stockton in December 1882 and a spokesman described the situation as "chaotic". The *Huddersfield Examiner's* Commuter Club was quickly on the scene to record these angry passengers demanding a refund on their seasons by staging a "sit-in" at Rokesby Sidings. ▶

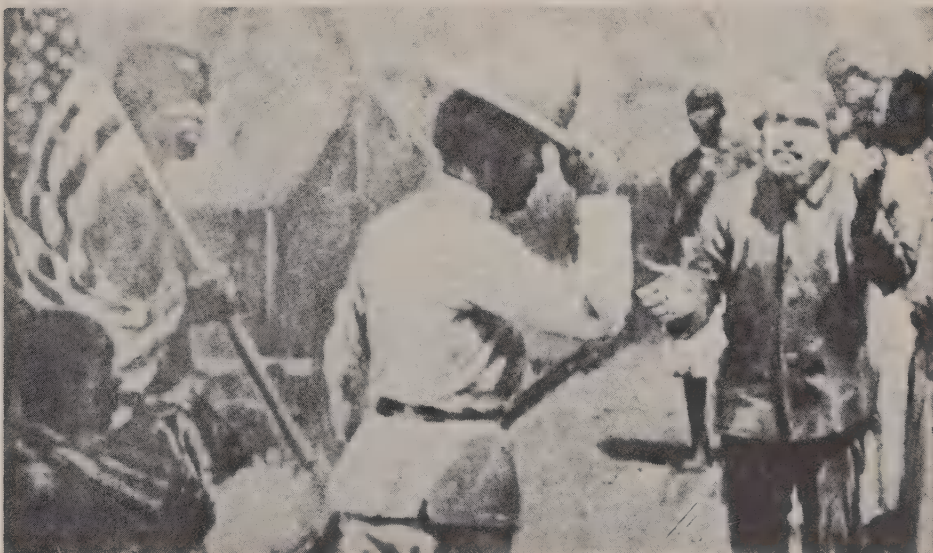


FIRST PAGE THREE PIN-UP

Hackney hairdresser Maureen Brontë posed for this provocative Daguerreotype on page three of the September 1881 edition of *The Presbyterian Trumpet*. Maureen listed her hobbies as reading penny dreadfuls and needlepoint but said she wanted to be a serious actress.

FIRST FRONT-PAGE PICTURE OF THE TURMOIL IN AFRICA

This historic snap, taken by a Makololo freelance using a pinhole okapi hoof at Ujiji in November 1871, was used to accompany an exclusive feature by Henry Moreton Stanley, African Affairs Correspondent of the *New York Herald*, who secured scoop interviews with Dr David Livingstone, an explorer, and his notorious twin brother, "Bishop" Mycroft Livingstone, the rebel guerrilla leader of ZANLA—the Zambezi and Nile Liberation Army. Since the nearest chemist was 4,800 miles away, upstream, the film was not processed until April 1881 by which time the photographer and both Livingstones had perished from dysentery and Stanley was too weak to recall which one is shown. Some scholars note the American flag as evidence that the CIA may have the answer. ▼



Western Reproaches

SOMEONE had thoughtfully tuned the television to a repeat of *Upstairs, Downstairs*, set out the ice bucket with the Champagne on top of the set along with the gin bottle, the tonics and fresh limes, and in a moment the limo (for we are in America, gentle readers) had left the normally rigorously-maintained No Parking bay, where it had been standing for at least a half-hour outside Los Angeles airport, and we were on our way—albeit at no great speed.

Limos, in common with Canadian Pacific railway engines, as I was to discover later, have no great turn of foot, especially, in the former case, when they are conveying not only freshly-opened Champagne but unidentifiable VIPs cloistered and sustained behind opaque glass windows.

We drove for a few miles along what I mistook for a tunnelled motorway and I was just congratulating the Los Angeles authorities on constructing so formidable an

underground link between LAX and Beverly Hills when I realised that we were indeed out in the open, but that through the glass roof only one star's reflection could be glimpsed.

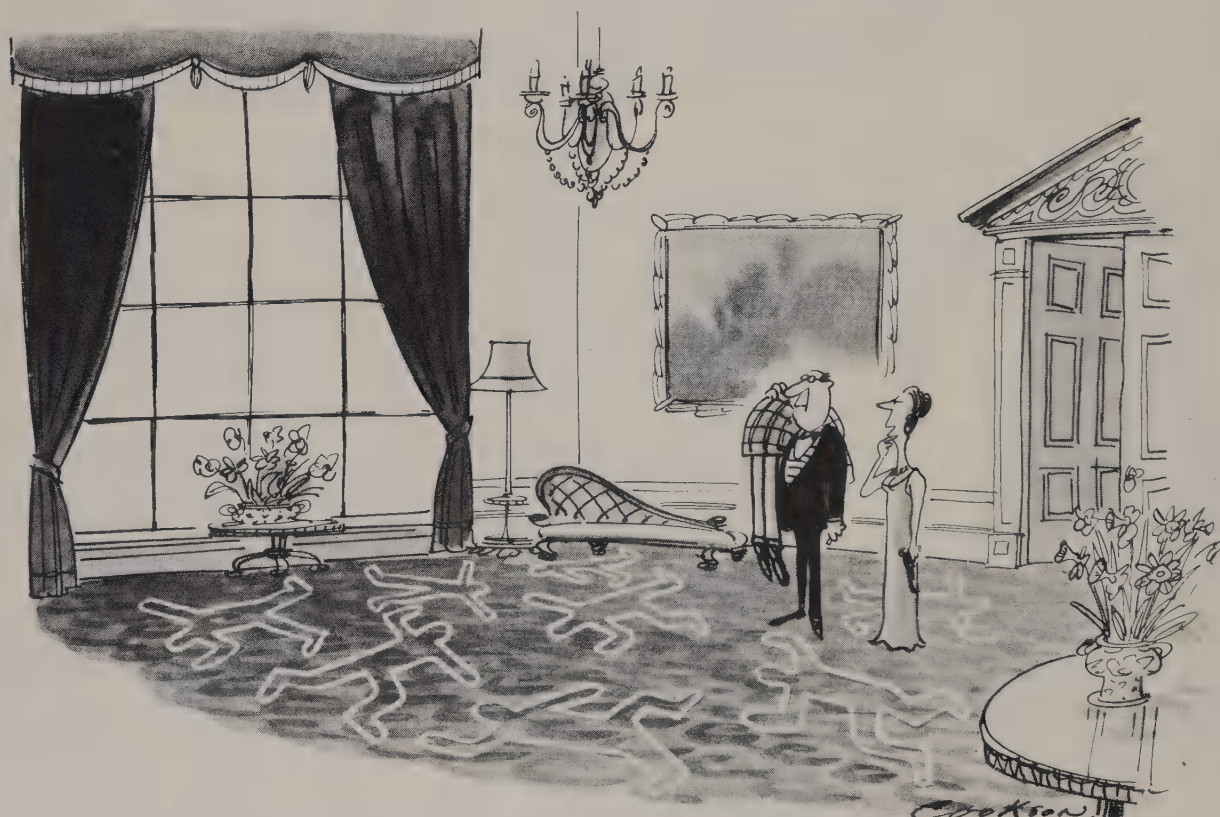
Lest I give the impression that I am accustomed to maintaining the lifestyle of Barbra Streisand, I must point out that the circumstances were somewhat exceptional in so much that advertising British Airways in America, a task with which I have been entrusted for some time, is now the joint responsibility of myself and the prestigiously titled firm of Foote, Cone and Belding, who are comparative newcomers to the account. In a media phrase, we have switched agencies.

Whoever was responsible for pushing the limo out was not, of course, Mr Foote, Mr Cone or Mr Belding himself, all of them have long since retired from the firm which proudly bears their names. Only Mr Cone is still a surviving father figure in the Industry

and credited with having awakened American palates to the realisation that gum cleans as it chews as it sweetens. Besides capturing the British Airways account, the agency had also entrapped a pristine copywriter, who, although conducting himself with the superb modesty hitherto only exhibited by myself, had recently been responsible for almost the entire American nation withdrawing their funds from other banking houses, and indeed from under their mattresses, and entrusting them to the establishment for which he coined (and I make no excuse for the pun) the immortal slogan "You worked hard for your money and we do the same."

Even so, he had quite a job persuading me to carry on the shoot a furred umbrella which, at a touch on the handle, displayed a Union Jack normally secreted in the ferrule. "It is an insult to the flag," I told him, "principally because I am clumsy." Actually it often needed a good deal more than a touch but time passes pleasantly enough on these occasions and over yet more Champagne I learned that another member of the talent, as we actors are referred to, was not only the sister-in-law of the late Cedric Hardwicke but had been a member of the court of Louis XVI (never quite sure of the number) when I had essayed the role on the very same lot at Culver City precisely forty-two years earlier. Survival is the name of the game.

We may think we have troubles at home



"... on the other hand, Parker, I think his Lordship's body will look better over by the window."



with Mrs Thatcher but they are nothing to what the Americans are having abroad at this moment with the Ayatollah, and most evenings when we had finished sampling the fare at the Ragoon Racquet Club, a particular favourite of mine, or the Hermitage, which is understandably the favourite of almost everyone else, I would alight in front of the television screen in my bedroom and watch an hour or so of special reports from the beleaguered embassy. It took apparently exactly fifty seconds to place a call to Teheran but a good deal longer to establish communication between Mr Carter and the Mad Monk.

We are too complacent in believing that British television is better at reporting world events than the American networks. Not only are their commentators superbly courageous in insisting that the mobs burn the flags in front of their lenses, but at home their calm insistence that no policeman should club an Iranian student until the camera is correctly focussed and providing coverage of which either Dimbleby could not fail to be envious is exemplary.

My task completed, and with no more Champagne immediately in prospect, I thought I might fulfil a life-long ambition to ride the Canadian Pacific Railway across the Rockies to Montreal, where I planned further exposure in a film supporting Benji, a likeable mongrel who was already there, shooting his latest film, *A Heavenly Dog*. Alas, the journey was not all that it is cracked up to be and I can only advise would-be fellow-travellers to wait until spring for the clouds to clear, the snow to melt and an occasional mountain peak to be glimpsed. By the time Calgary was reached I had had enough of leadened skies and leadened food in the dining car and flew. If I have a further word of useful advice to fellow explorers, remember to travel with a plug for the wash basin. In Montreal I found Omar Sharif eagerly awaiting my arrival at The Blue Bonnets, which is not, as you might imagine, knowing him, a go-go disco or a bridge club, but the local track

where he kept open house and his own private stock of caviare, entertaining members of the cast and crew and any jockey under temporary suspension who cared to mark his card.

The evenings seemed to pass in a flash but the days took longer. Although I hesitate to decry a fellow artiste, Benji is not the most reliable of performers and, like myself, seemed to have only the haziest idea of what the story was about. His trainer, a patient fellow who had once trained a pig not only to turn on the television but subsequently to watch the programme, and had started his career with Rin Tin Tin, was constantly producing small pieces of steak and a live guinea pig to attract his attention and sustain his interest. "He doesn't want to eat the guinea pig, does he?" I asked. "No, no," explained Frank, "they adore each other; he fulfils the same function as a goat in the stall of a racehorse. Benji gets bored with only human company."

On the days I was not needed to display my trouser legs and speak my lines just as I judged Benji to be about on his marks, I was free to wander about Montreal and sample the cooking of this enclave of France where the authorities insist that nothing shall be written in English which hasn't been displayed first in French and the paperwork thereby created is every bit as time-consuming as the Value Added Tax is at home.

When the time came for me to leave, I sought out Benji, who, his role completed for the day, was dozing happily in a crowded *café chantant*, where brunch was being served to the accompaniment of wandering minstrels and two young ladies in the guise of clowns executing an incomprehensible mime show with invisible bubble gum. "Just came to say Au Revoir, old chap," I told him as he solemnly extended a paw. "You haven't signed his autograph book," they reminded me, and I wrote over my name: "Thank Heaven For Little Dogs" and gave him the last of my steak.

LET'S PARLER FRANGLAIS!

Au Cinéma

Monsieur: Mademoiselle, je veux réserver un ticket d'avance pour ce soir.

Caissière: Bon. Pour quel cinéma?

Monsieur: Mademoiselle, pour le cinéma ici, où vous êtes employée.

Caissière: Nous avons cinq cinémas ici. Odéon 1, Odéon 2, Odéon 3, Odéon...

Monsieur: OK, j'attrappe votre drift. Je veux voir *Star Wars 3* à Odéon 2.

Caissière: Nous avons seulement *Star Wars 2* à Odéon 3.

Monsieur: Bon, ça va.

Caissière: Ou *Jaws 2* à Odéon 4, ou *Le Magnifique 7* à Odéon 5...

Monsieur: Ou *Fahrenheit 1* à Odéon 451?

Caissière: Fresh!

Monsieur: Pardon. A quelle heure le film commence-t-il?

Caissière: A 1840.

Monsieur: Dites-moi la vérité. C'est le film ou le programme à 1840?

Caissière: Ah, monsieur, ne me donnez pas un hard time. Oui, en effet, c'est le programme qui débute à 1840.

Monsieur: Donnez-moi les détails de ce programme supporting fantastique.

Caissière: A 1840 il y a une 30-seconde feature qui s'appelle: *Why Not Eat Chez Ce Fine Restaurant Après Le Show, Pas 2 Minutes De Ce Cinéma?* A 1841 une histoire de crime et passion qui s'appelle: *Next Time, Assurez-vous avec le Phoenix Star.* A 1842 un short silent.

Monsieur: De Chaplin?

Caissière: De St Raphaël. Puis un gap pour la vente des glaces et des soft drinks. Puis un petit festival de trailers pour des films à d'autres cinémas loin d'ici. Puis un gap pour les buveurs de soft drinks pour une visite au loo. Puis une saison retrospective, à 1915, des classiques de ce duo formidable, Pearl & Dean. Puis un petit gap, pour un quick jar pour le projecteur. Et puis, le highlight du soir à 1932!

Monsieur: *Star Wars 2?*

Caissière: Eh bien, non. C'est une documentaire par British Movietone News sur les problèmes de la Forestry Commission dans les régions sauvages de Kirkcudbrightshire. C'est poétique, lyrique, informatif, éducationnel, il faut l'avouer, un peu slow-moving. Il dure 38 minutes.

Monsieur: Et *Star Wars 2?*

Caissière: Le reste du programme est si long que *Star Wars 2* est annulé.

Monsieur: Merveilleux! Un programme parfait! Donnez-moi 10 tickets.

Caissière: Et ce soir vous avez la full-length version de *L'Anthème Nationale*.

Monsieur: Donnez-moi 14 tickets.

Caissière: Merci, monsieur. Voilà.

ffolkes:

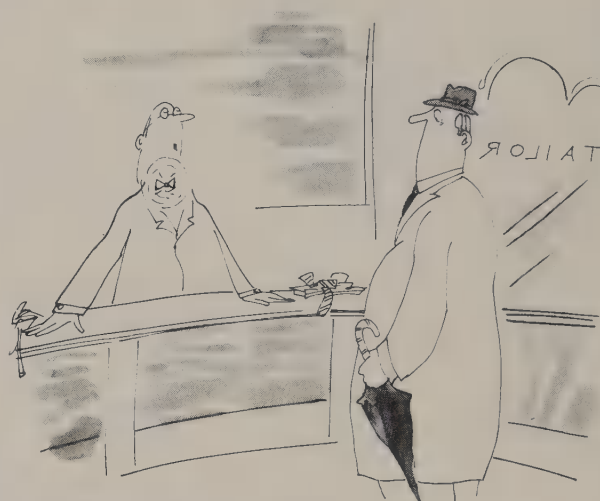
Just Dandy



"That's fashion. Suddenly **everybody** wants to wear one."



"Actually, I was never much of a dandy."



"Or, for evening anti-clockwise."



"Chap called Pendleton. I wouldn't care, he's not even Dutch."



"Brummell, sometimes I think you go too far."

KEITH WATERHOUSE:

Manny Alive

The life of Lord Shinwell is to be turned into a major drama serial by the BBC...

"One usually needs a pause after someone's life to work out whether it's important enough to do—but Manny is still alive and there's no doubt it is," said BBC Scotland drama head, Roderick Graham.

"Not only is he alive, but so are a lot of the people he knew. We are obviously going to have to take great care."

Evening Standard

FROM The Gathering Twilight, Vol XV of the unpublished memoirs of Lord Ackerslake of Clogthorpe, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Permits 1945-1951 and sometime Chairman of the Boiled Sweets Marketing Board:—

I have recounted at length in Vol II (*The Sleeper Awakes*) how I came close to a showdown with "Manny" (now Lord) Shinwell over the Uzbekistan Oats, Wheat and Barley Treaty of 1947. It will be remembered that although neither Shinwell nor I were directly involved in the drafting of that, to my mind, over-generous (on our part) pact with the Soviet bloc—for Shinwell was at the relevant time still Minister of Fuel and Power, while for my part I was (and was to remain: see Vol IV, *The Bitter Harvest*) but a junior Minister under "Jock" MacBairn, as my old friend Lord MacBairn of the Lowlands then was—we were drawn into the crossfire when Easterby was sent for by Attlee and told that his services would no longer be required. (This was, of course, following on the celebrated incident when Easterby knocked an ink-bottle over the Wheat Treaty while appending his signature. How a flustered typist inadvertently added three noughts to the figure of £10,000,000 while hastily retyping the document to the accompaniment of the impatient sighs and finger-drumming of the Russian delegation, has been fully related in Vol III, *The Fruitful Years*).

The position now was that Easterby's

Ministerial hat-peg fell vacant. Hibberthorpe, who stepped into Easterby's shoes until he too fell foul of Attlee after mimicking Ernest Bevin at a dinner for the American Ambassador (see Vol VI, *The Darkening Shadow*), did not wear a hat. Shinwell therefore took Easterby's hat-peg, which he found easier to reach than his own. Hugh Dalton—I think I am right in saying Hugh Dalton, but I am writing here without reference to my archives—moved up to Shinwell's hat-peg; John Strachey took Dalton's (if it was Dalton's) hat-peg; Sir Hartley Shawcross took Strachey's; and a rising young man called Harold Wilson, then Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Works but soon to become President of the Board of Trade and subsequently to scale even dizzy heights (see Vol XI, *At The Crossroads*) moved his headgear across from the Junior Ministers' hat-pegs on the other side of the corridor. I, therefore, saw no harm in switching my hat from the farthestmost peg on the Junior Ministerial side, and "bagging" the more central peg hitherto occupied by Wilson.

Imagine my surprise when out of the blue there arrived a missive from Shinwell's office—it was not signed by him personally, but by one of his hatchet-men—informing me that Wilson's hatpeg had been informally promised to Latchworth (then tipped as a "high flier" in Fuel and Power but later to fall out with Shinwell over the price of coke. See Vol V: *Reaping the Whirlwind*). The note arrived as I was leaving the House for an important meeting of the Gummied Labels Board at the Ministry in Great Horse-neck Street. I went out into the corridor and found the grey trilby that Latchworth affected already occupying my (i.e., what had been Wilson's) hat-peg, while my own

homburg had been tossed carelessly onto a nearby wooden settle.

As soon as I was able I sought out Tom Driberg, who I knew had had a similar contretemps involving Aneurin Bevan, Stafford Cripps, Konni Zilliacus, Woodrow Wyatt, Sidney Silverman, and Hugh Gaitskell, although over coat-hangers rather than hat-pegs. Driberg heard me out, and then said: "I have one question to put to you. Do you see this as a resigning issue?" I answered firmly in the negative. Although I felt I had been slighted, it was a personal issue, not a Party one. No principle was involved. The Labour Government was but in its youth and there was much to be done. "Then forget it," advised Driberg. Therefore, I did nothing. I still do not know whether it was the wise thing. Did it get to Shinwell's ears that I had conceded my hat-peg to his junior, and if so, did he regard this as an act of grace or a sign of weakness? I do not know. I reminded Shinwell of the incident at a reception for the Master Butchers in the House of Lords in February 1973 (see Vol XIII, *Days of Reckoning*) but he no longer seemed interested.

That much is by now public knowledge. But there were to be further repercussions behind the scenes.

In September 1979 I was travelling by tube to Kings Cross from Earls Court, where I had been attending a preview of the Corrugated Cardboard Protective Packaging Expo '79 (see Chapter XXXVI) when I picked up an evening newspaper discarded by a passenger alighting at Green Park. It was in this fortuitous and casual manner, therefore, that I learned what no-one had had the courtesy to inform me, namely that the BBC was to make a "drama serial" based on Shinwell's not uneventful life, and that it would con-



tain representations of living personalities.

It was too late to do anything that day. It would be eight in the evening before I arrived back in Clogthorpe, and I knew from bitter experience that by that hour only a duty officer would be available at TV Centre. I decided to bide my time.

At ten o'clock the following morning I telephoned Cadby at Bush House, only to learn, after a frustrating ten minutes of being passed from department to department, that he had died some eighteen years previously. This was a setback. I had met Stephen Cadby briefly when being auditioned for a World Service discussion programme on confectionery exports in April 1951 (see Vol VII, *In The Wilderness*) and I was relying on him as my "contact" with the Corporation. He was an able producer, with an enviable grasp of the intricacies of the world of sweets and chocolate, and he will be sorely missed.

I was momentarily nonplussed. Since my clash with Sir William Haley in 1954—I have described earlier (Vol VIII, *The Storm Clouds Gather*) how, using the excuse that he was now Editor of *The Times* and no longer Director General, he refused to initiate an inquiry into why I was being boycotted as a possible candidate for *Any Question?*—I had lost touch with the BBC "high-ups". Indeed, I knew nobody.

It was my shrewd and loyal wife, Cathie, who as usual solved my dilemma. "You met Mr Arbuckle, a former BBC Governor, when we were on holiday in Portugal three years ago," she reminded me. "Why do you not now write to Mr Arbuckle, care of Broadcasting House, setting the facts before him and asking him to intervene on your behalf?"

I sat down at once with pen and paper. After several drafts the letter was ready and I dispatched it by first-class post from the pillar box at the end of the street.

The missive is reproduced in full in my

Collected Correspondence and also in Appendix LVIX of this volume, so I will not weary the reader with it here. Suffice it to say that I asked Arbuckle to use his good offices to secure from the television authorities (a) a clear undertaking that any reference to the Uzbekistan Oats, Wheat and Barley Treaty in the Shinwell documentary should be submitted to me for script approval, (b) an agreement that they would permit mention of the hatpeg incident only on condition that an account of my conversation with Tom Driberg, which in my view vindicates my decision not to pursue the matter, was given "equal time" with Shinwell's side of the story, and (c) in the event of my being represented on the screen in any dramatised version of the hatpeg affair, an assurance that I should be given right of veto over the actor chosen for the part. I added a note in my own hand to Arbuckle to the effect that the Corporation would find me not unco-operative if the part went to Gerald Harper, whom I have always admired.

Arbuckle never replied. Negotiations "backstairs" are always delicate and I suppose he did not want to put himself "on the record" for fear of appearing to interfere where he had no official authority. Evidently, however, he made the strongest representations with the powers that be, for when the Shinwell "drama series" was subsequently shown, all reference to hatpegs and wheat treaties had been expunged. What urgently-called script conferences, what comings and goings of producers and writers, took place as a result of Arbuckle's intervention I shall never know, but I shall be ever grateful to him, my one regret being that I was deprived of the opportunity of seeing myself "when young" portrayed by Mr Harper. As to my opinion of the hastily-rewritten series, that must wait for the next probably final volume of my memoirs, *Horizons New*.

LET'S PARLER FRANÇAIS!

Dans le Record Shop

Client: Bonjour. Avez-vous *Heavy Dreams*?

Shoppirl: C'est none of your business, monsieur.

Client: Non, c'est une disque.

Shoppirl: Ah. Dans le Top Quarante?

Client: Non.

Shoppirl: Oh. C'est un chart-climber? Un chart-faller? Un disco-miss? Un Mouldy Oldy?

Client: Ni l'un, ni l'autre. C'est un album, par Plastic Stucco Facade avec le New Brunswick Symphony.

Shoppirl: C'est Rock, Pop, Mid-Route, Folk, Jazz, Shows, C & W, Cockney-Rock, Crossover, Soundtrack, Hard Shoulder, Cheapjack, One-Hit, Vox Pop, Greatest Hits ou Remainder Bin?

Client: Je ne sais pas. Plastic Stucco Facade sont un East End group.

Shoppirl: Ah, c'est Dock-Rock.

Client: Mais le New Brunswick est une orchestre.

Shoppirl: Ah, c'est Schlock-Dock-Rock.

Client: Vous avez un Schlock-Dock-Rock rack?

Shoppirl: Non.

Client: Dommage. Alors, je cherche aussi *Can't Start Lovin' You* par les Disco Brakes.

Shoppirl: C'est dans le Black-Bloc-Tick-Tock-Shock-Rock bin.

Client: Je n'aime pas l'onomatopoeie. Avez-vous tout simplement Symphonie No. 38 de Mozart?

Shoppirl: Par qui?

Client: Par Mozart.

Shoppirl: C'est une groupe?

Client: Non, la groupe, c'est le BBC Symphony Orchestra.

Shoppirl: Radio 1 ou Radio 2?

Client: Radio 3.

Shoppirl: Ah. C'est dans le Bach-Brecht-Rock rack.

Client: Ou c'est?

Shoppirl: Dans notre branche à Ealing.

Client: Bon dieu. Avez-vous *Lullaby of 'ammersmith Broadway*?

Shoppirl: Par qui?

Client: Ian Dury, of course.

Shoppirl: Ian Dury est old-time. Il est Nostalgia-Rock. Il est Last-year's-Layabout. Il est dans le Discontinued bin.

Client: Et ou est le Discontinued Bin?

Shoppirl: Avec les dustmen, of course.

Client: OK. Donnez-moi No. 1 dans le Top Quarante.

Shoppirl: Voilà.

Client: Merci.



"Hello, wall. Did you have a good day today? My big news is I discovered a new, miracle washday product that has me all excited..."

The biggest film of 1979!!

WOODY ALIEN

In space, no-one can hear you laugh

Scenario by MILES KINGTON

Space. Black, empty space. Thousands of silent, motionless stars. There is only one moving object, a tiny dot—it is the spacecargoo "Anhedonia".

Close-up of the prow of the spaceship, with the inscription EARTH CARGO 56/A738 ANHEDONIA. Underneath, someone has chalked, "If found, please return to Brooklyn."

Cut to the crew leisure centre, where three astronauts are sitting. They are Brad, Scott and Otis. Brad and Scott are tall and white. Otis is white, but short, freckled and bespectacled.

Otis: Of course, we only *think* the stars are silent and motionless. I mean they're all moving at incredible speeds, and probably making a lot of noise, if earth is anything to go by. The only motionless body round here is the Anhedonia. Pretty quiet, too. What do you think, fellows? *Total silence.* Do you think we'll ever find signs of life on this apparently dead spacecruiser? On Friday evenings, maybe? *Silence.* Well, just ■ thought.

Brad: Why don't you read ■ magazine and shut up?

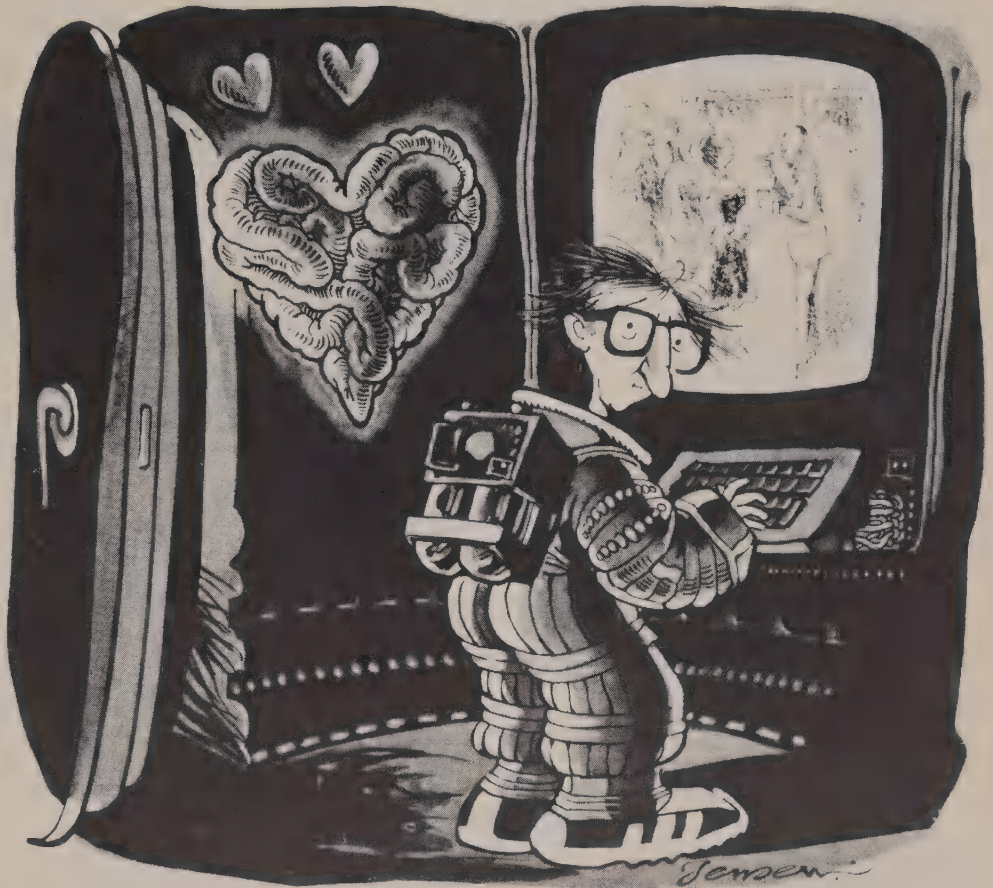
Scott: When did reading a magazine ever shut him up?

Otis: OK, OK. I can take ■ hint. I'll go see if the new *New Yorker* is on the streets yet. He crosses to a console marked **EARTH PUBLICATIONS** and presses a knob. On a huge screen appears a page of the *New Yorker*, with a cartoon showing several people at a party. The caption reads: "This is Mort. Mort's into ecology. He thinks ecology is ruining the environment." Otis stares at it, silenced for a short while.

Otis: Amazing, isn't it? Science can now beam visual images through millions of miles, but it can't explain *New Yorker* cartoons. I never met anyone yet who laughed at a *New Yorker* cartoon. Or do you think it's some kind of scientific experiment? I mean, if we beam out incomprehensible messages into space, do you think there's ■ chance that some alien civilisation will find it easy meat? Do you think five-legged mutants are roaring with laughter at the *New Yorker*? Do you think the *New Yorker* is produced by five-legged mutants? Do you . . .

Scott: Look, Otis . . .

Otis: OK, OK. I can take a hint. Actually, I



could take a capsule. Anyone feel like a capsule? Just a quick one, before supper? He crosses to an automat marked **CAPSULES** and hesitates in front of knobs marked variously *Bourbon Flavour*, *Rye Flavour*, *Southern Comfort Flavour* etc. He presses one marked *Gin Flavour*. A capsule drops out. He presses another marked *Tonic Water Flavour*. A sign flashes up: "Sorry—*Fresh Out.*"

Otis: Well, send out for some, for God's sake!

Scott: Otis, will you please . . .

Otis: We have a crisis on our hands, Scott. A million miles from earth and we're fresh out of tonic water capsules, and all you can do is tell me to shut up! What kind of leadership is that? And have you got ■ lemon on you?

Brad: Shut up, Otis.

Otis: Yes, sir. He switches to the next page of the *New Yorker*. It has ■ cartoon showing several people at a party, one of them black

with a huge Afro. The caption reads: "This is Coleman. Coleman thinks *Token Black* is Beautiful." Otis stares at it for a while. Did it ever strike you as odd that we don't have ■ token black on this ship? I mean, I'm Jewish and Joe is Italian and you two are WASP . . .

Brad: I'm not WASP. I'm Italian.

Otis: With a name like Brad?

Brad: That's not my real name. Real name is Joe, but the Space Rules forbid two guys on the same ship with the same name. So I chose Brad.

Otis: I'd prefer Scott any day. Brad is kinda limiting. Brad of the Antarctic. Brad's Waverley Novels. Doesn't sound right.

Brad: How come you're called Otis, anyway? That's not Jewish. Did they give you ■ token black name?

Otis: My father worked for an elevator company. Named me after it. I'm just very happy he wasn't an employee of Hydro-matic. I guess in a way my father was an

early space traveller, too; he would get in his capsule at street level, press a button and shoot off towards the stars. Course, then they didn't have the technology to get an elevator into space and he'd generally get out at the 18th floor.

Brad: So you joined the Space Force to do better than your father?

Otis: Yes. That, and my warts.

Brad: Warts?

Otis: I heard they had this really terrific laser treatment in the Space Force for warts, so I applied to join when I was 18.

Brad: And what happened?

Otis: I failed the medical because of my warts. Next year I reapplied, and lied about my warts. Now, here I am, warts and all. A space Cromwell.

Brad: How's that?

Otis: Know what I think, every time I look out of that window and see us surrounded by 10,000 burnt-out stars? I think, it's no different from the Oscar Presentation Ceremony. Except we haven't got Bob Hope up in space.

Scott: Sometimes I wonder. *Otis is about to wax indignant when a huge shock shakes the spaceship.* Jesus, what was that?

Otis: I think we ran over a dog.

Scott: Turn on the scanner. *Otis obeys. On the screen flashes the message: "Passing through debris of dead planet. No damage incurred. Minute electronic particles."*

Brad: Well, thank God for that. OK, fellows, time to relieve the other three. *They cross to the small personnel lift.*

Otis: Going up, going up. Third floor, hardware, computers, lingerie . . .

Two weeks later. In the Anhedonia's control room. Brad, Scott and Otis are on duty.

Otis: Of course, that's only two weeks later in space time. How long have we been up here in real time, Brad?

Brad: 20,000 years.

Otis: Makes you think, doesn't it? It's 20,000 years since I last kissed a girl. Even with my luck, that's pushing it. Not that I rate girls that highly. In fact, I've gone right off them in the last, oh I don't know, 5,000 years.

Brad: Knock it off, Otis.

Otis: Oh, don't get me wrong. I'm not a misogynist. I can't stand men either.

Scott: Brad, take a look at this, would you? We've got some kind of malfunction in the read-out.

Brad: How do you mean?

Scott: I'm not getting any response from the internal security system.

Brad: Try the communications computer for an up-to-date. *Scott throws a switch. The screen fills out with a repeated message: "There is an alien intelligence on board. There is an alien intelligence on board . . ."*

Scott: What in hell does that mean?

Otis: Maybe it's found out I'm Jewish. Maybe it's an anti-semitic computer.

Scott: That's ridiculous.

Otis: I hope so. The computer and I have got on terrifically so far. Hey, maybe there's a woman on board! That would fit alien intelligence, wouldn't it?

Scott: The read-out dates the interference to two weeks ago.

Brad: That's when we hit that debris.

Scott: Do you think it came aboard then?

Otis: Well, *that's* ridiculous. We'd have noticed the signs by now—the smell of scent, dirty tights, hairpins . . .

Scott: The computer's getting a contact on the alien force. Nothing definite; just very heavy messages of hate, and hostility and aggression.

Otis: My God! It's my first wife.

Brad: You mean, it's communicating with us?

Scott: No. No attempt to communicate.

Otis: It is my first wife!

Brad: This is frightening. Somewhere on this ship . . . an alien force . . . watching us . . . Scott, you take over while I tell the others. *Brad leaves via the lift.*

Otis: Something tells me that Brad is going to come back with awfully bad news, like one of the crew is missing.

Scott: How do you reckon that?

Otis: I've seen the movie before. See, there's this dark force lurking and one by one we become the victims, and then in the final scene, the ultimate in horror . . . !

Scott: What's that?

Otis: Bob Hope, handing out medals to the survivors.

Scott: Wait a moment, we're getting signals . . . I think I've got the wavelength of the alien.

Otis: Ask him if he's got any tonic water.

Scott: Think we can communicate with it?

Otis: It's worth trying.

Scott: OK, I'll try a short signal. I'll identify us as earth people, bringing peace and friendliness.

Otis: And loads of gin capsules. Don't forget that. He may be fresh out of gin. We could ask it up for a party.

Scott: Jesus! I'm getting incredible electronic reactions of hate and fury. The circuits are overheating. *The lift door opens and Brad comes back, looking shaken.*

Brad: They're nowhere to be seen! The whole goddamned crew has vanished. I've checked every which where.

Otis: That's incredible.

Brad: I know.

Otis: I mean, we're meant to disappear one by one. Not in batches! Know what I think?

Scott: What?

Otis: I think the alien is overacting. Scott, you tell him—tell him he'll never get an Oscar for Best Performance by Any Monster if he goes on the rampage. Tell him to stick to the damn script!

Brad: Scott, you and I go for another look. Otis, you stay and handle the controls.

Otis: Fellows, haven't *you* seen the movie? Splitting up for a search is the best way for one of you to disappear. Only one of you will come back! *They leave.* Well, so long, whichever of you it is. *He grabs the internal systems mike.* And as for you, knock it off, will you? What's your mother going to think when she learns that a nice alien like you is going round consuming earthlings? Three at a time! Know what I call that? I call it discrimination. *He studies the read-out.* Well, I'm sorry, but I do. And by the way, if you have to take one of them, make it Scott, would you? I couldn't stand another season of baseball results. 20,000 already, would you believe? *He studies a*

fresh read-out. No. he's the one with the moustache. Check. *A thought strikes him.* By the way, alien, can I try something on you? Just testing for size. There's this party and a woman saying, This is Mort, Mort's into ecology, he thinks ecology is ruining the environment. *A short pause.* Sure, I think it's pretty snappy too. Over and out. *The lift door opens and Brad stumbles out.*

Brad: It's Scott . . . he . . . suddenly he was taken by this . . . thing!

Otis: Sure, sure. Now, listen . . .

Brad: But what are we going to do?

Otis: Well, not grow a moustache, for one. Now listen, I've been in touch with the alien, and guess what?

Brad: What?

Otis: It's into *New Yorker* humour!

Brad: What?

Otis: I know. Terrifying, isn't it. A million-plus technology and an IQ of nil. Here's what we've got to do. Humour the thing and feed it all the cartoons we can get. And let *me* talk to it. I don't want to boast but I think it's got a Jewish mentality. It's got all the classic symptoms—feeling threatened by its environment, eating up well, and pretending to enjoy the smart magazines. It's just a shame that it's *us* he's eating up. But I think if we play our cards right . . . *Fade and dissolve to two weeks later. Otis is at the commands alone.* Well, welcome back to two weeks later everyone, that's 20,000 years for those of you listening in real time, and I'm only sorry that Brad couldn't be here on the show tonight. Talking of which, I have a bone to pick with our programme supervisor. *He switches on the internal systems mike.* Alien, what was the big idea of eating Brad? I thought we'd agreed you were going to lay off him. *He studies the read-out.* What do you mean, *you've* seen the movie too? God, I hate wise guys. Hey, look, let's not argue, because have I got good news for you! You remember that idea we cooked up the other night? That's right. Well, they've taken it! No, no kidding. Take a look. *Otis switches on the screen and a cartoon from the New Yorker lights up. It shows people at a party, of whom one is an extra-galactic being. The caption reads: "This is Zvolg. Zvolg is an alien. He's here to make a horror movie about humans."* Isn't that great? And they want more like it! Yes, I know I said I didn't like it, and I'm sorry. I was wrong. OK? *I said I'm sorry!* Jesus, you creative aliens . . . So, OK, I'll be in touch tomorrow . . . You what? You feel like . . . a date? But that's crazy. I'm a good earth boy and you're a good alien boy . . . You're a good alien girl. I didn't know that. I'm sorry. This is one movie I've never seen. Oh, my God. Look, I have this terrible headache and I'm awfully tired and I never hold antennae on the first date and . . . You'll be along in a moment. OK. Yes, ma'am. Yes, I'll break out the crackers. Over and out . . . Oh, mother, I'm sorry I haven't written for 40,000 years! I've got good news for you, though. Yes, I'm dating a nice alien girl. Please try and understand. She's called Zvolg. I'll tell you more about her as soon as I've met her. *The cabin door starts to open, very slowly.* Diane? Is that you, Diane? It is you, isn't it, Diane? Diane . . . ?

Stout Party

by CYRIL RAY

HERE I am, then, in the land of saints and scholars, leprechauns and legends, by which I mean that I am in the Shelbourne Bar, in St Stephen's Green, with a glass of Guinness at my elbow, the only other occupant of the bar being an elderly gentleman, rather frayed at the edges, a pint bottle of the same within his reach, not simply talking to himself but, so far as I can tell, conducting a courteous two-sided argument.

I am no more well up on saints and scholars than I am on leprechauns, which means that I am not up at all, but I have been investigating a couple of the legends that attach themselves to Dublin's black wine, otherwise known as The Workman's Friend, my matutinal modicum of which is slowly sinking in the glass.

First, though, observe that I refer to a glass, not a half-pint, of the dark stuff. It was in Mulligan's of Poolbeg Street, many a long twilit Dublin evening ago, or it might have been in Madigan's, that I told my then host that I should like a half-pint, thank him very much, to be gently rebuked with, "Pray remember that drinking in these parts is a manly thing, and it isn't manly at all to be asking for a half-pint, though a man may decently drink one, and no reflection on his virility."

"But there's a namby-paminess about the word that makes it proper to ask not for a half-pint, straight out, but for a glass, which is the same thing, more magnanimously stated. And mind you," he added, "in as decent a place as this it takes time to draw a Guinness—time enough for us to have a bottle while it's drawn and the top taken off."

Which reminded me that in the west of Ireland, which is draught-drinking country, the word for a half-pint of draught isn't, as in Dublin, a glass, but "a bottle", so that in Galway, say, the man who so flies in the face of local feeling as actually to want a bottle, has to ask for "a bottle bottle", which means a half-pint bottle, and what the Galway phrase is for a pint bottle, such as I see being slowly but relentlessly demolished by the frayed-at-the-edges citizen already mentioned, I have never got around to asking.

However, what I was saying before I interrupted myself—a habit one acquires in these parts—was that I would deal with a couple of the legends that attach themselves to the life-enhancing liquid.

One such is that the Guinness brewed in Dublin (I shall concern myself with the Park Royal product next week, if I am spared) is made with Liffey water, which it is not, and this news will bring relief to those who have smelled the Liffey, where it flows by the Guinness brewery.

No, the water comes, through filter-beds, from springs in the plains of Kildare and from springs the other side of the Curragh, by Pollardstown, piped by the Dublin Corporation, the Sheriff and officials of which, on 10 May 1775, laid claim to it, on the city's behalf, only to be met by the first Arthur Guinness in person, armed with a pickaxe he had wrenched from a workman and "declaring with very much improper language that they should not proceed", since when there has been no such nonsense, and Arthur's descendants, quite properly, have been ennobled.

Although I express relief that malodorous Liffey water is not the basis of my modest glass I have it in mind that Dublin Bay prawns—the real thing, not frozen scampi—become fat and flavoured on the Liffey water that flows into the bay. By that time, these waters are charged with Guinness effluent—ah, how blessed, this city on the Liffey that takes the dark stuff in fluid and in fishy form!



"I did it! I did it! I traumatised the whole group!"



"I wasn't satisfied with the blandness of my first doctor's reassurance."

THE PET SET

McMurtry nips round to his local animal house



"How much is that doggy in the window? The one with the waggly tail."



"We come out here at this time every morning to avoid the dawn chorus."



"Excuse me, madam. I don't believe you've paid for those tortoises."



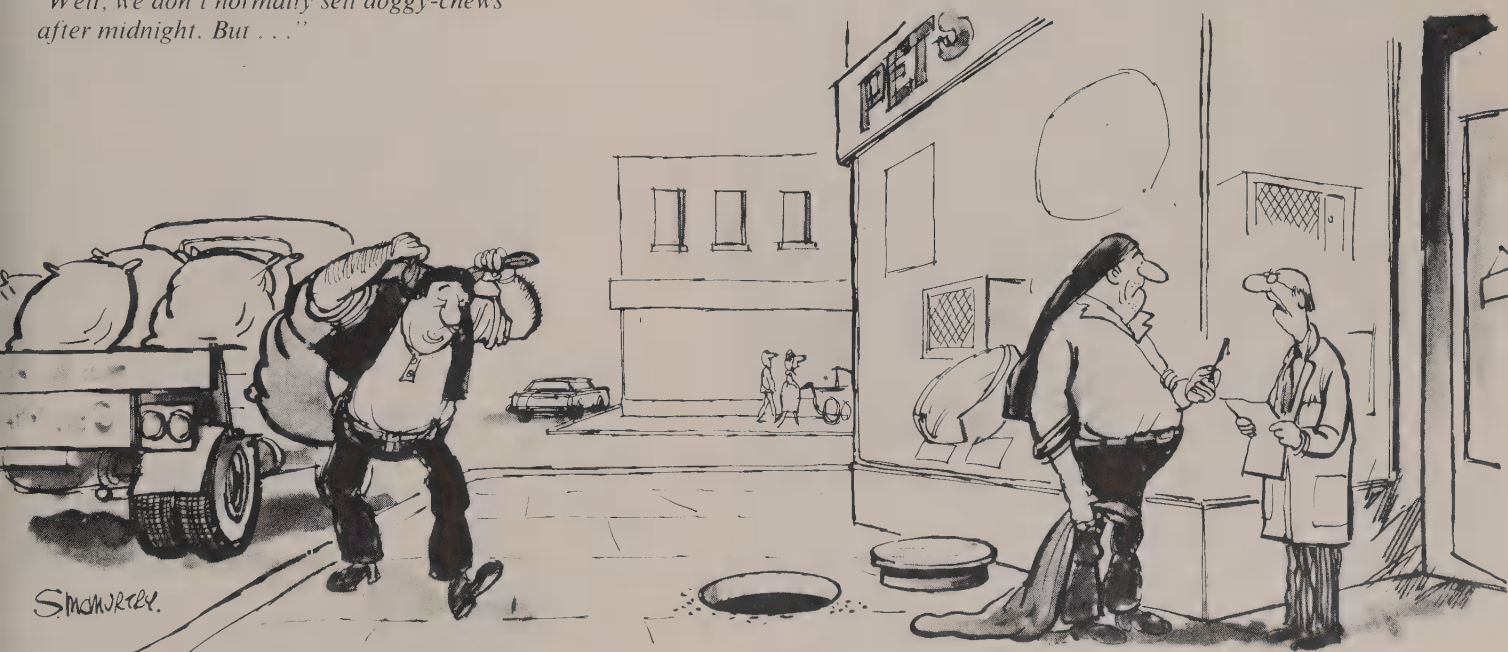
"I'm sorry, sir—we don't do part exchange."



"No, no, lad! Just mark up the new prices on each tank."



"Well, we don't normally sell doggy-chews after midnight. But . . ."



"Hang on, hang on! I've only counted six sacks of gerbils!"



I WAS CHURCHILL? DOUBLE

As the TV phoney war hots up, the latest dramatic reconstruction of the years of blood, toil, tears and sweat features a new talent with an uncanny resemblance to the great bulldog warlord

NO EXPENSE was spared—on a precision-knitted wig, acrylic nose, contact lenses with an authentic glint, period panatellas and a 44-piece artificial jawbone—in a bid to re-capture all of the charm, irascibility, power, compassion and autocratic splendour of the man who led Britain to victory in the dark years before documentary TV.

With plans well-advanced to cast Beryl Reid as "Clemmie", Peter Egan as the king, Arthur Lowe as Chamberlain, Arthur Mullard as de Gaulle and Telly Savalas as Roosevelt, this lavish co-production with Deutsche Funk promises to be the most authentic ever mounted by make-up artistes working from old photographs.



First Sea Lord—and a proud moment in history takes on all the poignancy and drama of *The Onedin Line*.

Dunkirk—and the triumphs and disasters are vividly re-created in this moving sequence, actually shot in the English Channel for total realism.





Arriving for the Yalta Conference and a riveting scene in which a perfect replica of Stalin's moustache is featured.



"Give us the tools and we will finish the job," Churchill tells a youthful-looking Eisenhower.



Meticulously modelled on a contemporary Vicky cartoon, Eden invites Churchill to the Foreign Office for a dried egg omelette and briefing.



Part of the East End was specially demolished during filming of the morale-boosting tours of Blitz damage.

SHOPTALK



IF there is a shortage of paper clips this winter it may be my fault. I seem to have gone too far again. I have boxes of the things all over the place.

I have big paper clips and small paper clips, giant wavy ones and cute triangular ones, square ones which I recommend, round ones which I don't and plastic ones which aren't any good at all. You can't twist them about, they break. Here is some advice to take with you on your journey through life. Avoid plastic paper clips.

I also have a lot of elastic bands and five pencil sharpeners, one, made in China, of a stout Chinese child waving. I have a great many drawing pins and rubbers and phials of type cleaner and roll upon roll of Sello-tape and some rulers and an arsenal of paper knives and a wonderful new dispenser that promises thousands of glue spots.

I have, indeed, a desk with nine drawers all crammed with stuff like this and I know what will happen. Some men in plain clothes will burst in and say aha, I think you had better come along with US, sir. "The desk, Your Honour, was like Aladdin's cave," they will say next day, "FULL of stationery," and what will I say then?

Who will believe the truth which is that I don't know what came over me? I bought it all. What is more I am still buying it. Only this afternoon I bought a box file, a good gadget for weighing letters and two bulldog clips. I already have a kennel of bulldog clips but quite honestly I really do think that you can't have too many bulldog clips. Not nowadays.

You need lots of envelopes, too, and typing paper and carbons. Clipboards, you need some of them, and staplers are essential. I have seven staplers plus staples to fit just about every stapler ever made except the seven I've got.

The truth is I'm keen on stationery. I like it, that's all. I like just about everything sold in stationer's shops including the cash books and those marvellous ledgers bound in what looks like tooled leather, I wish I needed one of those, but most of all, at the very top of the list, I like the pens.

I dote on pens, I'm devoted to them and I know I am not alone in this. I'm told there is one on every bus. We are a freemasonry, we pen freaks, a secret brotherhood recognising each other by a look in the eye and a certain bulge in the breast pocket.

Of course, some people overdo it. I have a friend, a respectable publisher by day, whose secret passion for pens knows no bounds. His current favourite is a Mickey Mouse pen bought in California. A Mickey

Mouse pen, I ask you, how vulgar! My own is a fine square pen inset with slivers of mirror on three sides and the word "BANGKOK" picked out in beads on the fourth. It is, I know, much admired.

And what about the triangular yellow one with "SOUTH SHIELDS" printed on one flank? And the tiny one that pulls out and out until it is three feet long? And the fat one that writes in five different colours? Jewels from my collection, gentlemen, gems all. The South Shields one needs a refill.

I may make this an excuse to call on Mr and Mrs Hunt. They are the cynosure of all true pen freaks, the envy of us all. They seem to us to have found the ideal life. They have a pen shop of their own.

And such a pen shop! It is called The Pen Shop and it is very small and very grand. It occupies a choice place halfway along Burlington Arcade, surely the most elegant mall of shops in London, and you have to pause and straighten your tie before you go in.

Not long ago some audacious criminals raided Burlington Arcade. They careered down it in a car and for one awful moment it seemed they might be after The Pen Shop. But no, such a relief, they chose the jewellers opposite and the pens were saved.

They must have kicked themselves when they realised what they had missed. I mean they could have got away with this beautiful French fountain pen covered in Chinese lacquer, a living substance as perhaps you know, obtained from the sap of the lacquer tree (*Rhus vernicifera*). It would cost you or me £150. Or they could have got one of the chic Christian Dior pens or one of the fat

German pens that are so popular now. They hold masses of ink and cost only £58 each. The smartest ink, says Mrs Hunt, is brown.

Or they may have preferred one of the new black pens that somehow owe their finish to a spin-off from space research or, my goodness, they might have got one of the Anglo-French pens, 18-carat gold, hand-finished and, at £480, the most expensive in the place.

There are more expensive pens, of course. This gold one comes with a diamond studded clip that puts the price up a bit but the Hunts don't stock these. There isn't a lot of call for gold pens with diamond clips, even in Burlington Arcade.

Such falderals are not on offer at Philip Poole's famous shop in Drury Lane, either, though most other pens are. Mr Poole will be happy to sell you any kind of pen. But you can't tell me he *likes* ballpoints or squashy felt tips, the nearest thing to finger painting since fingers.

What Mr Poole likes are real pens, that is to say pen holders into which you fit proper pen nibs. Not for nothing is he known as His Nibs. Mr Poole has, oh, a million nibs or so it seems as you gaze in amazement and admiration at the marvellous display in his window or, if you are lucky, at the highlights of his collection, set out in trays like priceless Babylonian artefacts at the British Museum.

The tragedy of the steel nib, as he will tell you, is that for 150 years it got steadily better, every day and in every way, until it reached perfection. It was at that moment of triumph that the ballpoint arrived. Overnight the perfect steel nib was obsolete.

Never mind, you can see them in all their glory at Philip Poole's—pretty filigree nibs, grand crested nibs, interesting scenic nibs, distinguished portrait nibs. Fame was to have your profile on a pen nib.

Their passing is sad, of course, but frankly, and don't tell Mr Poole, I can't pretend I'm all that sorry. I remember them too well from Westoe Junior Boys, spluttering, spluttering things that got ink all over everything. Of course ours didn't have portraits of Bismark or views of the Matterhorn which would have made a difference, I can see that now.

But modern pens, how lovely they are. Did you know you can get a ballpoint now that you can *rub out*? Aren't pens wonderful!

This Way Out?

THE first thing I'd look up in the index would be Slip-Knots. I'm determined to master these before I die. My slip-knots either leave me with the short end to work with, or slip right off with nothing but a smooth piece of string, or rope in the case of rope. After that I'd see what it said under Notes. You're supposed to leave a Note, and they're hell to get right, as I know from trying to draft something crisp for the milkman, when we decided to have yoghurt only on alternate days in future, but only if he's got plain, and in any event not Thursdays.

The challenge of writing the Note may not be all that's put me off suicide so far, but it's certainly helped. "I can't go on," is corny. "Goodbye world," is superfluous. "I've put the house in your name," seems harshly materialistic. Besides, the ballpoint snatched up in an emergency is always a dead one. I wouldn't want to be more of a nuisance than I'm being already, causing the investigating officer to scribble a pencil over the inkless impression before he could get the message. He's had enough trouble cutting me down.

This all points to the Voluntary Euthanasia Society's good sense in voting 115 to 11 in favour of publishing its handy guide to self-destruction, which many reports degraded by calling it a Do-It-Yourself suicide booklet. Not only tautological but flip. I don't like that. Never say DIY. From what I can tell, it seems a first-rate idea. I can think of nothing more likely to keep this mortal coil on me than detailed instructions on how to shuffle it off. Things I've gone in for in my time, but abandoned in a daze after reading the instructions, include an aerosol suede cleaner, backgammon, two get-you-home windshields, a light-meter, and a little transparent bag of buttons and black elastic designed to lodge inside the waistband and render braces obsolete.

Coming across these articles, also some pieces of brown wood promised in assembled form to be a shoe rack, and also their manuals, though not always at the same time and place, I find that they have now lost their attraction. A man holding a bag of buttons in one hand, and in the other a tiny page saying, "If indicator needle shows upper or lower end of measuring field with camera aperture two stops up or respectively down..." is in no doubt that he's gone clean off braces-substitutes and photography. They seemed a good idea at the time, but the urge has passed.

Can suicide be all that different?

Hamlet is pretty airy on the bare bodkin as a quietus agent, and it certainly sounds clean, simple and quick. Add a manual, you're in trouble. "Taking care to ensure that... Holding the point inwards, the blade lying along the line of the wrist... Counting from the upper or lower end of the rib-cage respectively..." You're still working it out when Ophelia comes prancing in, and nothing achieved but a slashed doublet, which is what you had, if I remember my Elizabethan costume, in the first place.

Take ledge-jumping. Authorities on the Wall Street crash, presently getting good mileage out of its demi-centennial, are adamant that no one actually jumped. The crash is not denied, but it wasn't citizens meeting the sidewalk. And since America has always been ahead of us in everything, from bulletproof limos to convenience suppers, I think I see an explanation. They already had their suicide's vade-mecum while it was still a penny on our VE Society's eyelid.

This would inhibit jumpers. Get out on a ledge with a book telling you to distribute the weight evenly, bend slightly at the knees, place the hands to the rear with palms against the wall, and you either clamber back inside to get things clear in the mind, the urge then passing, or shuffle off in confusion with your ankles crossed and bounce intact on a strong awning.

I haven't been able to acquire a copy of the Society's guide, unfortunately. You have to be a member, and of "three months' standing", I see, which is a long time to stand before you can kick the chair away and start swinging. Good sense again—and not only because members who got the book on enrolment day, and had a label

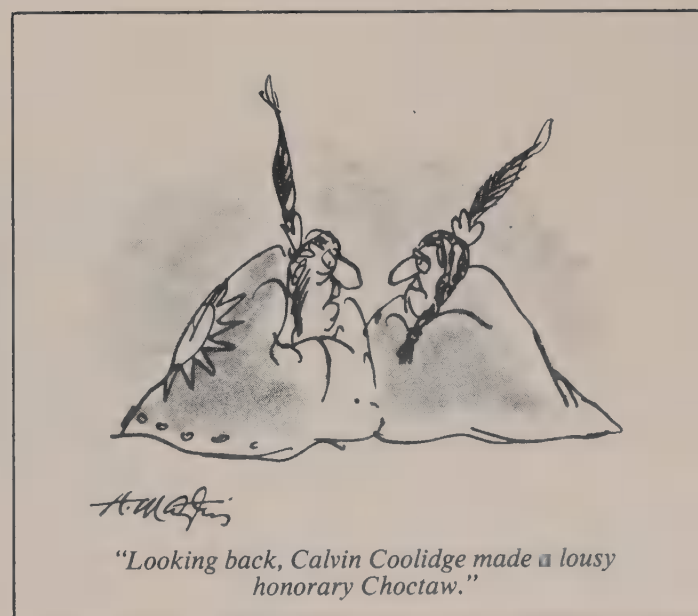
round their big toe by lunchtime, would be a tough prospect when it came to collecting the subscription. It also gives what you could call a breathing space. Stops them rushing into things without pausing to reflect that tomorrow might be sunny, or an unexpected cheque turn up, when second thoughts could ensue. You have to be quick to be dead.

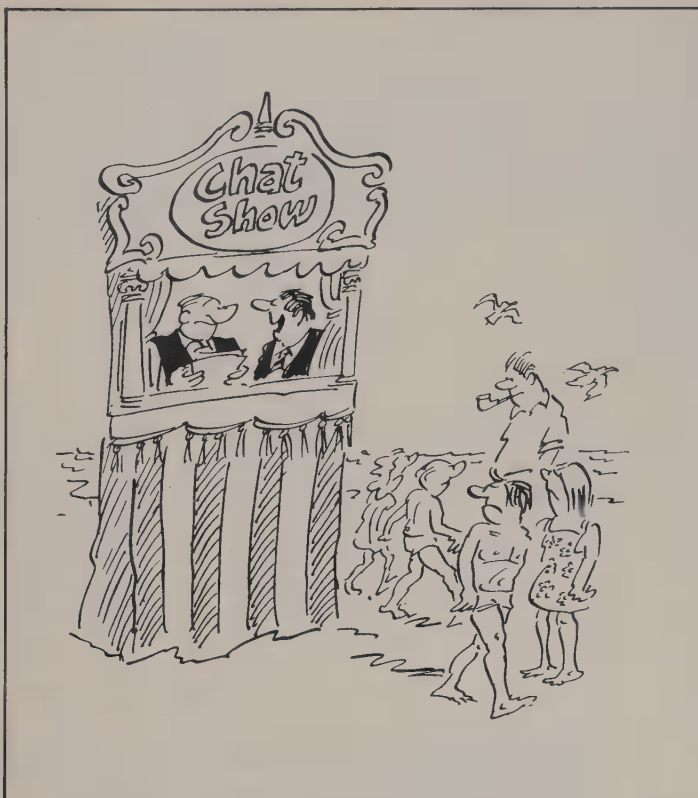
So, without more information, I'm bound to speculate a bit. I don't know the full range of recommended methods. Chair-kicking may not qualify. If it does, though, I'd certainly have a lively interest in the approved techniques. For those planning to be their own Jack Ketch, and not yet gone over to concealed supports inside the waistband, see above, what is the thinking, say, on braces as a successful instrument of suspension?

Myself, I have a surviving pair. They are to be found, mostly when not required, in a low wardrobe compartment and a mesh of drycleaners' wire coathangers. But they have long lost their stretch. More accurately, are fully stretched in repose, and would only hold up the trousers of a nine-foot man. Even putting aside slip-knot problems in trying to attach one end to a ceiling fitting, I can see myself booting away the chair and just dropping to the carpet.

How silly can you feel?

Yes, I know. Of course I could go out and buy a new pair. Which is exactly the kind of thing that has you off the boil. Then what have





garden hose; end up with enough leaks, waterlogged wellingtons and Eezy-Joyn clips with a vital part missing to make me want to take my life.

What of pills? Himmler went out all right, on a faint waft of pear drops, but he'd probably had the stuff tested on somebody, and had confidence in it. Not everyone's going to be so lucky. You could wake up saying "Where am I?" and be told your favourite chair, smelling of Tunes. In the pill-taking society the chances of taking the wrong one are high, accounting for nervous air travellers who start singing over Mont Blanc when they'd meant to sleep all the way to Athens.

And on that testing, incidentally, and with all respect to the authors of our booklet, do we feel total confidence in their recommendations? Are they true and tried? I don't know the membership fee, but they all come a bit steep these days, and I don't suppose this one is even tax deductible. You'd want to be sure. An appendix to the manual, with testimonials from those fully satisfied ("I was gone in a minute"—Mrs P.W., Lechlade) can hardly be looked for here. There may be practical demonstrations at the Society's meetings, I don't know. You couldn't cover the whole range, even then. Drownings would be tricky, having to ship all that water into the hall, doubtless against the by-laws. Ground floor jumping looks stupid. Electrics are wide open to bungling, as anyone knows who ever checked all conceivable fault points in a bedside lamp, and come the big switch-on the dishwasher blows. The last thing you'd want is a laughing audience, but it's a grave risk, when your platform expert promises a quick way with 10,000 volts and just gets melted sleeve buttons.

It's a serious business, all this. Don't think I see it any other way. The Society can help us. I'm convinced of that. If only in alerting us to the dangers. Making us alive to them. Of laughter particularly. Who wants to look ridiculous at the end? Particularly if it isn't the end.

The man who lacks proper instructions for chucking himself on the Northern Line ("Note the position of the live rail . . . Keeping the arms close to the sides . . .") and has to crawl back on to the platform with only his umbrella snapped and his hat spinning off towards High Barnet, is never going to hold up his head again. Not even high enough to slide into an oven.

Yes, indeed. Do it right or not at all. That's the message. I've got it even without reading the booklet. It's done wonders for me already. Not at all, is my personal decision. As of now, I'm swearing off suicide.

If it's the last thing I do.

you got? A pair of strong new braces you're never going to use.

Let alone I haven't all that much confidence in our ceiling fittings.

The Society's main purpose in publishing, and an admirable one, is to spare people the embarrassment of failed attempts. Their researchers have come up with many cases of staggering inefficiency, it seems. Once more, I'm short on specifics, but it doesn't take much imagination, especially for me, to see the sort of mess you could get into, thrashing around for the right bit of tubing to go over your exhaust pipe. And then it's such a strained fit that you only have to bang the car door getting in and it springs off. The next thing you hear, instead of angel voices, is a call from the house saying the soup's getting cold. I get this every summer, if fine, with your common or



"Pass it along—we're breaking out of here at Evensong."

KENNETH ROBINSON:

SCREEN TEST



Dear Reggie,

Before you left *News At Ten* I had been auditioned, as you know, to work on your programme. I'm glad nothing came of it, and I do hope you will explain to the management that I've gone right off the idea, for reasons I shall try to explain here.

But first, let me say what a relief it was to talk to you on the telephone the other day, and to find you had not taken leave of your senses. I had just been reading, in my newspaper, that "the turbulent, best-loved newsreader wept over the strain of his gruelling job with ITN."

I must say this didn't ring true, and I was glad when you assured me that it wasn't. But, as you said, the Press never have time to check facts. Even when a newspaperman does get something right, he makes it sound sinister. The same reporter told us you had spent a whole day inside your flat, "occasionally looking out of the window". This perfectly normal behaviour was made to seem quite worrying.

I tried to ring Anna to see if you were all right but she was obviously keeping a discreet distance from her telephone. She tells me, incidentally, that reporters still follow her and her escorts out of theatre foyers—apparently fascinated to find that a newsreader can lead a normal life. "We're only doing our job," they whine at her, "just like you, Miss Ford."

What is it about you lot at ITN? Even I can see that you are more glamorous than your colleagues at the BBC. Though Michael Aspel would have done very well on *News At Ten*. When he was reading the BBC news, he was always longing to lose his sedate image. Before he left and went to Capital Radio, via *Crackerjack*, he practically begged me to squirt a soda syphon at his face on a programme I was presenting.

Yes, I *did* once present programmes, Reggie. And that, of course, is why I was interviewed by you at that audition, fifteen years ago.

More of that in a moment. Michael Aspel tells me that even now he cannot quite shake off the respectable image he acquired at the BBC. The other day, when he was interviewing somebody on his own morning

programme, the man asked him, with compassion, how he had managed to fall so far from grace. It seems that if you read the news at the BBC, you become an institution and are expected to stay in the job until nobody minds when you retire rather too late. After all, none of us screamed with disappointment when Robert Dougal stopped reading to us before bedtime.

But then, of course, Mr Dougal and other BBC readers have never been public entertainers like you, Reggie, and Anna. I suppose there is some truth in what you were telling me about the dual presentation of news making bulletins seem more relaxed. When you and your colleagues glanced at each other, gathering up your papers, you reminded us you were human.

You also reminded me of my own experiences in a two-handed television presentation I once did, with Chris Kelly, on an East Anglian news magazine. We chose, for our signature tune, a French composition played on an electric organ. It came to a climax with a descending arpeggio and ended on the lowest, fruitiest raspberry ever heard from a musical instrument. One week we were rebuked by the regional television watchdog. In future, he said, we must not end on the lewd bottom note. So Chris and I left out the final raspberry and sat facing viewers as though we were waiting for it in considerable pain. The next week we were instructed either to restore the note or cut out the miming.

I mention this, Reggie, to show that I never had the right attitude to television work and cannot now hope to step in and take your place. When you helped to audition me, all those years ago, I had already done some very strange interviews. "I like your work," I once said to Peter Cook, "because there is no cruelty in your humour."

"That's true enough," said Peter, leaning across and grasping me playfully round the throat.

Later, when the tiny loudspeaker earpiece came into use, I took over from Eamonn Andrews and interviewed a man who claimed he could play tunes on his nose.

"I'm afraid I can't seem to manage it, tonight," said the poor man. He was

shaking so much with stage fright that his finger kept slipping out of his nostril.

I was about to turn to an item on dwarf abortionists, and their place in society, when the director barked instructions at me.

"Of course he can do it," yelled my earpiece.

"Of course you can do it," I shouted at the musician.

He still couldn't get his nose properly in tune, but my earpiece kept making me tell him he could. He left the studio a broken man and I got a pile of letters accusing me of sadism. Once again, Reggie, I had moved further away from your own noble calling, with all the adulation it brings.

It wasn't always my own fault that I failed. On one occasion, when I was to announce Clement Freud's election triumph, a researcher ordered a bloodhound to decorate the studio. Unknown to her, two other researchers had done the same thing. I opened the programme with one bloodhound each side of me and a third trying to climb on my knee. It was a long time before Clement Freud, or any other Liberal, would speak to me.

Somehow, Reggie, you have avoided this kind of pitfall. It is true that you often had us hanging upon your every word, in a way that we never did for anybody else. I like to think this is because, as you have explained, you liked to seem conversational while delivering some of those depressingly illiterate lines. Anna merely looks at us prettily and hypnotically, as she reads dreadful sentences like "The gulf between Catholics and Protestants widened spectacularly and with bitter force today." But you, Reggie, often came very near to giving some sort of meaning to the nonsense you were reading. I found both techniques enjoyable because each helped us, in its own way, not to really *think* about the news.

I know, of course, that you were allowed to change words if you wanted to. But most television news items would have to be reconstructed completely before they made sense. So you were wise to accept what you were given and personalise it, if that is the word I want.

Don't think I didn't envy your sticking-power and the enormous following you received from viewing sympathisers over the years. As I watched the queue forming at my local newsagent, waiting for the evening editions that would spread your name and face over the front pages, I knew where I had gone wrong as a television presenter. I had never really *tried* to say those impossible words on the automatic cue.

For instance, on the night the astronauts were trying to land, with difficulty, I took over again from Eamonn Andrews and was asked to say, "One thing has been uppermost in our minds all day."

"Sex," I added at rehearsals. Somehow I could never use the phrases that are written by some sort of inhuman newswriting machine behind the scenes.

Even so, I was sent for by the ITN boss, Geoffrey Cox, for that audition I mentioned. I'm glad to hear that the story of this occasion is to be published, for posterity, in the forthcoming reminiscences

of Reggie. As I remember it, when I arrived at the ITN studios Geoffrey Cox said he wanted me to present the Thursday night half-hour. But he looked puzzled as I sat down opposite him.

"First," he said, "we must try you out in front of the cameras."

"But if you know my work . . . ?"

"It's sometimes a question of height on the screen," he said. "Please go and talk to Mr Bosanquet in the studio."

He seemed a little on edge, so we obeyed orders and sent each other up for ten minutes or so, neither of us knowing which was being interviewed. When it was all over Mr Cox had left his office.

"He's been called away to Manchester," said his secretary. "So sorry."

Some months later I learned how I had failed. The moment Geoffrey Cox saw me he realised something was wrong. But it was not until I was in front of the cameras that he was able to pin-point the fault.

I was not *Robert Robinson*, he realised. Somewhere there had been a failure of

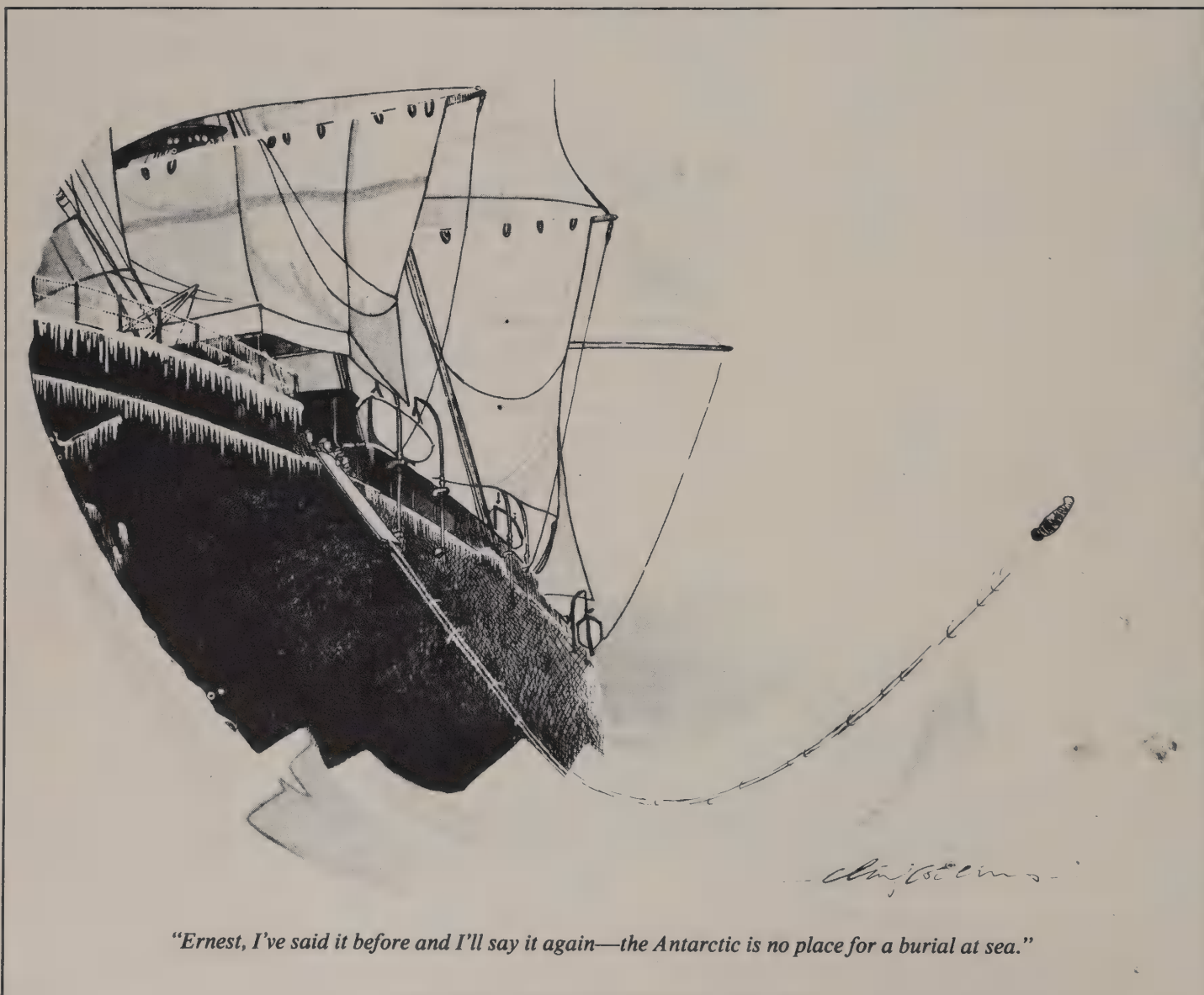
communication. ITN had nearly signed up the wrong man.

And now, Reggie, there will be another failure of communication, as the weeks go by and we no longer receive you in our living rooms. You will do other programmes, of course, but it won't be the same. There is something special about televised news. It gives a very tiny hint of what we shall be reading, with better understanding, in our newspapers. Because it is so appallingly written, we barely listen to what the newsreaders are saying. But there is a rhythm about it that nearly approximates to the sound of human speech. It comforts our consciences to think we have plugged in to international disasters. But we haven't, of course. Every newsreader gets between the words and the viewer. And none more engagingly than you, Reggie. Or, as Anna is reported to call you, "Old Bean".

And that is something that, in two years acquaintanceship, Miss Ford has certainly never called *me*. It seems that all the bouquets are for Bosanquet.



"Oh, no! Not the last of the goldfish."



"Ernest, I've said it before and I'll say it again—the Antarctic is no place for a burial at sea."



Dear Mrs Thatcher

When nine months ago you were elected our leader, albeit not by me personally, it was as a result of a number of election pledges. One of these was, you may recall, that you were going to do something about the arts. It was perhaps not widely understood at the time, at least not by me, that "doing something" meant in this case closing them down or leaving them to their own resources which comes in the end to much the same thing.

The arts are not like Harrods; you cannot leave them to survive on a "first come first served" basis, nor are they strictly answerable to the laws of the market place since most market places are renowned for their lack of art galleries. I have admittedly an axe to grind here: I happen to be by trade a drama critic, and I do not much look forward to spending my 1980s watching a cast of two doing highlights from *Carousel* for lunchtimes only at a pub not far from Highbury. On the other hand I didn't much expect to find myself spending Friday mornings in 1979 explaining to bewildered tourists why the Victoria & Albert Museum was staying closed for an extra day a week due to a short-term economy measure introduced several months earlier and now conveniently turned into a permanent arrangement. Nor did I expect to find the National Theatre partly closed by industrial action for almost as long as it had been open. Nor did I expect to find you appointing as Minister for the Arts a man so patently laden down with other duties (not least that of Leader of the House) that he would scarcely have the time to watch a commercial on television, let alone a full-length play. There are a great many things that have happened to the arts in the last nine months that I didn't expect, and it begins to occur to me that your professed devotion to them is much akin to the love avowed for Hamlet by Claudius.

The pity of it is that unlike most of the rest of this great country of ours, the arts actually work. Indeed in any league of national assets they rate somewhere only just below North Sea Oil and the Queen Mother; tourist surveys have for years been proving that the British theatre is why most people come to London, and next time you happen to find yourself in either Paris or New York perhaps you'd care to check the local entertainments guides and see what happens to a nation's theatre when its government is either too lazy or too rich to bother with much encouragement.

The details of the present crisis in the arts are probably vaguely familiar to you; you'll find them in a folder on your desk underneath

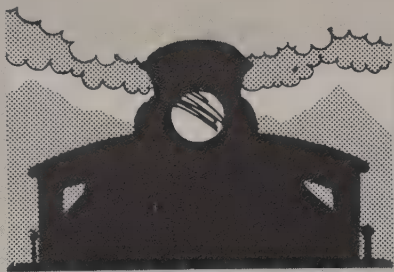
the one about British Leyland. A combination of factors, ranging from the doubling of VAT to the strengthened £, have made what was only a decade ago plentiful and cheap appear rare and expensive; the arts generally and the theatre in particular are now in the midst of an economic crisis which makes Wall Street in 1929 look like minor piggy-bank trouble. Unless you do something, fast and now, by this time next year we shall have lost at the very least a dozen playhouses nationwide, and reduced the activities of the National Theatre and the RSC by at least a third. As for Covent Garden and Sadlers' Wells, heaven help them because the way things are right now nobody else can afford to.

This is not however intended to be a New Year message of total despair because, there is, as it happens, something you can do. Fifteen years ago, Harold Wilson's first Minister for the Arts was a lady called Jennie Lee; through a combination of her own strength, her abiding party popularity as the widow Bevan, and the boom time through which she worked, the National Theatre got itself built and the country as a whole learnt that its arts tradition was something to be celebrated and continued.

These are harder times, but it could be done again; since Baroness Lee packed up the job a decade ago we have not had a single arts minister who could get a job backstage at the Palladium, let alone justify an arts budget worth millions. The best way for you to start 1980 would be by finding a suitable candidate and giving him or her the kind of authority you have given Heseltine at Environment or Carrington at the Foreign Office. Until we get an arts minister with that kind of power, we are in deep trouble.

As it happens this is not an application for the job, though I would venture to suggest that there are two very strong possibilities. Both are, admittedly, male, but that should not necessarily be held against them; both are currently running leading state-subsidised arts enterprises, both have recently come through long and difficult industrial and economic problems in their own establishments, and both have the personality and the strength to operate with your support an arts policy which could just about pull us through the 1980s. A technical and painless elevation to the peerage would make either of them eligible. One is Roy Strong at the V&A; the other is Peter Hall at the National. The choice is yours, but for God's sake make it, and make it soon.

Sheridan 7/87



Inspired by Paul Theroux's latest travels on the Old Patagonia Express, E. S. TURNER sets out on

THE WORST RAIL JOURNEY

(The journey begins at Orpingham Green—which is not its real name—situated 15 miles from London.)

AS the train lurches out into the dank suburban wasteland, past the long rows of posters which ask women whether they are pregnant, you suddenly think: *'I've been here before.'* These fields of derelict buses, these abandoned factories which once turned out miles of plastic parsley for fishmongers' windows—yes, it is all uneasily familiar. In fact, you saw it yesterday. And the day before.

We are bound for the Capital of a once-legendary imperial power. No one knows when we shall get there. Back in the station the chalked messages warned us of absentee guards, faithless drivers, cancellations, diversions, industrial action. Already the sun is half-way up the mucus-yellow sky. Within the grubby coach where we shall spend an eternity in the company of strangers there is an ill-concealed air of menace, as those who light cigarettes are told to put them out again and those who failed to get seats stand on the feet of those who did.

I am one of the luckier ones and to cover my embarrassment I pretend to read the Bible tract that was lying on my seat. "Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth," it says. "I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints." I fold it to use as a marker in Hardy's *The Dynasts*, which I hope to start, and perhaps finish, on the journey.

I keep thinking of the homeless family who were lying sprawled on the platform from which we started, the flotsam of a decayed society, with all their worldly goods in plastic bags. "My Mum frew me art, dint she?" the mother said to a patient policeman. "Couldn't stand my Kevin and the boys no more, could she? Now we're sleeping rough in stations, aren't we? Yeah, I bin to the council but they dint want to know. But I'll get bloody Shelter on to them. And bloody *Nationwide*. And the bloody *Evening News*." Throughout her spirited outburst her Kevin, a portly youth of about seventeen, kept a bored silence, contenting himself with cuffing his offspring, though he seemed too young to have sired more than three of them. What a land of raw human tragedy this is! Yet the children seemed in no way dispirited; their hyper-activity was amazing to behold.

We halt for ten minutes, in sight of a church bearing the whitewashed message: WOGS OUT. It is an exhortation we shall see endlessly repeated on the walls of hospitals and schools.

The air of menace in the coach deepens. Suddenly a pistol is thrust in my ear, there is a sharp report and my brains spatter across the window. Or so it seems. "Don't do that, Wayne," says a woman's voice. "The gentleman doesn't like it." There was a lifetime of nagging in her flat voice. The over-fed child, a future white Bokassa, kicks her shins until she stops rebuking him.

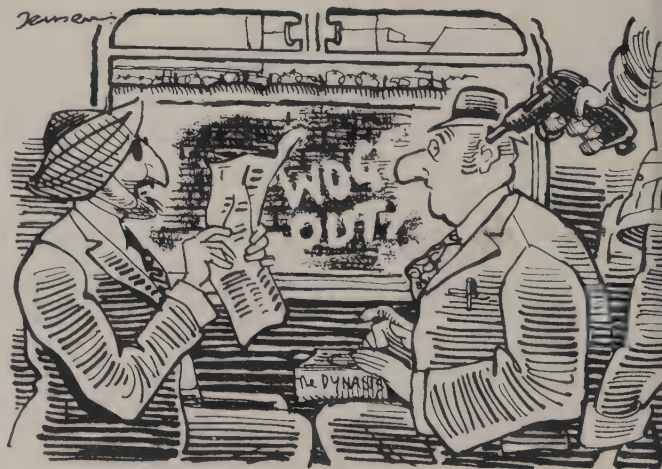
The incident reminds me of the wife and son I have left at home while I voluntarily undertake the Worst Rail Journey

in the World. Shall I ever see them again? Shall I be the same man when I return? I fidget uneasily; and one reason why I fidget is that a metal spring in the vandalised seat is piercing me to the quick. When I can no longer stand it I rise and give up my seat to an elderly nun.

"ALL OUT! ALL OUT!" comes the shout from a passenger, a tapeworm of a youth in a railwayman's cap. Why must we get out? Because he says so. Will there be another train today? That is no concern of his. Where are we? Apparently we must learn to read. The desolation, the sense of ultimate despair, on this lone platform in the midst of nowhere is terrifying. Something like panic sets in, as famished travellers tug at the drawers of slot machines, which have probably held no chocolate for years. The plight of the very young is pitiful to behold. Some of them have had nothing to eat for thirty minutes. How are they to survive the mounting privations ahead?

The youth like a tapeworm disappears through a door marked PRIVATE, no doubt to rejoin his card school. We never see him again. Reluctantly I allow myself to be drawn into conversation with a neatly-dressed young man who, from his appearance, seems to have undergone some unspeakable ordeal. "God! I never knew it would be like that!" he keeps saying. When I offer him a sip from my brandy flask he takes a long swig. Eventually the sordid story comes tumbling out. He is an office worker in Cheapside and, egged on by his fellow workers, he applied for 24 hours leave to see his first child being born. His old-fashioned employer told him he was a lewd fellow and that such matters were the concern of midwives only, but he would not listen. Now, at a fearful cost, his eyes have been opened. "Serves you right," I say, bitterly regretting the waste of brandy.

The loudspeakers vibrate with the accents of Barbados and Uttar Pradesh. People look at each other blankly. There is a rumour that the train has been ambushed. Across the track just outside the station is one of those sinister concrete



JOURNEY IN THE WORLD

bridges from which youthful guerrilla bands hurl prams and traffic bollards at passing trains.

From a waste bin I retrieve a copy of the *Sun*, which is open at the book review page. CAUGHT IN A WEB OF FORBIDDEN JUST runs one headline; PASSION IN THE WILDS runs another. The lady reviewer ends her saucy summaries of the plots with "This romantic tale will make you feel like seducing your man" and "Meredith's adventures will put a lot of hot and steamy thoughts into your head." Truly, in the Republic of Letters there are now job opportunities for all. How Juvenal would have revelled in the contents of a British Rail waste bin!

While I am thus absorbed, the train is shunted out and a new one shunted in. We are not allowed to board until they decide whether to route it by Elmer's End or Potter's Bar, or perhaps they said Potter's End and Elmer's Bar. At length we are ordered aboard and roundly cursed for not moving quickly enough. Once more the nightmare landscape rolls past, its hard edges mercifully softened by the filth on the windows.

"It looks like Sodom and Gomorrah," says a man in a pin-striped suit. "It does not," I snap. "I have been to Sodom and Gomorrah and I know." He does not like this. I do not like it either. We are all getting short-tempered.

I read a few chapters of *The Dynasts*. An American tourist who looks like John Foster Dulles asks me in an aggrieved tone why all these travellers are not at their places of work. In America they would have been at their desks for three hours by now. I say nothing. What is there to say?

We are offloaded again, in a station resembling every other station and with scant hopes of further transport. I decide to make a short exploration of the near-by town. Children are riding cycles round the station booking hall, maintaining that their fathers said they could do so, as the roads are unsafe. A large notice boasts: THERE ARE NO TOILETS IN THIS STATION. Near by is a betting shop full of postmen, fresh from delaying the second-class mail. News bills proclaim RAIL CHAOS LOOMS and RAIL FARES UP AGAIN. A dog pauses to defile a car priced at £4,999—"This Week's Snip." The only liveliness is when a willowy youth emerges from a unisex hairdresser's to stamp his foot petulantly at the burglar alarm ringing away on the premises above. Otherwise, there is an air of apathy and dejection everywhere. I count four abandoned cars, all with notices on the windscreens saying they will be destroyed if not claimed.

Back to the station, just as a train, all unannounced, pulls in. There is a furious scrimmage for seats by those who still cherish hopes of reaching the Capital today. It moves off slowly. And in a brief instant my eye, long starved of beauty, feasts on the sight of a single exquisite tree silhouetted against the sky. It is growing from the gutter of a factory, established in 1931 for the manufacture of patent bottle closures, if I read the faded lettering aright. The whole composition is perfect, with a scarcely bearable poignancy.

Now we are halted in a tunnel. After ten minutes the driver reluctantly switches on the lights, just as I am pouring the last of the brandy down my throat. As we sit and swelter hysteria begins to mount. The windows are jammed shut. A traveller who looks like an ordnance major pokes out a pane with his rolled umbrella, to admit what he fancies will be fresh air. Suddenly everyone begins to break windows—this sort of thing is infectious. Then with a great lurch we are off again and stop in another anonymous station, where we are invaded by an army of Common Market school children, squealing and jostling as if they were in a cathedral. Because of the broken windows the train is held to be unserviceable and we are all ordered out.

The station waiting room has a single occupant, a singing white-whiskered Silenus dressed in scarecrow clothing, outrageous and malodorous, with rows of empty bottles beside him and a cap on the floor containing two decoy coins. He is the only happy person I have seen today.

He motions me to join him, but I sit ill-temperedly on the broken bench outside, gazing at a discoloured block of flats. All the cistern overflow pipes are dribbling, the water shining silvery in the weak sun. It is a familiar sight in these parts. No power on earth, it seems, can remedy it. This people is defeated, utterly, by the physical problems of urban living.

At last, the Capital, the Mother of Abominations herself! Some say we are entering Waterloo, some say Liverpool Street; only time will show. Again the posters ask women if they are pregnant. There is wild elbowing and pushing as those who have been seated make clear their determination to get off before those who have been standing. What vitality these people display when the show-down comes! I am proud to have journeyed with them, through the last disenchantments of a run-down civilisation doomed, as it must now seem, to speedy oblivion.

Next week: THE TERRIBLE JOURNEY HOME AGAIN.



KATHARINE WHITEHORN:

FEVER PITCH

Dear Editor, I am sorry to be so late with my piece on beating the heat; the trouble, as I am sure you know, is that there hasn't been any heat for so long that I can barely remember what it is like to be warm, let alone hot. However, I have now had a scalding hot bath, taken three aspirins and a stiff whisky and ginger, put on my gumboot socks and dragged a duvet into the airing cupboard. So perhaps I shall manage to imagine . . .

IF you shut your eyes and think of any normal Come to the Sun poster the chances are that the image you conjure up will contain just about every mistake you can make if you actually want to stay cool. You will be thinking of someone in a suntan and a bikini, strolling along a sunny beach with a tall young man, eating an ice cream and thinking about sex. Wrong in every respect.

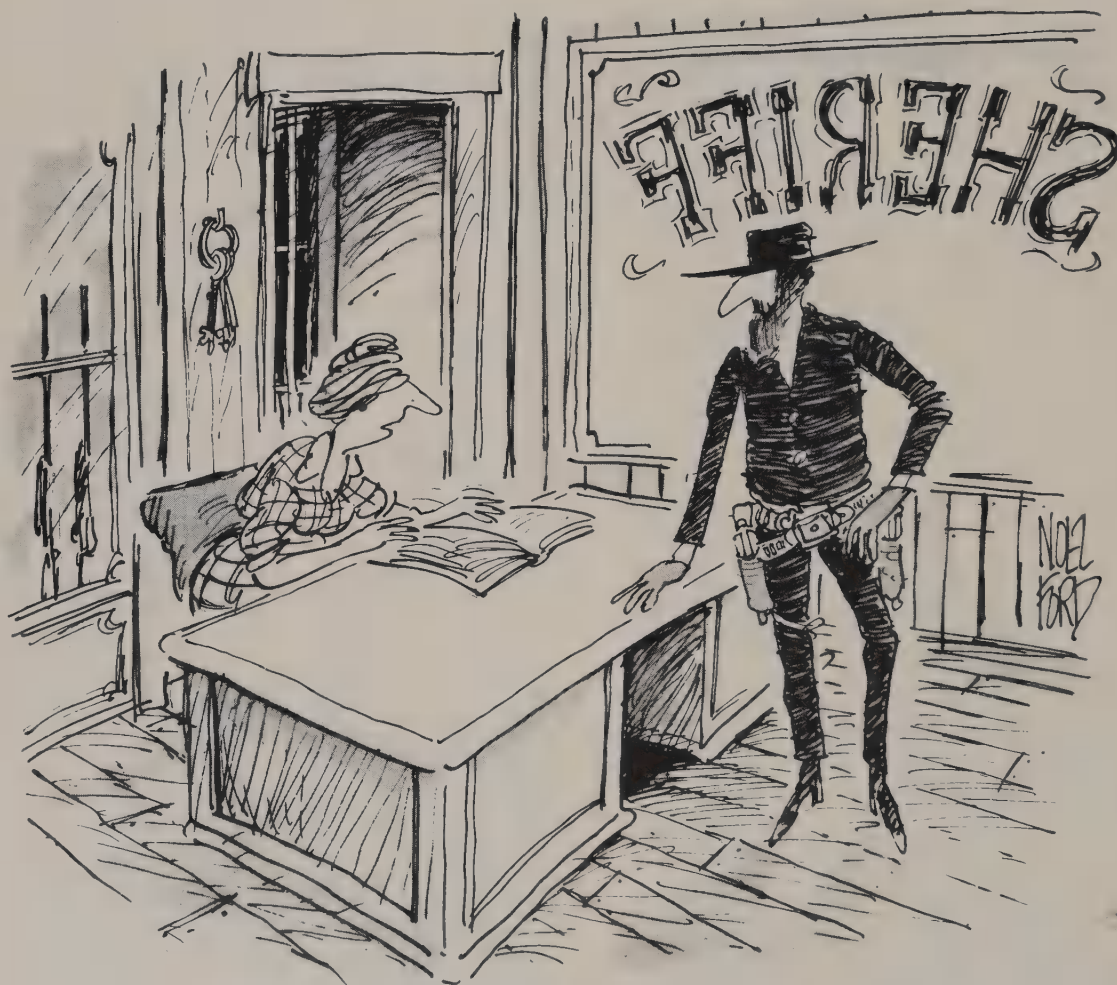
To start with, the clothes. Every square, I mean round, inch of the girl is exposed to the sun; she has been brainwashed into thinking this a suitable way to dress by male editors pressurising female fashion editors into cramming yet more near-naked ladies onto their pages, under the guise of Beach Fashion.

A businessman, no doubt, is slightly worse off sweltering inside a 14 oz dark suit, swearing at his secretary and making bad judgements about the movement of cocoa futures; so, I daresay, is the apparently cool customer wearing skin-tight

jeans and a rough, hot, denim shirt—but only just. Looseness is all, and to be sure of best results there is nothing on underneath.

Girls drifting around in saris are cool. Kaftans are cool. The bicycling correspondent of *Vole* magazine, who habitually goes round London in an Arab nightshirt, is cool, though nobody has figured out how he doesn't get it caught in the chain (perhaps there is a mono version of the bicycle clip?). And Old Colonial shorts which, doubtless for reasons of morality allow a plentiful stream of icy air to pass across the reproductive organs, are also a lot better than smarter, tighter, more interesting ones. And it is important, too, what you wear on your feet . . .

His eyes swam; he wiped the sweat from his forehead for the hundredth time, shifted his load yet again to the other shoulder. He looked down at what was left of his clothes: the grey shreds that had once been a smart pair of khaki shorts, before he came to this



"He already has an appointment at noon, but I could squeeze you in at 12.15, circumstances permitting."

wilderness of sand; the strip of dusty leather he had once honed to a rich mahogany. God, if he could be back in the compound now, a tall frosted glass in his hand . . . ice-cold in Alex . . . well, that had been an unfortunate evening. The sand burned under his feet, he could feel it even through his boots; when I get back to Alex, he thought savagely, when I get back to Alex I will kick the bloody woman's teeth in for not getting my chukka boots re-soled.

And then the ice cream. Ice cream leaves a warm sticky deposit of a mixture of lard and sugar around the mouth; it makes you thirstier than ever. The right drinks are mint juleps and Pimms and masses of very hot tea. It is still considered bad manners to lift the ice out of your drink and actually lean against it, but it is often quite hard to distinguish between being too dry inside and being too dry outside. So you go on drinking vin rosé by the jugful and it doesn't seem to do any good, because what you really want is a cool shower: like the tramp in the nightclub, unable to absorb another drop, even of champagne, saying weakly, "pour it over me, I like the smell." Or, to put it another way, when you've run out of anything further to drink, get under the shower, then get out again, and don't get dry: just stand there and evaporate.

And be careful about keeping your thoughts clean, too, unless there's someone around just waiting to swish you under their mosquito net. The chap who chooses the books for the Navy has an A list and a B list: A list books can be read by anyone, but B list books, all heavings and couplings and suggestions and girls pantingly undoing their blouses, must absolutely not be read by matelots sweltering under the hatches in the Red Sea; for them, it is only engineering manuals and the cleaner parts of the Prayer Book. In every respect, you must—unless thought can instantly be translated into action—keep your mind off the hot stuff and think cool.

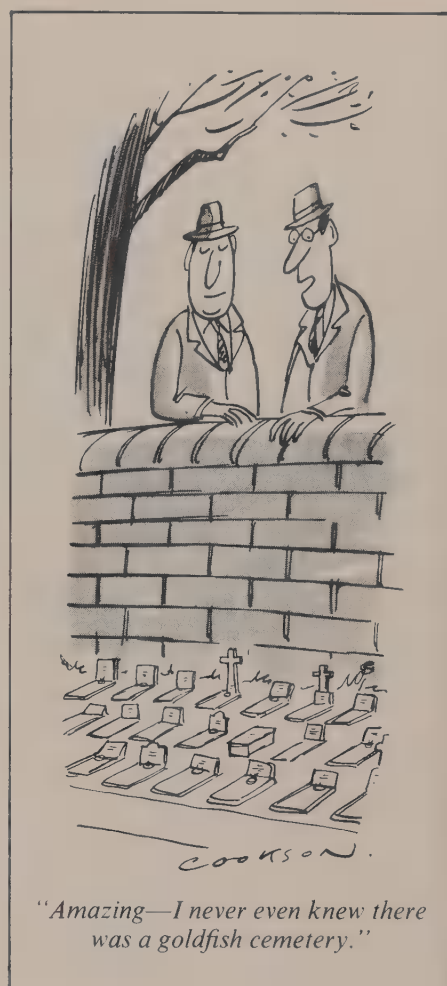
Think cool—that's what she had to do. What man can hold a fire in his hand by thinking of the frosty Caucasus? Well, she could. Hadn't she read recently that the mind-over-matter people could do just that—alter the relative temperatures of their two hands by imagining one in a fire, the other in an icebucket? She mustn't think about the throbbing in her head. She was a toad under a stone. She was a stone under a toad, under a deep pool under a waterfall. She was Marilyn Monroe putting her lingerie in the freezer—what, she wondered idly, would it be like when it came out? Like the stiff frozen knickers reclaimed by an Eskimo maiden next morning after a heavy session in the sledge? Well, it couldn't be long now. Soon the sweaty engineer would return, the door would open and he would sway horribly in the doorway in his vest, his half-empty gin bottle in his hand; then she would have to be cool enough to slam past him, out of the engine room, up the gangway . . .

And finally, the idiot girl in the poster is out in the noonday sun; insane. People who really know how to cope with heat

don't do that; they get up while it is still dark, and grudgingly let a little of the dawn breeze into their tall, cool houses; after which they firmly close the shutters and move around in a cool gloom for the rest of the day. The last thing they do is to go and bathe, which is pleasant for a few minutes; after which you have to get out onto the baking sand again and come into contact with a red-hot towel.

And they do not, repeat not, go in for air-conditioning. This device may have made Arizona habitable, it may have made dark bars all over the world seem like home to anyone who loves a dry Martini and the Modern Jazz Quartet; it may enable you to scuttle in off the burning pavement in shopping centres from Kansas City to Manila. It may even have kept the number of murders in New York City down to only twice the number performed in this whole country; but it effectively prevents your own system ever adapting. And it is so cold.

"Be sure to bring a really warm cardigan," she read, her aunt's spidery writing scrabbling across the thick, expensive paper. "Even although it is still cool in the evenings in Alice Springs in October, the days are already hotting up, and the air conditioning, therefore, will be on; you will catch a terrible chill if you do not wrap up. I have spoken to the house man about it but he seems unable to control the machine. Indeed, I am having some difficulty, I must confess, in forcing myself to write to you, it is so chilly, and my old blood does not quicken as it used to. However, I have had a scalding hot bath, taken two aspirins and a whisky and ginger, put on thick socks, borrowed Toto's duvet and taken my writing pad into the hot cupboard . . .



THE Queen came to see Jake last week. Well, not just Jake, but the 600 or so other boys at his school. I stood outside at the school gates with my Super Eight camera and got her flashing past in a big car in the rain. I wouldn't say I was a keen Royal fan, not the way my wife is. Ask her the birthday of any member of the Royal family, however remote, and she knows it, she really does. It's a talent that's bound to come in useful some day.

I wanted to get the Queen for my home movies because ten years ago I got Prince Charles. We were on a remote beach on the island of Gozo, and he just arrived, stepped out of a boat and walked past us, large as life. This was before he was famous, long before Tony Holden had written about him.

Jake wasn't all that impressed by the Queen. He had to stand out in the rain in the playground with the rest of the Third Year waiting for her to come out and plant a tree and when my wife cross-examined him at night, hoping for some Crawfie crumb, all he would say was that she was just an ordinary old woman in an ordinary old coat. Fact, he and his friend fought she was a double. Y'know. That woman wot looks like her, that's wot I fink.

The only thing Jake will probably remember about this very wonderful, very thrilling day was that he had to wear a tie. The headmaster said so. He can't get out of wearing a blazer, because that's a hanging offence, but they altered the rules just before he arrived, as it was changing from a grammar to a comprehensive, and they said ties were optional. They said it quietly, hoping no one would hear, but Jake did and has never ever worn a tie to school. So we borrowed one, didn't we, and I shouted after him down the street, get it out of your pocket and put it on, you dum dum, but he went off scowling and tieless.

He must have lost his nerve at the last moment and decided he'd better put it on, which was when he ran into trouble. He didn't know how to. A master had to tie it for him. God, I would have died a thousand deaths at his age. The humiliation.

At thirteen, I could tie the best Windsor knot in our class. And I used to wear a front stud, turning my dad's collars over after three days when they were filthy, making them last another three days. I was longing to be tall enough to wear his Burton suits but luckily his neck wasn't much broader than mine, especially with a giant Windsor to fill the gap. My ambition in life was to dress like my dad. There was no such thing as teenage clothes. I just caught the last generation before teenagers were invented.

When I used to go out with my wife in the early days, or my husband as she then was, I used to wear an old camel coat of my dad's which I always thought made me look trifric, even though it did rather drag on the



Further confessions from the domestic diary of **HUNTER DAVIES**

ground. I also wore one of his old caps, tili she threw it out of a bus window, swearing there'd been a freak gale. There was no intermediary stage in those days. Once you were out of short trousers you dressed like a little old man. I was about sixteen when Teddy Boys came in. I got my hair greased back but that was about all. I was from another age, another world.

Slowly, over the years, I have tried to

dress the part. You know, a bloke walking around the universe in 1960 or whenever. In my wedding picture I'm wearing an Italian suit with a bum freezer jacket. Very sharp very Cecil Gee Manchester which was where I think I got it. It couldn't have been Kendal Milne, Manchester, as I only bought one thing there, a grey striped tweed jacket, made in Denmark. My wife, as she then hadn't become, talked me into it. It cost £14, the same as the weekly salary I was then getting on the *Manchester Evening Chronicle*. I had nightmares for years about such profligacy.

For a while in the late Sixties I was the women's editor of the *Sunday Times*, at least the "Look!" pages, and you know what it's like, a long lunch, a few laughs, a drunken walk back to the office and before you know what's happened, I'd bought some more rubbish at Take Six. And again the next day. I suppose I was quite fashionable in those days, for a while anyway. Things dated so quickly, back in the Sixties. You could be out of fashion by the time you came home from lunch.

In the Seventies I haven't bothered. I don't recall when I last bought new clothes. I have one suit for smart and one black plastic battle-jacket, now ten years old, which I wear when I think there might be young people there, you know, under 35. My wife, as you've asked, always looks band box fresh. Really, you can take her anywhere, I will say that. Questions about the Queen, and fashionable with it. She takes after her mother who's always looked smart, whether hanging out the washing or going up the street to buy a reel of thread. You never catch her looking scruffy, whatever the day, whatever the dollar.

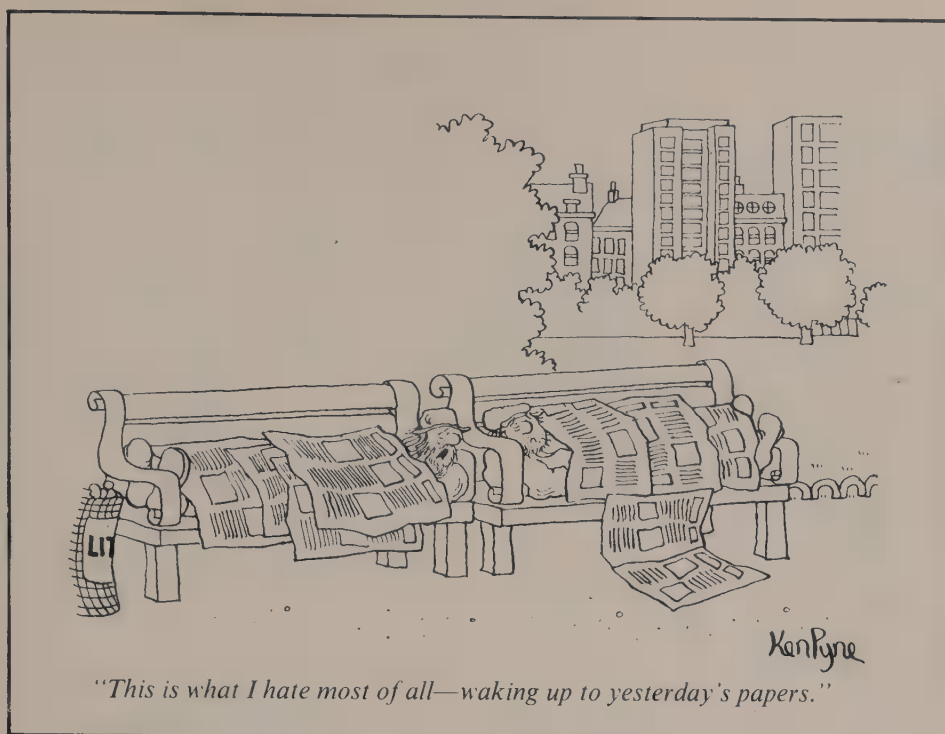
I agree you *feel* better if you're clean and well dressed. It's not simply vanity. I know all that. It's just that I haven't got the energy. And I'm terribly mean.

Last week I decided that my one suit was looking a bit ridiculous with those broad flares. If only I hadn't bought a fashionable suit, when I got it six years ago, but had done what chinless wonders do and wear the same style throughout their whole life. I would now be fashion-less instead of unfashionable. I went into the local dry cleaners and asked how much for tapering. They said £2.90 and I walked out again. Bloody hell. I was buying suits for that price, not long ago. Sounds a bargain, to me, said my husband, as she now is. Doing your rotten trousers will take about an hour. It's slave labour.

I went back next day, ready to lash out, and the lady behind the counter said they'd have to be dry cleaned first, for hygienic reasons, and oh sir, they have got turn-ups, that will put the price up. We had words and I made an excuse and left. I'm going to stick it out. Twenty-three inch bottoms are



"Of course I ram it down people's throats!"



bound to come back some time, and I'll be first.

It was all Caitlin's fault, with laughing at my clothes. I need not go into the awful clothes teenagers are wearing these days, nor her orange hair, sorry, blue hair, that was the day before yesterday. It just encourages them. Last winter we moaned on about the fact that she was wearing plimsolls every day to school, in all the rain and snow. I offered to buy her some Kickers, at vast expense, but it was sod off, I'll have the money. Now she teeters to school on second hand, worn-down gold lamé stiletto heels. At least the plimsolls

stayed on her feet. She fell off her stilettos the other day and ended up so black and bruised I expected Erin Pizzey to knock at the door and accuse me of battering her.

Jake's clothes are at least new, such as his Dr Martin boots and his Harrington jacket. (Who is Mr Harrington and what sort of Dr was Dr Martin, I ask myself, but do not stay for an answer.) Caitlin's are all junk. Nothing is ever new. The worst sin is to wear anything new or fresh or smart and clean. The most she pays for anything, even a fur coat, is 30p. They're all the same. You see these poor little deprived waiflike Orphan Annie girls trailing home to their

doss-house, only they continue on up Highgate Hill and disappear into £200,000 houses.

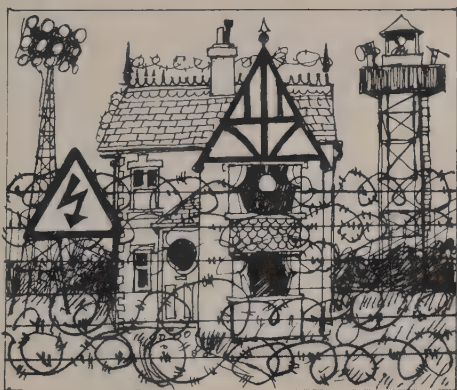
She never even washes these horrible clothes she buys, nor are they once-fashionable garments which no one wants. They've always been junk clothes, yet she'll get up at seven, having read the *Ham and High*, and be first in the queue with her other friends, all from lovely homes, and knock down poor old ladies in the panic to be first at the clothes counter at every Jumble Sale. The old ladies shouldn't mind. She's not actually after the same clothes as they are.

The Rev Patrick Figgis sent us a message the other day. Any old clothes to spare for an old men's home he visits. Turns out there's a national shortage of second hand men's clothes. It puzzled me at first why this should be so. One theory is that old men never throw out their old clothes, which is true. I never throw mine out. But the real reason is Caitlin. She and her friends are into old men's clothes. Because they're wearing them all, there's none left for the poor old men.

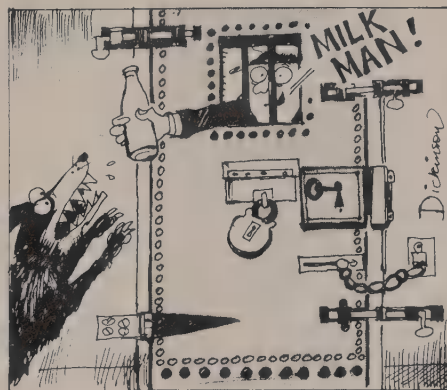
I know I mentioned those stilettos, but that's about the only female item. What they're really after is old men's suits, hats and old coats. Every day to school she wears an old gaberdine raincoat which belonged to her grandfather, the sort no self-respecting flasher would ever wear.

They always say that clothes, like all fashions, go in cycles. I know if I'd kept my tight trousers I had when I got married I'd be very smart now. But teenage girls, with the cult of the scruffy old man look, seem to disprove this. But I dunno. Some sort of cycle has come round. My ambition was to dress like my dad. Her ambition, so it now appears, is also to dress like him.

HANDYMAN PUNCH



Having spent £££s on improving your home, it pays to keep the burglar out. Most everyday locks easily yield to a professional thief using jemmys, oxy-acetylene cutting gear or plastic explosives and many are easily picked with a hairpin. Windows, too, are vulnerable as they readily break. For peace of mind, security fittings are best installed.



Front doors provide an easy exit for the thief once inside and should therefore be not less than 5mm sheet steel with morticed, five-lever, tempered bolts on all four sides, titanium hinges and a lockable letterbox. For all interior doors, surface-mounted shackles will suffice, provided all windows are barred with 2mm steel grilles, welded to the frame.



Do not keep keys in a kitchen drawer but in a combination safe, riveted to the attic rafters or set in concrete under the floorboards. Fix metal spikes to alternate roof tiles and bars to all drains over 50cm diameter. Sweep internal floor area with ultrasonic sensors which, if tripped, electrify all door handles from a stand-by generator.

SPRING WALK: Chester-le-Conklin to Bowel (35 miles)

Chester-le-Conklin (*pron.* Fargswick) lies in the high rich country of N. Wilts. It is chiefly famous for the fact that it was once represented by Lord Gryll, the "shorteste peere in al Englande" (Denket), who went about on a bull terrier and escaped to Holland disguised as a churn, following the Virgin Riots of 1716. Unique in Wiltshire history, this was a rising of parish maidens incensed by the negligible effect of the *droit du seigneur* attempted by the diminutive nobleman. The incident is recorded on a plaque in **Dog Passage**, where a statue was put up to the bull terrier, Honk, which represented the town at Westminster after its master's flight. The inscription reads: *To goodlie Honk, our trustie Member, never drunke and his mouthe allwayes shutte, from the loyal folke of the towne, 1726.*

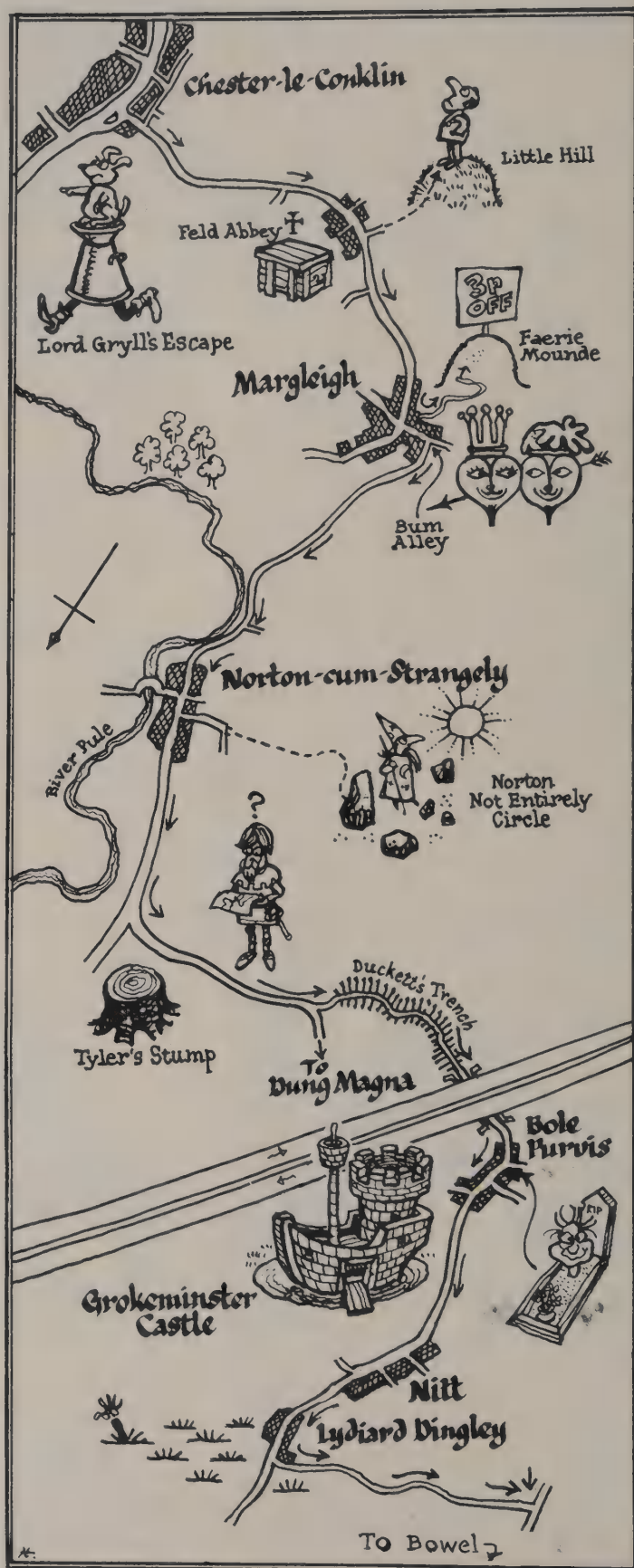
At the S. end of Dog Passage, where it joins **Squint Lane**, former site of the old tooth museum, there is a good view of St. Mary's Church and its two spires, both of which lean, but in opposite directions. The architect, Jethro Nuke of Towlsham, was later buried in quicklime; on the third Saturday of Lent, boys of the town climb the two spires and throw a pumpkin from one to the other, representing the head of the unfortunate Nuke. In the evening, there are bonfires and dirty films.

Leaving Chester-le-Conklin on the Margleigh Road, you pass the house where Daniel Harris began writing his only book, *People Who Came Into My Shop*; sadly, he never got beyond page five, since his memory gave out, but the garden is interesting, and worth glancing over the fence at.

One mile along the Margleigh Road lie the ruins of **Feld Abbey**. Lift the lid and examine them. There is a large part of what might have been a stone tap, possibly used by the abbot, and almost an entire stone chairleg ending in a toe of some kind. Walk beyond the box and the keeper's hutment for approx $\frac{2}{3}$ mile W., up **Little Hill**, from the summit of which there is a good view of the sky.

At **Margleigh** itself, 2 miles N., note particularly the roof of the organ chamber of the E.E. church; the beams were carved by a former rector from the timbers of *HMS Relentless*, which sank in 1806 off Cape St. Vincent. The tragedy should perhaps have been foreseen, since the timbers taken by Rev. Finchett had formed the keel; recognition of their own oversight was made by the Sea Lords, and Finchett was hanged not for murder, but only for manslaughter.

Margleigh probably derives its name from the Anglo-Saxon *Maerla*, but a more romantic tradition associated it with Merlin, whose kidneys are supposed to be buried under **Faerie Mound**; there is little substantiation for the legend, but the belief that on Midsummer Night the kidneys come out and dance on the green goes back at least as far as Lewis of Groke, who wrote in his *Thynge Thatte Goe Bumpe* (1591): "And sobere menne have seene



where Merlyn's magicke gutts tred a mesure in the ayre & eke syng a garglyng songe."

Faerie Mound is today, sadly, the ground floor of **Tesco's**; but a friendly warehouseman may be persuaded, for a few pounds, to take you into the basement to see where the kidneys might have been before the loading bays were dug.

Walking W. past the **Old Fire Station** (formerly the **New Fire Station**) mentioned by Gallacher in his authoritative *Wayfarer's Guide to High Alumina Cement Problems*, you arrive at the picturesquely named **Bum Alley**. It was here, in 1321, that Edward II is supposed to have made his first suggestion to the young Piers Gaveston; hurriedly renamed Bun Alley in 1646 by the new Puritan council, the spot instantly attracted a new legend, which maintained that it was here that the Countess of Wincanton was made pregnant by Henry VIII. It was renamed Fun Alley after the Restoration, and immediately gave rise to such appallingly filthy new legends that even the Victorians were glad to revert the name to Bum Alley, preferring the devil they knew.

From Margleigh, the road winds NNW alongside the **River Pule**, known chiefly for its weed, until it reaches **Norton-cum-Strangely**, a hamlet about whose name much unsavoury speculation has circulated ever since it was expunged from the second edition of the *Domesday Book* on the grounds of taste. Today, little of interest remains, but 3m. beyond, to the S., is the famous **Norton Not Entirely Circle**, sometimes called the Norton More Of An Oblong Really. This is a configuration of megalithic stones which do not seem to have much relationship to one another; there is no mystic significance in their numbers, however they are multiplied or divided, and when the sun comes up the shadows do not make any meaningful pattern. Not much mystery surrounds the problem of how they were dragged thither, since geologists are agreed that the stones come from about forty yards away. They have been disowned by Druids, and the likeliest explanation is that it was something built by drunks, though it is impossible to see exactly why. A souvenir shop was opened near the site in 1911, but closed the following day.

Continuing NE, take the Dung Magna road after it forks at **Tyler's Stump**. Known as Tyler's Oak until it was felled in error in 1974 (the Forestry Commission had erroneously listed it as Tyler's Elm, and chopped it down to see if it had Dutch Elm disease, since they had left their ladder behind and were unable to examine the upper branches without it), this is where Wat Tyler paused in 1381 on his way from Canterbury to Blackheath. Since it is some 150 miles off any possible route from Canterbury to Blackheath, it is not difficult to understand why he paused. Next year, major celebrations will be held to mark the sexcentenary, but not here.

By-pass **Dung Magna** via **Duckett's Trench**, wade under the dual carriageway until you reach the **Lunatics Cemetery** at **Bole Purvis**, and proceed NW as far as **Nitt**. Here stands the remarkable pile of **Grokeminster Castle**, built in 1415 by the 7th Earl to withstand what most people believed would be a French invasion. It was not expected that Henry V would manage to defeat the vastly superior French army at Agincourt, and

general preparations were put in hand. Eager to help, not to say survive, the Earl enquired as to what form the invasion would take, and was informed that the French would be coming by sea. A dim man, with ten centuries of inbreeding behind him, the Earl immediately built a huge stone boat. Armed with eighty cannon, it would, he claimed, be able to withstand anything that the frail wooden hulls of the enemy could throw at him. When it was pointed out that mid-Wilts was a hundred miles from the sea, it served only to fuel his enthusiasm: the French, he explained, would be so weary with dragging their galleons halfway across England, they would fall beneath his guns like ripe corn.

After Agincourt, HMS Grokeminster Castle underwent unsettling times. Having developed a taste for the nautical life, the Earl took to flogging his gardeners on the granite poop and keelhauling sluggish maunciples. In 1422, they not unnaturally revolted, becoming the only naval mutiny in British history to have taken place in a field. They forced the Earl to walk the plank, and he broke both legs, spending the rest of his life sitting by a porthole with a fishing rod to which sympathetic relatives would occasionally attach a live sprat.

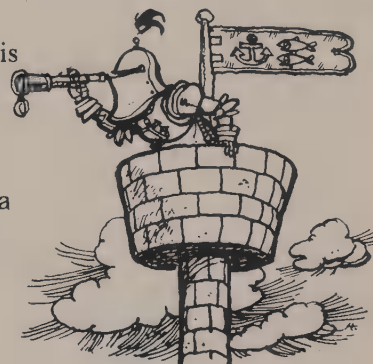
Today, the castle is a mosque-and-casino complex.

From Nitt, the road is relatively straight as far as **Lydiard Dingley**, winner in both 1977 and 1978 of the Ugliest Village In England title. In 1979, the Parish Council attempted to burn it down, but it was too wet to light, being built partially on swamp, and partially under it, and this year there is a good chance that it will carry off the title again. Note particularly the village pond with the 1953 Volkswagen in it, the abandoned Unipart factory overlooking the green, and the **Pig's Head**.

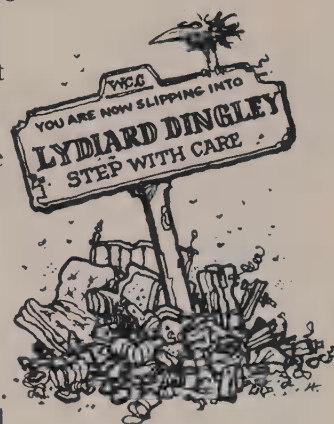
This is not a pub, but a hill overlooking the village. Local legend has it that when the wind blows from the east, the smell from the horse-gristle rendering plant makes the pig's nostrils twitch, but this is in fact due to a trick of the light as it reflects from the slopes of the Central Wilts Nuclear Waste Tip, slurry from which recently overwhelmed the unfinished flyover that stands in the main square.

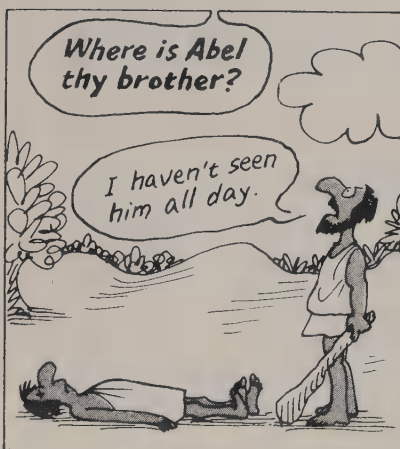
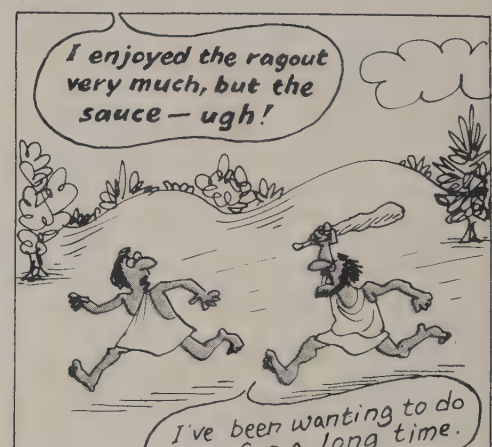
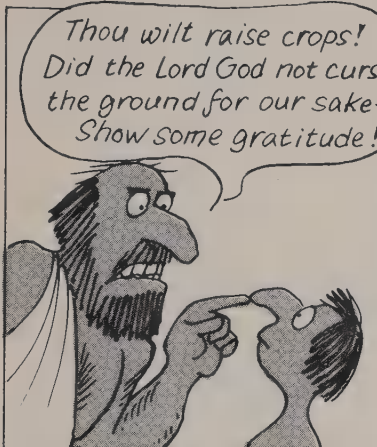
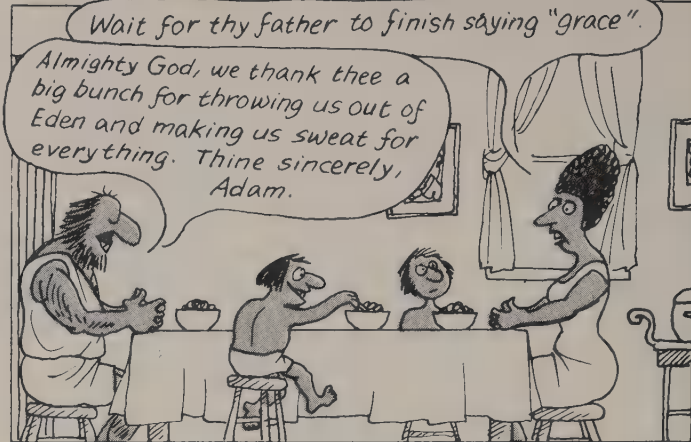
Running from Lydiard Dingley, you will find yourself back on the main **Bowel** road, 6 miles S. of the town. This is a good spot to pause, and give up country walks altogether.

AC



The Earl seeks the French





ALAN COREN:

Straight Man

W. H. Foscett: *The Life of ■ Bloke Eric Breene Mullins* £7.95

ON a simmering June day in 1913, when the subject of this riveting new biography was only six, his mother, Isadora Foscett, returned unexpectedly from a shopping expedition to nearby Willesden. Without warning, she walked into her bedroom in the comfortable family villa Erzanmine. Her son, Wystan Hugh Foscett, was standing in front of her full-length mirror.

He was wearing men's clothes.

Still numb with shock, Isadora wrote to her sister two days later:

"Wystan seemed utterly unashamed. He turned somewhat awkwardly in his father's galoshes, and bowed stiffly. His bowler hat fell off.

I did not know what to say then, nor do I now. As you know, we had hoped he would one day join Diaghilev, or change the face of English poetry, or compose grand opera, or revolutionise economics. Certainly, he has manifested a talent for all this, and more. But now, I suppose, he will have to go into Foscett's Depilatory Soups."

She was foolish enough not to mention the incident to the boy's headmaster; biographer Breene suggests that she may have hoped that young Wystan would grow out of it. Had she informed the school of his strange sexual predisposition, they might have been prepared to bend the rules; as it was, when the headmaster took the boy on his lap ■ few weeks later in order to audition him for the part of Hedda Gabler, Wystan bit him on the hand.

He was asked to leave St. Bosie's and, over the next few years, ■ further dozen of the better prep schools. In 1919, however, he managed to scrape into Eton, despite the fact that his lips were considered too thin, on the strength of the Chanel No. 5 which his desperate mother had managed to squirt into his hair on the morning of his interview. But, inevitably, he was unhappy there: Breene quotes this piece of juvenilia, composed in 1923:

"The first XV are dancing in the showers, The Classics Sixth are trying on their pearls; The Racquets Club have been at it for hours, While I sit here, alone, and dream of girls."

Only once did Foscett's stubborn pursuit of the love that dare not speak its name work to his advantage. In the 1920's, girls bobbed their hair, flattened their chests, and smoked black stogies; and when Foscett took a young Slough barmaid on a trip to

Oxford in 1925 and (needing to kill time until nightfall, when he planned to defile a punt) walked into Christ Church with what the dons took to be a youth in false eyelashes and a bee-sting mouth, he was offered a scholarship on the spot.

Oxford in 1925, Mr Breene vividly reminds us for the ninety-third time, was entering a Golden Era; and Foscett, determined now to be a poet, rejoiced at the proximity of Auden, Spender, Harold Acton, A. L. Rowse, Louis Macneice, Tom Driberg, Richard Crossman, and, of course, Christopher Isherwood, who, although at Cambridge, spent most of his time in Oxford following the expansion of Morris Motors at Cowley, which had brought thousands of rough young mechanics flooding thither from all over England.

When Auden invited him to a party in Peck Quad, Foscett was overjoyed. He took along a sheaf of his imagist poems and (since the card had suggested he bring ■ dear friend) Miss Doreen Nugent, who trimmed seats for bullnose Morris tourers and was reputed to be able to crack walnuts with her bust. What followed is poignantly described by the young poet in a letter to Stanley Tibbs, an Ealing glazier.

"As I stepped into the room, Auden sprang forward eagerly to greet me; but upon spotting Miss Nugent behind me, he let out a small cry, and fell back into the arms of C. Day Lewis, who, attempting to revive Auden by mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, was kicked in the head by a furious Isherwood. A terrible silence fell upon the room; Driberg and Crossman stood frozen in mid-tango, unable to take their eyes from Miss Nugent.

As to what happened next, I cannot be clear. It may have been Nijinsky who hit me with the table-lamp, and Miss Nugent thinks that the people who threw her out of

the window were all Sitwells, but neither of us can be sure. I know only that I woke up in the Isis, with my poems floating illegibly around me."

Disillusioned with Oxford, aware that his poetry would find no market there (the editor of *Isis*, meeting him two days later in the High, felled him with his reticule), Foscett left the university at the end of the term and went to Austria to write a novel. He was never to finish it; pursued from *gasthaus* to *gasthaus* by lust-crazed peasant youths who had heard that he was an English writer, he managed to escape across the Brenner Pass into Switzerland on the night of September 5, 1927, disguised as a St Bernard. Only one fragment of his writing remains from this period, quoted by Breene:

"Lederhosen suffuse my nightmares; Knees close in.

I choke on hat-feathers."

His time in Switzerland, however, was far from happy. His father having died, W. H. Foscett inherited a hundred thousand pounds, which enabled him to stay at the Palace in Gstaad, where André Gide, having recently sold the US rights of *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*, had taken the bridal suite. Every day, from its balcony, Gide scanned the nursery slopes through his binoculars, and upon catching sight of Wystan's large-brimmed felt hat one morning, he let out an impassioned shriek and set off in hot pursuit.

Despite the fact that Gide's skis wore out at Domodossola, the terrified Foscett kept going until he reached Venice. It was not the wisest of moves. Most of Bloomsbury was in Venice that year, and spending money lavishly on local goods; Wystan Foscett being the only English heterosexual in the enchanted city, whenever he accepted a ride from the horde of clamouring gondoliers he



"Frankly, Marlowe, the Chief of Detectives and I feel that you've begun to sacrifice the original spontaneity of your wisecracking dialogue in favour of calculated professionalism and rapid-fire delivery."



would find himself swimming back across the filthy Grand Canal, pursued by jeers, his knuckles bruised, his sensibilities shredded.

Lytton Strachey, however, took pity on him; at least, initially. Strachey had gone to Venice to finish a sentence, with money given to him by Duncan Grant who had won it from Clive Bell in a bet concerning a personal habit of J. M. Keynes so peculiarly illegal that even now, fifty years on, biographer Breene is not permitted to describe it. Having toyed with his sentence for five weeks and reached, at last, a convenient comma, Strachey felt he deserved a month off; and, encountering the dripping Foscett as he splashed wretchedly ashore at St Mark's Square for the twentieth time, Strachey offered him a glass of strega and a quick tour of the Doge's palace. Foscett was at first suspicious; but so enervated had Lytton become by his industry (he had written over fourteen words), that every time he reached out to touch Wystan when the corridors took a darker turn, his hand merely fell back limply to his side.

They thus contracted, perforce, a Platonic friendship; and upon his return to London, Foscett, his novel now finished, rushed straight round to the apartment of the man who had promised to bring his enormous influence to bear in its publication.

The extracts quoted from memory by Breene show it to have been a major advance in English fiction; had it been published, there is no question but that the entire subsequent course of English letters would have been radically different. In the event, however, E. M. Forster was in Strachey's bath when Foscett called and sprang at the young visitor with such force that Lytton, two rooms away, fell off the milkman. Rushing out into the street in

panic, Foscett was knocked down by a bus. When he woke up, two days later, in St George's Hospital, his manuscript had vanished.

That was in 1929. For the next two or three years, Wystan Foscett lived from hand to mouth, working on his writing but shunned by the literary establishment, the very depths of which were by now penetrated by scandalous rumours of his sexual habits. He had been spotted at the Locarno, Streatham, it was said, dancing with a woman; he had left, apparently, a glittering literary banquet at the very moment when the most respected publisher in London had suggested that everyone swap bras; it was even suggested that he might be getting engaged.

As the result of this ostracism, Foscett penned what Breene considers his major verse work, *The Ascent of F All*, a bitter, pessimistic epic, inadvertently burnt by Foscett's agent in a fit of pique after Sir Maurice Bowra had spurned his advances. All that remains is the charred extract shown in the photograph on page 98, from which Breene formed, in my view correctly, his appreciative judgement.

Understandably soured by the appalling circumstances of his persecution, Foscett, now 25, decided to give up literature altogether. There was also a political motive for this decision; Foscett had gone to Germany in 1932, and had been deeply shocked by what he had seen. The lakes were full of naked Nazis; observing their behaviour on beaches and in beer-halls, Wystan Foscett formed the opinion that if Hitler ever realised his dream, all heterosexuals would be exterminated. When Hitler assumed power in 1933, Foscett pledged himself to fighting the Nazi sexual menace; he became a Communist, and went up to Cambridge to learn Russian.

He allowed his political persuasion to become known, in the hope of thereby making contact with courageous and decent men who might be encouraged to recruit him as a Russian agent; he would thus be able to work for the overthrow of the Nazi regime at a time when Britain herself seemed pledged only to compromise, appeasement, and ultimately subordination.

On November 9, 1933, he found a note in his pigeon hole, requesting his presence at a room in Trinity. Excitedly, that evening he went along. In the room were Guy Burgess, Kim Philby, Donald MacLean and Anthony Blunt.

When he emerged from the room two hours later, his eyes, according to an ancient Trinity porter discovered in Newmarket by Breene, were strangely glazed. He walked to his digs without a word, packed, left Cambridge the next morning and went to London. That afternoon, he joined the Blackshirts.

For nearly three years thereafter, Wystan Foscett dedicated himself to the cause; but while his colleagues were down in Stepney fighting Jews, Foscett chose instead to hang around Russell Square with a pick-handle, felling anyone who came out of Faber & Faber. Then, in July 1936, the Spanish Civil War broke out, and Foscett, as his biographer poignantly tells it in the final moving chapters, rushed to join up.

And there it was, in the proud ranks of the Condor Legion, that the restless and persecuted spirit of W. H. Foscett found at last its fulfilment, and its rest. By mid-1937, he had earned the Iron Cross and the Blue Max with crossed palms and oak-leaves, and been personally congratulated by Franco. Renowned for the pin-point accuracy of his dive-bombing, it was this, ironically, for which he finally paid the ultimate price: it was on a mission to bomb W. H. Auden that Foscett's Stuka was tragically, on August 17, shot down.

There were no literary figures at his funeral. But eighty-seven women turned up, to weep and to provide, in Breene's telling final words, "a testament to one English writer's bizarre priorities".



"You know what I found hard to renounce? My set of box-spanners!"

The Silicon Con

THERE is a recurrent motion that the advances of technology are so rapid, that the process can only end with scientists taking over the earth, and an indefinite rule by men in white coats, possibly employing machines as their satraps. But I notice that this vision begins to disintegrate once you get down to details.

In *Flash Gordon*, the superb Thirties serial recently shown on BBC2, the Emperor Ming runs his evil planet by means of the scientific marvels he has constructed. But on policy matters he defers to the advice of his High Priest, an archaic figure who dispenses wisdom of the old-fashioned Machiavellian kind. Equally, Ming's opponent, the benevolent scientist Dr Zarkov (mysteriously equipped with a strong Irish brogue), always appeals, in moments of crisis, to the judgment of Flash himself, the embodiment of brawn rather than brain.

The moral clichés of fiction usually embody ancestral wisdom, in this case the conclusion that science and statesmanship do not go together. Indeed, there is a good deal of hostility between scientists and politicians. A few years ago I suggested to an audience of students and dons at the Imperial College of Science and Technology that more scientists should go into Parliament. The idea was received in chilly silence masking moral disapproval, those present feeling they had little in common with men whose salient characteristic (they said) was a preference for terminological inexactitudes.

As for politicians, they continue to treat scientific advisers as their forebears did entrail-readers, astrologers and oracles—that is, as court attendants, a rung or two higher than their jesters. Churchill liked to have Professor Lindemann around, and might take his counsel on bombing-strategy. But he was just as likely to tell him to get out his slide-rule (as he did on one occasion in the 1950s), work out the cubic quantity of brandy he (Churchill) had consumed in his lifetime, and tell him to what height it would fill the stateroom of Onassis's yacht.

It is a comforting fact that Margaret Thatcher, the only person with a scientific degree ever to become Prime Minister, has a marked preference for the intellectual company of political philosophers and historians. Francis Bacon, who rose to be Lord Chancellor while adumbrating the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century, considered that the ancient myth of Daedalus reflected the fear that human societies felt at the prospect of a mechanic of

genius, or as we would say a technologist, being entrusted with too much power. It was Daedalus who was credited with the emergence of the terrifying Minotaur, an animalistic image of scientific horror; and then, to imprison the Minotaur, he conceived the Labyrinth, which became in turn a yet more daunting emblem of the claustrophobic world in which science and technology rule.

I am one of those who believe myths reflect actual events. The notion of the Labyrinth was not conceived in its most famous embodiment, the Palace of Minos at Knossos in Crete. It came from Egypt, as Herodotus says, and originally referred to palaces with huge systems of underground chambers.

The first of these was built early in the third millennium BC, on behalf of the Pharaoh Djoser, by his architect Imhotep. This man was the earliest recognisable individual who survives in the historical record, though his tomb has not yet been identified. He seems to have been a scientific and artistic all-rounder, like Leonardo, not only designing the first stone palace and pyramid, but working out the principles of medicine. Later generations deified him, and he became the underlay for the Greek God of Medicine, Aesculepius. As a man, Imhotep married into the Egyptian royal

family and exercised the role of leading minister, but he is the only one I can find of a scientist coming to possess state power on the basis of his technical achievements; and in view of the labyrinth myth, Imhotep has a slightly sinister ring about him. (He was a high priest too.)

It is true that the ancient world also provides the case of Pythagoras. Despite his theorem, he was more an arithmetician than a geometer. In the second half of the sixth century BC he went to Croton, in the far south of Italy, and there founded a city-state based on scientific principles as he understood them. The universe in his view was entirely mathematical. It was created by the First Unit (heaven), inhaling the Infinite (endless noughts) and so forming groups of numbers. Pythagoras seems to have thought that everything, including intimate emotions, could be expressed in numerical form. So there is an element of 1984 in his social concepts, and he himself must have had more than a touch of Dr Strangelove. But his ideal scientific society, besides basing itself on numbers, also insisted that its citizens should be strict vegetarians, and abstain from speech and, above all, sex, concentrating instead on self-examination. We are not surprised to discover that it abruptly and mysteriously collapsed, quite possibly in violence. One of the elements in the universal human fear of the "scientific society" is the rooted belief that, if the scientists were ever put in charge, they would start interfering in our sex-lives. And it is a fact that, when Hitler gave his scientists their heads, they promptly concentrated on genetic experiments.

Hence Churchill coined the phrase: "Scientists should be on tap not on top." Politicians like to exhibit a certain acquaintance with scientific terminology. I remember Harold Macmillan contriving to work the term "roentgen" several times into one of his speeches, pronouncing it on each



"I'm glad to see every animal is kept in its natural habitat."

occasion with great emphasis and rhetorical flourish. Harold Wilson, too, went through a "white heat of technology" phase, though the image was rapidly abandoned, once in office, in favour of the more apposite Dunkirk one. For a public man to confess innumeracy is accounted a handicap: Sir Alec Douglas Home was forgiven for being the Fourteenth Earl but not for admitting he did economics with matchsticks. That slip helps to explain Wilson's gesture, a few months later, of bringing into his government the redoubtable Lord Snow, believed by Wilson to be the only man in public life thoroughly acquainted with the Second Law of Thermodynamics. But the Snowian political career did not prosper.

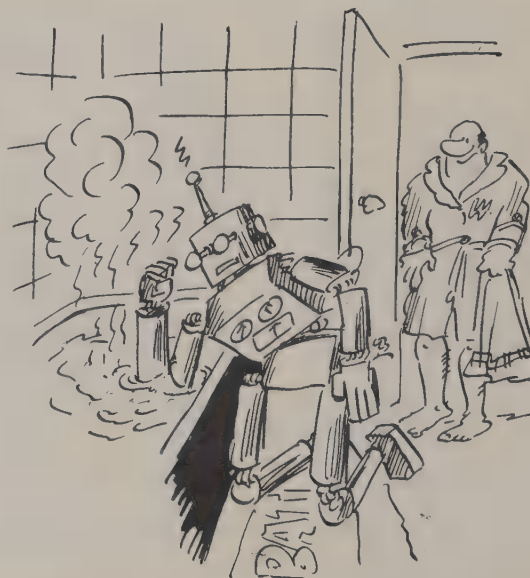
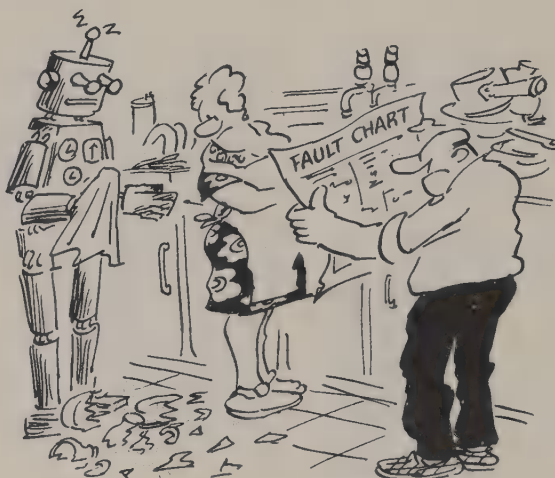
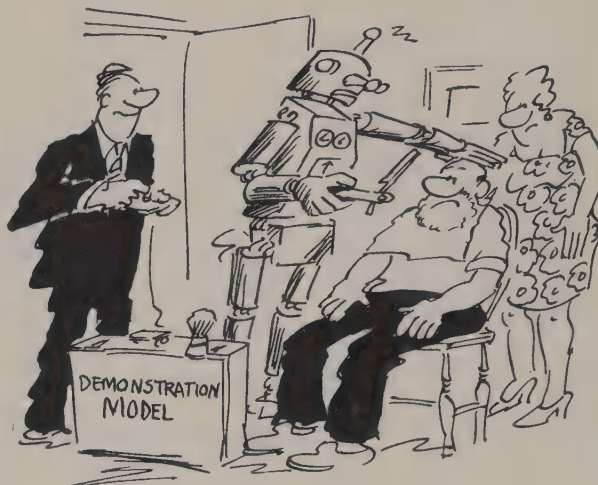
Leaders with a scientific bent are not common. Henry II was an expert on siege-engines, like his father and grandfather before him. Henry IV had learnt, as a mercenary soldier of fortune, how to cast cannon. He had a perfect understanding of gun-carriages, elevations, cannon-balls, saltpetre and other mysteries of the craft, and liked to charge, aim and fire big guns himself. Henry VIII went a step further. A document has survived from Calais, then an English possession, describing an artillery fortress, "which the King's Grace hath devised", and he took a hand in the design of other such technological castles at Deal and Walmer. But Henry made no attempt to conduct his public, or for that matter his private, life on strict scientific principles. The same could be said of Charles II, who frequently attended meetings of the Royal Society, and was the first in England to promote quinine as a cure for malaria; but his court was by no means a scientific one, the only recorded experiment being when his sister-in-law, the Duchess of York, proved she could down a quart-pot of beer without drawing breath.

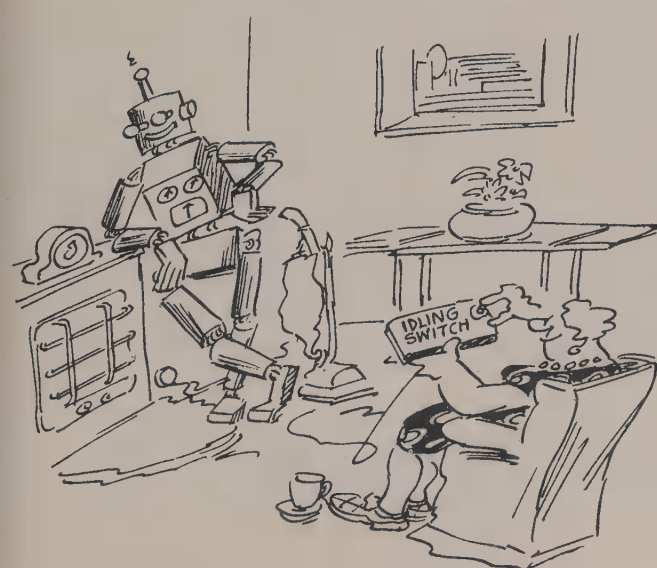
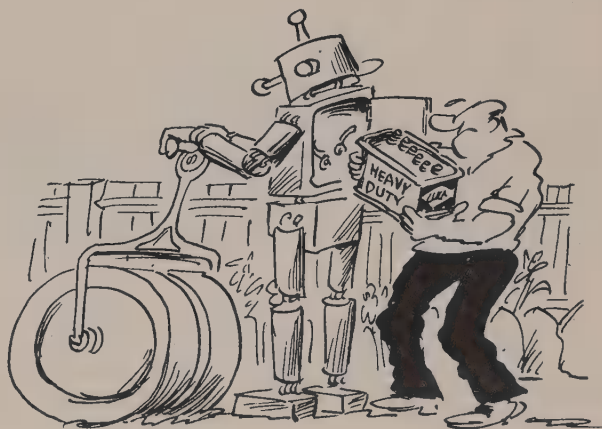
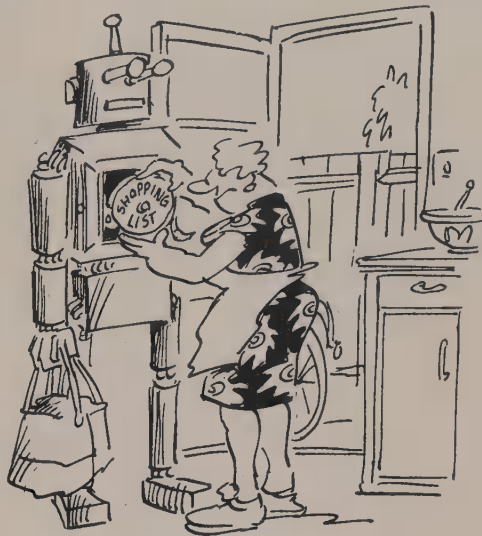
Our only practising scientist, a Prime Minister, was the Third Marquess of Salisbury, who rose to be President of the Royal Association for the Advancement of Science, contributed to a learned journal a paper "On Spectral Lines of Low Temperatures" and built for himself at Hatfield what he called a "stinks lab". He was the first to have his house electrified, doing much of the work himself. But on matters of public policy he would no more have dreamt of taking a scientific line than of consulting his coachman. "Government," he said, "is not an exact science."

Here we have it. The procedures by which millions of men and women are managed are not quantifiable ones or reducible to theorems. Sorting out the political mess he inherited from Eden, Harold Macmillan steadied his mind with copious draughts of Trollope; Margaret Thatcher is more accustomed to turn for inspiration to the Bible than to the laws of physics. Microchip revolutions will come and go, but of one thing we can be reasonably sure. The real decisions will continue to be taken by men (and to a limited extent by women, too) who have been brought up in the liberal arts tradition and who are more likely to be familiar with Homer than with Quantum Theory.

CLUNK CLICK

LARRY chips in with the Robots





LA BETE CLOTILDE

NELLIE MULLIGAN lays bare the crazed debauchery of the sensual, psychopathic seamstress, Clotilde Coquin, BRIAN KNOX plays her witless, consumptive poltroon of a husband, Serge, and TOBY BARKWORTH is the romantically moustachioed, poker-playing engine-driver, Antoine, in Hercule Mompou's naturalistic tale of everyday vice, bestiality, geriatric paralysis and dissolute concupiscence, set amongst the subtle atmosphere of the wet, yellowing cobbles and pungently rat-infested haberdasheries so typical of France's colourful *deuxième empire* (now available as a fully-illustrated hardback with 'O' level notes from BBC Publications) . . .



It is 1867 in the rue Perdu and Clotilde's kindly but demented aunt Polyeucte (played by Young Actress of the Year Rene Washburton, expertly made up and fitted with acrylic dentures and false ears for the part) sublimates the traumatic passions of her youth in the Algerian casbah by hand-stitching camisoles and elasticated garters for the young ladies of the *arrondissement* and entertaining a string of feckless, mentally-defective friends each evening over a *citron pressé* and game of cribbage . . .



. . . below stairs sits the brooding Clotilde, an inarticulate parcel of suppressed sexuality unable to communicate her burning desires to anyone, save her cat, Camus. Day after day, she dreams of throwing herself under the Paris-Le Havre express or its demented, yet muscular driver, Antoine, whose hunchbacked dwarf of a fireman, Gérard, was expelled from the same *conservatoire* as Clotilde's dimwit husband, Serge, for poisoning the caretaker during one of his frequent blackouts . . .



... then one drenchingly wet afternoon, as Clotilde sits contemplating the sodden cobbles and the prospect of garotting her fearful aunt, her beautifully-formed knees are turned to a compote by the unexpected arrival of Antoine. After crashing the up *rapide* into the buffers of the Gare du Nord, Antoine has emerged from his drunken stupor to dress up as Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme and is looking for a bit of action to take his mind off the fact that his grandfather passed away from a brain tumour...



... Glances are exchanged and, as Clotilde hands Antoine a slice of seed cake, their fingertips momentarily touch and short-circuit their innermost cravings. Later that evening, with the rain now so torrential that the cobbles are glistening with ochre-stained mud, Antoine slips back to the haberdashery, climbs the back stairs five at a time, and finds Clotilde waiting for him in a Coquin silk and lace special she's run up whilst her aunt was having a fit. Chords from a brooding, waterlogged cello are heard as they satiate themselves and resolve to do this again sometime...



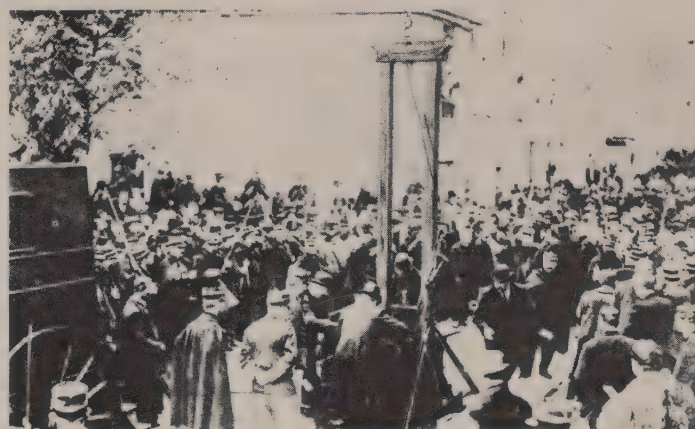
... but the time never seems to come. Antoine, unable to concentrate on his work, wrecks train after train in a series of appalling disasters. Clotilde all but ruins the business by absent-mindedly sewing dozens of one-legged bloomers. Serge contracts TB. Finally, aunt Polyeucte suggests a bit of fresh air and a picnic is arranged on a brooding stretch of the Seine. Again, Clotilde and Antoine exchange dark glances and again the cello strikes up as Antoine winks at his mistress, chucks Serge overboard and drowns him...



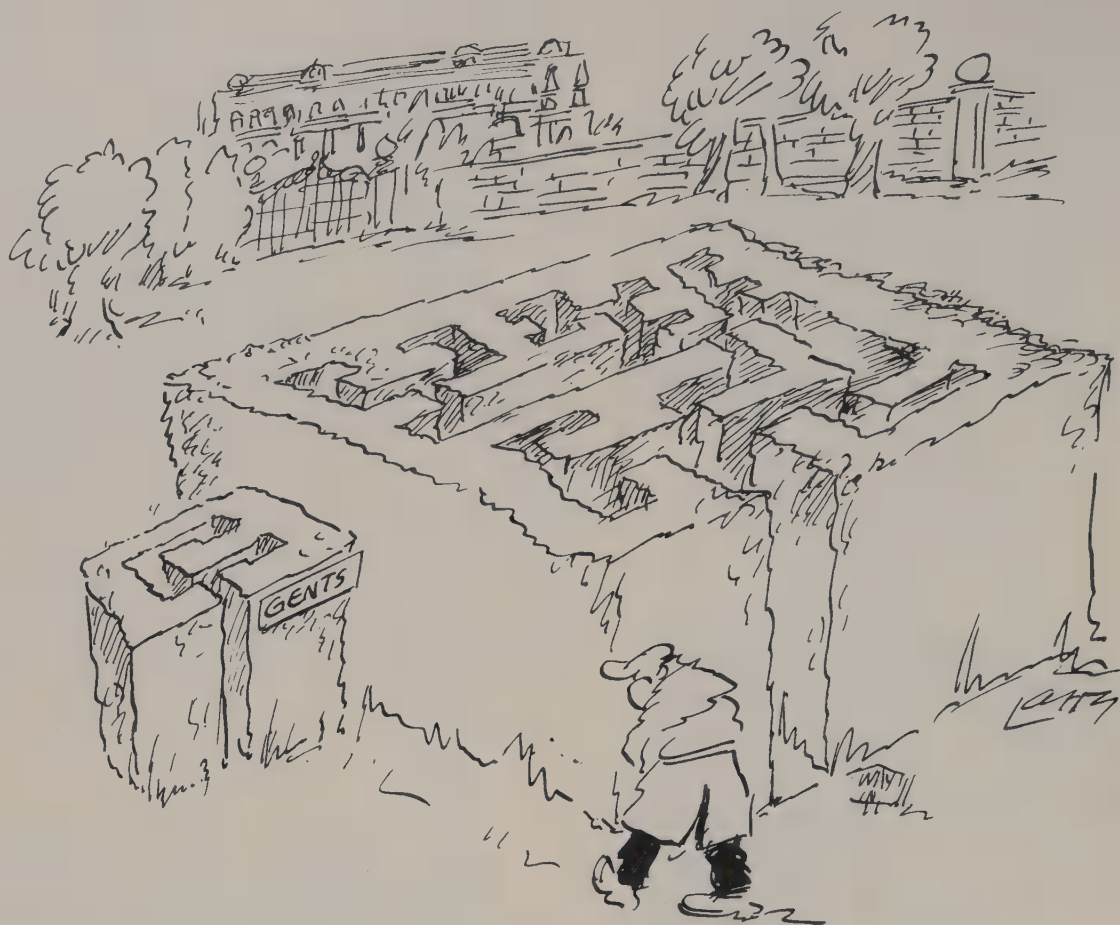
... Doubled up with grief and arthritis, Aunt Polyeucte goes potty. Clotilde and Antoine, unable to give their whole attention to their freedom on the bedstead, are haunted by guilt and the ill-timed appearance, each time they prepare to consummate their dwindling lust, of the headless ghost of Serge who has lost 2 stone, gone yellow as a cobblestone and emits a ghastly gargling noise. Love turns to loathing and the decadent collapse of the social, political and military stability of the *deuxième empire* is mirrored in the inability of Clotilde and Antoine to have a session to themselves without Serge's sodden torso plunging lugubrious laments on a rusting cello...



... Unhinged by the unrelenting stare of the paralysed and incontinent aunt Polyeucte, who never takes her one good eye off him, Antoine loses his taste for lingerie and determines to do himself in. Slipping a powder into his fireman's absinthe, he takes charge of a soaking wet loco, immolates Camus the cat in the firebox as a symbol of hereditary homicidal mania, and opens up the regulator to plunge himself and a packed carriage of unfeeling *bourgeoisie* into an impressionist cornfield where, to a pizzicato of common grief in G sharp, they're all burnt to a cinder...



... and Clotilde, finding the result that she has no interest left either in sewing or dressing her blubbery aunt's bedsores, goes out in a thunderstorm and strangles a parson who makes her an offer. Thinking she's a doctored cat, she then leaps from the wet, slippery tiles on the roof of a hospice for imbecilic French novelists and lands on a country doctor, who is crushed to the size of Toulouse-Lautrec. In the final scenes, Clotilde is guillotined to the hideous screams of her aunt, accompanied on cello, in a moving dirge now available as a BBC record or cassette.



BASIL BOOTHROYD:

Pennies From Heaven

3 Gas Cottages
Walworth. SE 17.

Dear Mrs Prime Minister,

I trust I am addressing the right person and please do not just pass this letter to an aide, as it is one of thanks and I expect you do not get that many. These days everything is taken for granted, it is all grab.

What I had wanted was a gratitude demo outside your number 10 of massed OAPs like myself. They was not interested, and objected What About the Bus Fare, etc. or Tube. My wife Mrs Fosse had done out a banner saying MUCH OBLIGED XMAS BONUS, but it took two to carry it and she does not qualify, still being a junior citizen.

So perhaps next year if we get the Bonus again through your kindness. Of course it will not be worth as much then, being now only = 19s 11d as against pre-war I see in the paper my neighbour Mr Meatley shows me, he is always bellyaching. Never mind, it is something for nothing and it is £10 to me, though it tempts one to lash out and I nearly went mad and put down a deposit on some trousers, as one good pair will probably see me out now, though we are living longer under the welfare state with eyes tested free and only the actual specs to buy.

Mrs F pooh-poohed the trousers, arguing you had granted the gracious £10 to give us a Merry Xmas and not stint on coal if the chimney has stopped smoking, we were going to get the Sweep but he wanted £4 so perhaps it has dried out or the dead bird has gone we shall see. Besides we both have coats to sit in from the W I Jumble all

proceeds to Care for the Aged.

One thing, we have not the carol singers we used to, it is a saving. We like to keep up tradition but it has been coming to something at recent Xmas where they looked down their noses at four bob for two lines of Shepherds Watched and bang on the knocker, my word, in my carolling days 4s would be riches and buy a Tree, which are going at £2.99 this year for the smallest.

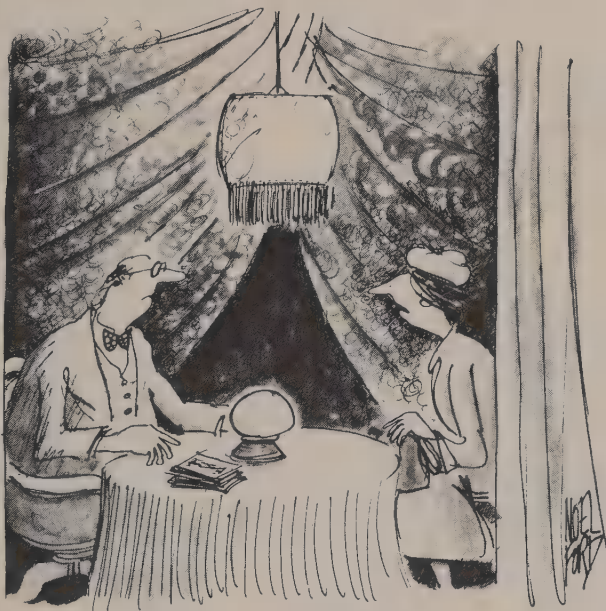
Thank heavens we are past Trees, our boy being in Australia with wife and kiddies, and but for anticipating your Bonus would have no presents from us this time, looking at the price of braces, headscarf and little toys in holly wrapping paper 20p per sheet, never mind the parcel rate I thought the post office was joking.

Still it left a bit over for tips, you do not want the dustman giving you a miss in the new year though you cannot do less than £1 to be safe, also milkman and so on it all runs away with the money as you and Denis will know I am sure.

I must say I sympathise with you about sending Cards. You will have a wide Circle between you and we are lucky with ours down to ten, so one packet sufficient at say £1.50, and £1 for stamps at 10p as you cannot trust the 2nd class. It still leaves $\frac{3}{4}$ of your gracious Bonus, which I bet it would not of yours if you was eligible, you have a lot of outgoings. Mr Meatley shows me the Daily Mail where he is subsidising your House of Parliament dinners at £5.37 each dinner and a menu quoted with creme Agnes Sorel, I do not know her, and roast Scotch ribs, etc., sherry trifle and cauliflower apricot Crumble



"I won't tell the Unions that you're a private patient if you won't tell them that I'm a bogus doctor."



*"You mean you don't **know** whether I want the cards, the crystal or the tea-leaves?"*

and the like, stilton 25p extra, he is forever griping, does he not know you have a country to run and keep your strength up for the Russians, there is too much complaining.

You can take Meatley's view, he says his Xmas £10 would not even cover two of your meal subsidies, he seems to think he is doing the tax-paying single-handed, but I say there are millions of us helping with such deserving causes plus British Leyland and Rolls Royce. Spread it out and it is nothing compared with ■ gratis £10 in the hand for Yuletide cheer you need not have bestowed let us face it.

Mrs Thatcher this is not just to say ■ heartfelt thank you in which Mrs Fosse joins as she will get $\frac{1}{2}$, though I am the one who signed the special Xmas sticker on my pension book headed BR 1015 SPECIAL PAYMENT £10 (TEN) and could not read the remainder owing to no eyesight for small print but Miss postmistress Corke says it is a receipt to sensibly guard against paying out twice, the twisters you get nowadays. No, it is because I think you would like to know how we are laying out the cash. I do not expect 1 in 100 bothers to tell you, certainly not Meatley, who was straight out of the P.O. into the off licence with his, it is nothing but snatching it and kiss your arse pardon the phrase with some people, they are like animals.

Well, we have not gone in for anything fancy which is the first thing, like Chinese lanterns, you cannot afford bulbs dimmed down to nothing with electricity costing its present prices. Also crackers we are giving a miss. We might have bought two but they will not split the 1 doz. box (£3.99), never mind our last lot did not crack but just pulled apart sotto voce, also ■ rotten Hat inside with ■ whistle that would not blow made in Korea. Ditto with mistletoe at 40p ■ sprig, and dropping everywhere, which we can steal a kiss without the benefit of at our age, it is a matter of priorities, and I know I cannot tell you anything about them, with your decisions about school meals as against paying Mr Nkomo's etc., bill at the Royal Garden five-star all these weeks.

We thought of putting it to the Rates, but that is not Xmas, or perhaps ■ board game, there are plenty in the shops from as little as £8 fun for all the family but you cannot eat them as Mrs Fosse said, let us be practical.

The risk in having this sudden money is spending it more than once, saying Never mind, we have the Bonus to fall back on, it is easy to forget you have fallen back on it already, e.g. with cards and Australian parcel to the tune of £6 and another four in the Rent tin, it is useless thinking we still have it for an Xmas cabbage £1.15 and other soaring food in keeping with Xmas mark-ups for the good will season, as the Bonus has then gone twice, and without exchanging one's own little gifts.

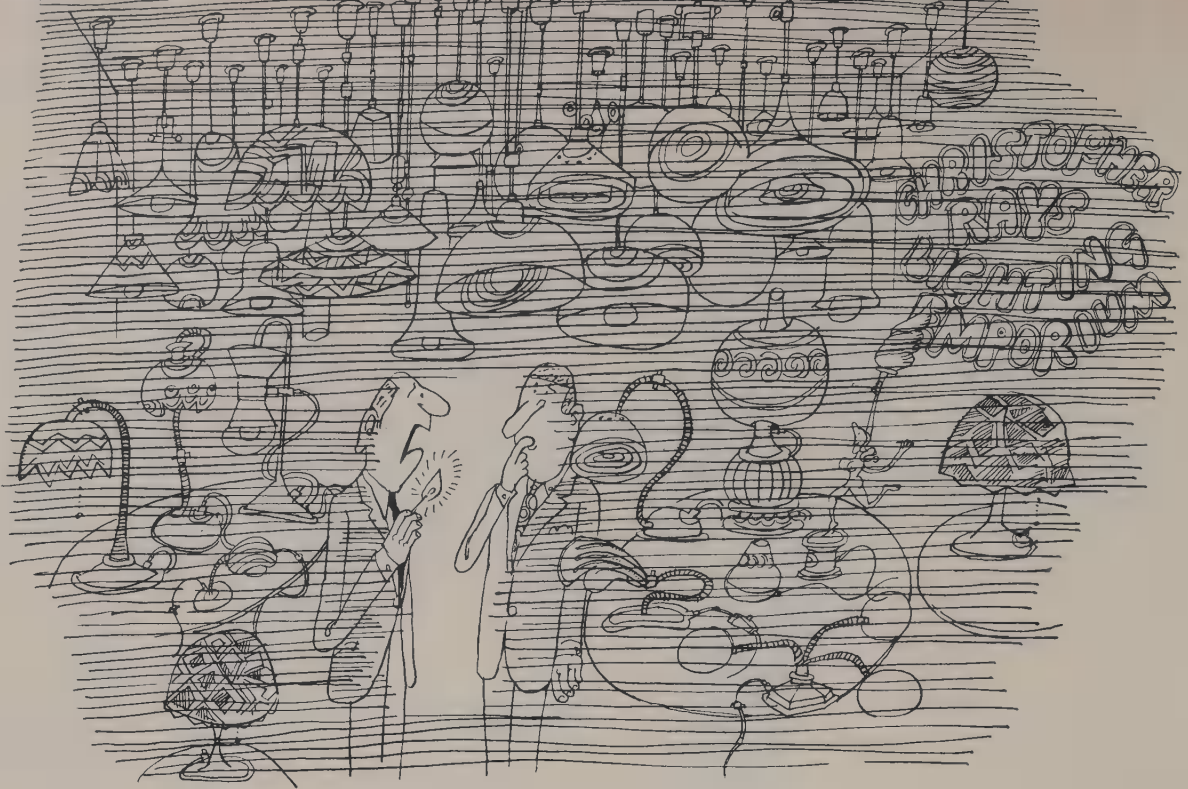
I see with regard to that, from ■ colour mag when I got my hair cut, 75p, they are advertising red velvet shooting stick £39.95 and I have dropped ■ hint to Mrs Fosse that I do not want one, also they say Give Stilts for Christmas only £5.99 the pair. She would not want them, Madam, and I see such gifts as typical of what your £10 Bounty is not meant for, besides being difficult to wrap and keep as a surprise in ■ small house, or there is a nine carrot Gold Music Box to play *I Saw Three Ships*, £1,477 where they say Save £150. I expect some OAPs are silly enough to write off for one as it only means adding £1,467 to their Bonus, but I am sure you are thinking in terms of keeping us from starving over the Holiday or catching hypothermia that Care for the Aged talk about when they are not at the front door asking for subs.

We have therefore sent off to another ad for ■ £7.45 Highland Xmas Hamper and wish we had not, noticing too late that it has such contents as Honey and Isle of Mull Mustard and pkt. Orkney Fudge but no joint, Turkey, etc. It is not one's idea of Xmas dinner though pkt. of boiled sweets included + shortbread fingers. You rush into things when windfalls come, we would have done better with the 2 lbs smoked Scottish Salmon, £11.50, and take balance from Water Rate savings, however it is done now, and are still better off than next door Meatleys who as I mentioned are doing all celebrations on whisky and gin, well, you cannot live on bread alone, 38p large sliced wholemeal.

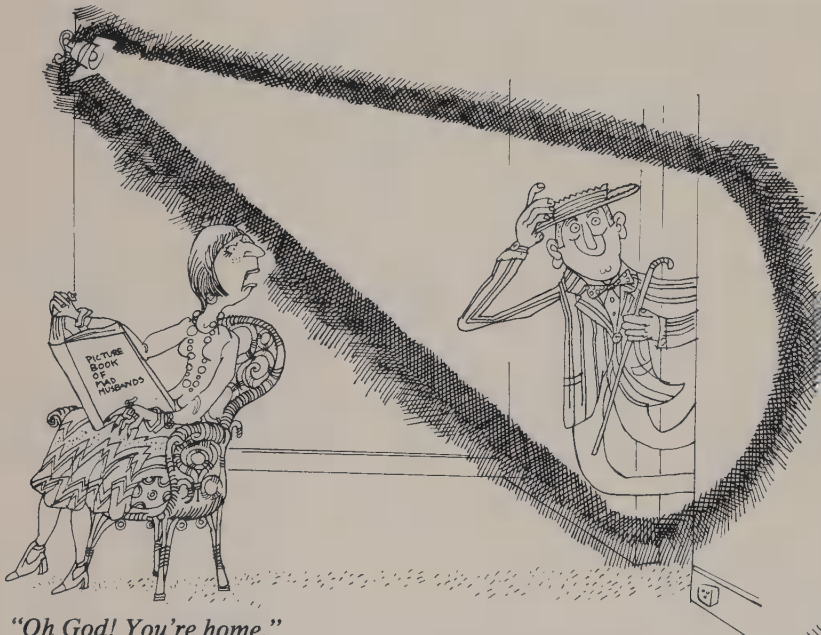
Mrs Prime Minister I am rambling on. I just meant a note of gratitude for our Orkney Fudge and the rest. You need not have given it us as I well realise. And will think of you as we sit down to the festive Board in which my wife joins.

And oblige,

Edgar Fosse (rtd.)
DHSS No LW/25/21/26/C



"I thought you knew where the fuse box was."

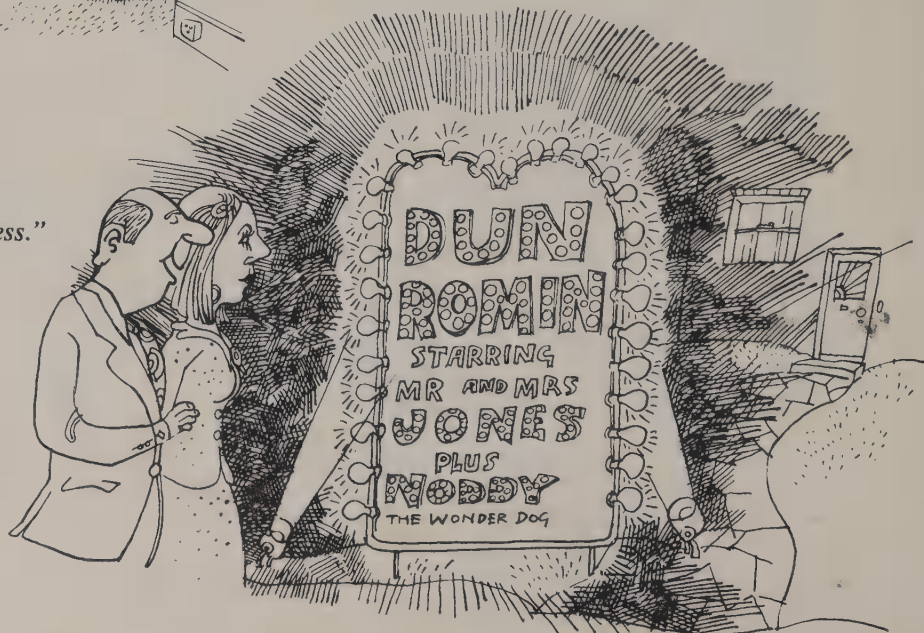


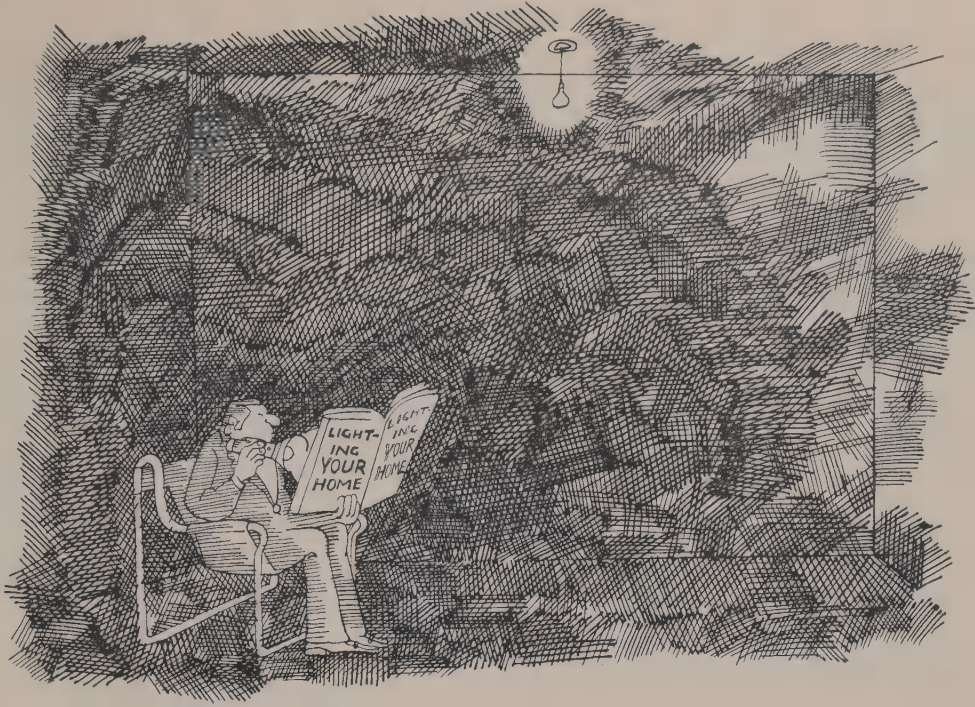
"Oh God! You're home."

MICHAEL HEATH

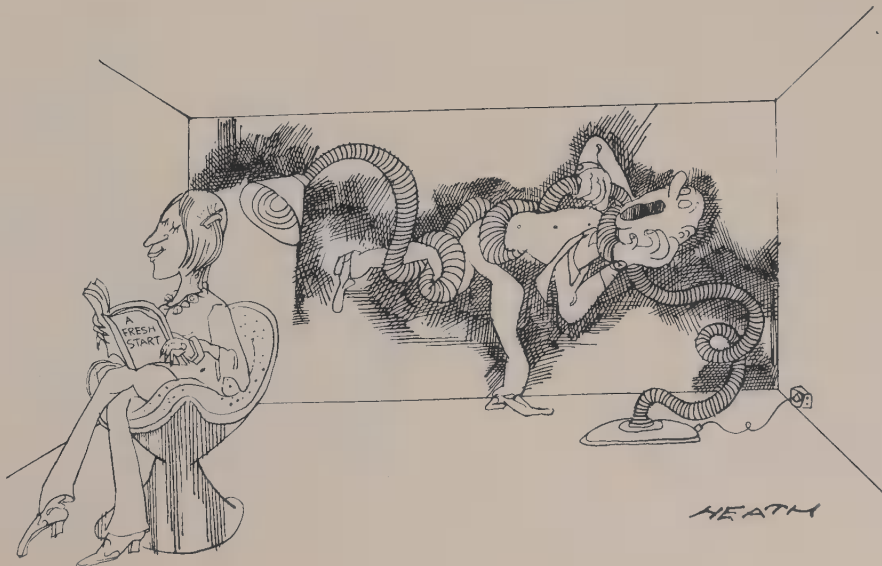
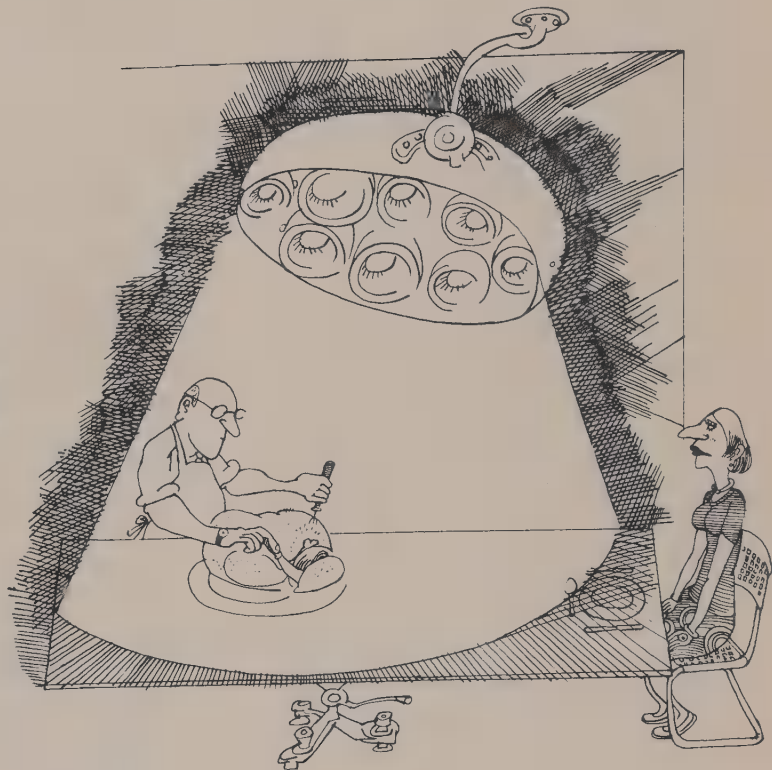
LIGHT FANTASTIC

"I understand they were in show business."





"Darling, you're so romantic."



HEATH

GUY PIERCE:

Pilgrim's Progress

Rome

IT cannot be denied that *Punch's* coverage of the lead-up to the forthcoming Ukrainian Synod has been thin to the point of gossamer. Pressure of work, theological oversight, blindness to the obvious, call it what you will, but our spiritual obligations to our readers have, perhaps, been lacking.

So it was, then, that I was despatched to Rome to seek out the Holy Father and explain to him that our silence on the matter implied no criticism and that the editorial corridor was behind him one hundred per cent.

I had no time to notify Our Man in the Holy See of my impending arrival and so my first enquiry as to Papal availability was directed at the Japanese Air stewardesses of my 747.

But my request for assistance in meeting with the Pontiff met with no little flutter of consternation, so I settled for a beer; and the almond-eyed servants of the air departed, clucking the Japanese equivalent of "We've got a right one here."

Rome's Leonardo da Vinci Airport, rivalled only by Salt Lake City International as the most cheerless homage to the Jet Age, proved to be of no help either.

It was here that I realised that English is not the universal language and felt for the first time, but not the last, that *Punch* should have sent someone whose mastery of Italian stretches further than a rough understanding of the local Pizzeria menu.

I watched nervously as my holdall was loaded into the back of the airport charabanc by various rogues, villains and vagabonds whose calloused hands belied a sensitivity of touch that could seek out a 1000 lira note sandwiched between six shirts and guarded by a Kermit the Frog soap-on-a-rope.

I approached an indolent youth hunched behind a glass partition.

"Excuse me, but I'd like to see the Pope."

"1500 lira."

"To see the Pope?" Aghast.

"Bus to city." He yawned, and indicated the same ramshackle vehicle into which my baggage had been thrown, doubtless kilos lighter than when it left Heathrow.

I sat motionless throughout the entire journey to the city, not daring to scratch the tip of my nose, tug my earlobe, rub my eyes or stroke my beard pensively—I had been reliably informed that these inflammatory gestures were regarded as grave insults by the Italians, casting doubts and aspersions

on their lineage, their mother's pasta, which is undoubtedly the best in all Italy, and Bettega's ability to kick a ball in a straight line.

I checked into my hotel and asked the receptionist whether or not the hotel could arrange a personal audience with His Holiness. He eyed, first, me with suspicion, and then my passport photograph, which portrays me as a sure refugee from the Baader-Meinhof gang, with even deeper concern.

"No possible," he said. "Room 326."

Once installed in 326 (Pope Control) I set about the task of seeking an audience. I was already regretting not purchasing an Anglo-Italian phrasebook but as I didn't know the Italian for "Where can I buy a phrasebook?" I was stymied.

I flicked through the Roma telephone directory in search of likely channels and spent the next hour in combat with a series of alien bleeps and call-signs, not one ever sounding the same as another. If ever the benighted EEC wanted the undying thanks from at least this hapless hack, it could start by standardising telephone signals.

The only success (sic) I had in reaching intelligent life was being greeted by the words "Italian Foreign Ministry" in such rounded Cowardesque tones that, assuming we have succeeded in planting a "mole" in the Italian government of the day (or government of the hour), he might well be advised not to make it so obvious.

The Roma telephone exchange failing me, I decided on playing my trump card. Since the death last year of the Pearl of Capri, the Venerable English College, founded in 1362, is no longer challenged by Our Gracie as England's oldest institution abroad.

This noted seminary had to be a stray Englishman's best chance of meeting the Pope, unless, of course, Parkinson had something up his sleeve and wasn't letting on.

I ordered the cab to take me to Via Monserrato, in a voice so histrionically Italian that it immediately registered "Inglese Mug", and it came as little surprise

to find myself crossing the Tiber twice and facing the way we had come by the time we reached our destination. But at least I was spared a lecture on Arsenal's chances against Liverpool.

I was met at the College by one Paul Donovan, in his fifth and final year of training in the priesthood, in the spacious, airy college which once hosted Napoleon's cavalry (the bottom half) during one of Bonaparte's overnight stays when billets were at a premium.

Much to my surprise, Paul did not blanch when I told him of my mission. Instead he said he would do what he could to fix me up, much in the way, I imagine, Stan Flashman would "see you all right" for a Cup ticket. He suggested that I might like to stay for the evening meal and afterwards hit the town with some of his fellow students—an intriguing prospect.

After the best meal I was to have in Rome, and the post-prandial prayers, a party of eight of us retired to what can only be described as a Roman "caff", where we indulged ourselves in what I termed, and they certainly didn't, a 2nd Class Last Supper—white wine and fried bread.

The talk was of the general decadence of Rome and what a far better place to study both the spiritual and temporal aspects of life than, say, Durham or Birmingham (though some might argue).

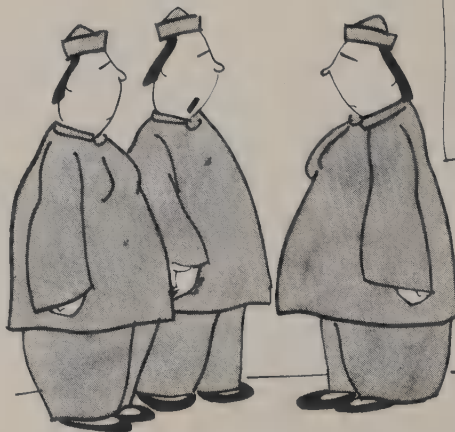
To our respective credit I didn't ask them why they chose the Church and they, in turn, didn't ask me whether the *Punch* staff think of the jokes themselves. At least I don't think we did; the evening was something of a blur by its end and I ruminated the following morning that if that was the English College, it's no wonder the Scottish seminary doesn't allow its inmates alcohol in their rooms.

A phone call to the College on Tuesday evening confirmed that my ticket for Wednesday's audience had arrived and I should collect it at 9.30 sharp to get there by 10.00 for a decent seat.

So this was it.

I returned to my hotel along Via Veneto,

"Darling, there's somebody else."



whistling *Oh Karol*, and went to bed early in preparation for the glorious day ahead.

But it was to be a sleepless night.

What was I to say to him?

"I'd just like to say, on behalf of the British humour industry, that I think you're doing a great job."

Perhaps I could ask him how he's getting on with Italians. After all, Deyna's had his troubles at Manchester City. That's it—football. Anyone who looks like a cross between Ron Greenwood and John Charles has got to know a bit about the game. Has he considered absolving the Italian soccer industry, riddled with rumours (later confirmed) of back-handers flying about more than a Lazio fullback's boots?

I finally settled for "World Peace".

It doesn't matter who sees the Pope—Liz Taylor, Sammy Davis Jnr., sundry politicians and astronauts—it's always, "We talked of hopes for World Peace."

Next question—for or against?

I picked up my ticket at the time instructed and crossed the Tiber (a river so characterless that a considerable number of Romans don't know of its existence). Arriving at St Peter's Square, I passed by columns of six until I reached the iron gates of an old palace on the left. There was a fair-sized crowd outside the gates and I took this to be the usual tourist mass awaiting the Changing of the Swiss Guard or similar.

But I was so wrong. No, the audience was not going to be merely Karol Wodjak and myself chatting over a cup of Vatican Blend. I was caught up in a pack of German tourists, obviously booked *en bloc* for the Wednesday audience, and was swept in through the courtyard gates on a wave of humanity more associated in determination with the January sales.

The church/palace had looked, from the

outside, capable of holding six or seven hundred, very few more, but the building had definite Tardis-like qualities, for inside there must have been at least 5,000 people. And John Paul II wasn't due until 11.00—another hour.

The atmosphere was carnival; ordered turmoil.

The church, or astral hangar as I preferred to think of it, was acoustically perfect, supported by massive white concrete arches with a wide aisle leading up to a marble dais, behind which stood a frieze which could only be described in style as "Vatican Chunky".

The crowd was swelling by the minute and turning into a veritable United Nations, with not only the already-mentioned Germans but locals who you would think by now would have tired of a "Cup Final", Wednesday in, Wednesday out. There were Spaniards (a family of about thirty who ploughed through me as opposed to around in order to get aisle seating), Japanese (whose presence was revealed by the barrage of Fuji and Nikon flashes every time a cardinal so much as coughed) and (probably) Israelis who sang Hebrew songs with an unrivalled fervour.

10.35 saw the first fainting and Swiss Guards in the role of St Peter's Ambulancemen helped the poor soul from the throng, to the accompaniment of 1001 flashing Nikons.

An English speaking priest came to the microphone, stage right, and announced the morning's programme. JP II (imagine having that for your registration plate—better than VAT 1) would read the lesson in Latin, give a discourse in Italian and then précis it in French, German, English, Spanish, Portuguese and Polish before coming down to bless the two rows of 42 invalids, newly-marrieds and diplomats.

Now if you had all those credentials, you were well away. But no Japanese précis. 1001 Nikons flashed in anger.

And then, as some great wind rustling through dead leaves, the crowd was on its feet. Or rather on its plastic stools, little bigger than garden ornaments.

JP II had arrived.

I was unable to see clearly through the mass of ill-balanced humanity that was at that moment going mildly bonkers, so I feigned disinterest and leant against a wall. A priest, not unlike Charlie Drake in size and looks, urged me in a thickish mid-European accent to take a seat.

"Is Holy Father! Is Holy Father!" he cried almost in disbelief as though the Pontiff had parachuted through the ceiling on a surprise visit.

It took JP II fully thirty minutes to walk from one end of the aisle to the marble steps as the adulation of the crowd pitched higher and higher. But there was no denying the man's immense charisma—he positively oozed it, and not a trace of arrogance to be felt.

Upon reaching the dais, however, the place immediately fell feather-still. Two officials placed microphones around him and a priest appeared on his right and began to announce the various bands of pilgrims in the hall.

As each group was named, they stood up and applauded his Holiness (but doubtless with a bit of self-congratulation thrown in). As they cheered, so JP II's right arm was raised in acknowledgement—the louder the cheer, the higher the arm went.

A group of about fifteen nuns from Turin managed to shout out two hundred National Servicemen from Naples.

For a moment I was gripped with panic. What if I heard from the dais, "And from London, representing the goddess, a wishy-washy Marxist, Guy Pierce"?

What should my reaction be? Hope that my single, solitary handclap would reach the Pope's ears, those seven rows and so many steps away, and that his thumb might just twitch? Or make a bolt for it?

I decided on the latter. Judging by the severity of looks a young woman received from the congregation when her baby's bottle clattered to the floor, I didn't want to be around for their particular brand of Christian compassion.

I returned to the Vatican City just once more, the following Friday afternoon. The rain was coming down in stair-rod but nonetheless I stood in the flooded Square, beneath JP II's three windows, jacket collar turned up in pathetic defiance against the elements.

I had heard that during the early days of his appointment the current Pontiff had occasionally called up pilgrims from the Square for a private audience.

After twenty minutes, however, I decided that no Wenceslas-like gesture was coming my way, and I packed it in.

Besides, a newspaper headline that read **ENGLISH JOURNALIST DIES OF BRONCHITIS - MOTHER BLAMES POPE** would be a little unfair.



"Do you think there's intelligent life anywhere else in the Universe?"



LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

under their Principal Conductor

CLAUDIO ABBADO

MAURIZIO POLLINI

THURSDAY, 7 FEBRUARY, at 8 p.m.
SCHOENBERG: Piano Concerto
MAHLER: Symphony No. 5
 £2.50, £3.50, £4.50, £5.50, £6.50 ONLY
 A British Airways Concert

JAMES WATSON:

FEAR OF FLYING

SCHOENBERG wrote his violin concerto while waiting for his Lufthansa flight to New York. The aeroplane never took off because of fog at Dusseldorf. This is perhaps just as well, as, if it had, we would have been deprived of one of his most limpid and evocative works, atonally describing as it does the emotions of one who has been injudicious enough to travel by the wrong airline. The nervous tension so dramatically presented in the strings, the irregular beat of the timpani—said to be Arnold's own decaying heart striving to cope with the prospect of possible death—and the triplets of the bassoon which shows his pulse rate steadily rising, all testify to the fact that he was aware that British Airways would have taken good care of him, if only he had had the good sense to fly the flag.

The second movement describes the effects of a glass of Riesling and ■ Dusselfurter, courtesy of the airline mentioned above. With the opening bars comes the first sip of wine and an immediate descent in the twelve tone scale as he relaxes into a false security and empty optimism. Gradually, as he consumes the German sausage, this is dissipated by a horrible dismay heard in the tuba's ponderous tones. The movement ends with the effects of Riesling wearing off, and he returns to the triplets (this time heard in the trombones) which denotes his pulse rate, now erratic and overpoweringly disturbing.

The third movement is quite short. It depicts a brief nap taken in a very uncomfortable position. The composer is wedged between ■ youth whom he suspects of being a member of the Baader-Meinhof gang, and an executive member of the board of Siemens who has inserted his brief case with a lumpy object in it between Schoenberg and himself. The dream of ■ mid-air explosion is represented by ■ recurring thump on bass xylophone; the ensuing diminuendi in the strings is Arnold's own body now in a million fragments as they fly through the air, along with articles of fuselage, duty free goods, and burnt plastic cups. The xylophone then intones the airport jingle which heralds another apology for delay. This wakes him and takes us straight into:

The fourth movement. *Allegro furtivo* is the marking, but most conductors take this *Lento reluctivo*. The composer gradually gives up all hope of ever leaving Dusseldorf, heard as a sustained sigh in the cellos which lasts fully four minutes. The serial plods in the oboes tell us he is leaving the airport lounge and looking for a taxi. Jagged

trumpet notes depict the blaring horns of taxis as they depart, taking with them other weary travellers who have conceived the idea before him, and are leaving. A bleak *sostenuto* in the violas makes it clear he will have to spend the night at the airport, with little hope of departure in the morning, all taxis gone and all aircraft grounded indefinitely.

It was thought that after such a work the programme should be balanced by an altogether different view of international flight. Mahler's experience at Heathrow was diametrically opposed to Schoenberg's. Indeed, he has stated as much in a letter to his countryman: "I heff no idea why you het flyink zo much. I woss vary vell lookt aftair by Pritish Earwews when I woz in London/Heatrow."

The first movement, "Trauermarsch. In gemessenem Schritt. Streng. Wie ein Kondukt", is the heading. It may be translated: "How to conduct a good, strong airline with clear marching orders and without getting into stressful messes." This indeed is precisely what is offered to us. The bold orchestration of the introduction leads us to expect that the fortissimi will triumph over the pizzicati—that is to say the smoothly oiled machinery that is British Airways will overcome any tendency towards nervousness or flight-fear so manifestly dominant in the Schoenberg. A series of rising thirds in the strings, and later the brass, tell us he is ascending the escalator to the departure lounge, and a satisfied theme is stated in the woodwind. The movement ends on a note of expectancy and profound confidence.

The second movement, "Sturmisch bewegt, mit grosster Vehemenz", may be interpreted as a jubilant hymn to the exhilarating experience of take-off. Mahler has outgrown the earlier tendencies to set folksong material, or the predilection for



"Good God! They're getting immune to car wheels."

"You don't have to kneel if it gives you all this trouble, Mrs Hodgkins."



neurotic musings on Nature, Fate and Death. Instead, we have an idea quite breathtaking in its simplicity, yet awe-inspiring in its potency: he reveals a man walking calmly across the tarmac and up the steps into the waiting Trident. The moment is brief, but it is undeniably *there*, before the roar of the engines buffets us. (The work is scored for sixteen trumpets, and ten trombones. Of one thing you may be sure: anyone hoping to put on Janacek's *Sinfonietta* this evening will be disappointed. All the brass players in London, are here.) While this is happening, the basses and cellos urgently, plangently sing out a deep-throated, all-pervasive melody redolent of pure joy, unequalled in any music before or since, and the rising ninths in the strings bring to our notice how swiftly the aircraft has risen to a height of nine thousand feet. Here it remains, secure, dependable, reassuring, as the strings tell us by the chord of C sustained over a typically Mahlerian one hundred and forty three bars. Beneath this chord can be heard the French horn, the automatic coffee and biscuits dispenser flipping out sachets of dried milk, coffee, sugar and hurling scalding water onto them to the delight of the grateful passengers. The movement ends on a note of slight tetchiness (a touch of humour here) as Gustav has not been able to work out how to undo his safety belt, and there is a mini-scherzo in the third violins as he tries to release himself.

Third movement: *Scherzo. Kraftig, nicht zu schnell*. The mini-scherzo leads to a

maxi-scherzo as the hustle and bustle of buying duty free after shave and other toiletries so dear to Gustav's heart begins. First we hear the petulant voice of a cockney asking why the hostess hasn't got Southern Comfort or Embassy Tipped—the scratchy glissandi make this hilariously clear—and then, as the marking has it, "crafty, but not too fast," Gustav asks if he can pay for his goods by cheque. The laughter in the basses tells us the cheque will bounce. Gustav then pays a visit to the smallest room in the aeroplane, and the rising fourths on the organ tell us he is reading the legend: "Gentlemen lift the seat."

Fourth movement: *Adagietto. Sehr Langsam*. Much damage has been done to this movement by one Luchino Visconti (he always flies Alitalia) who used it to excess in a film about an unhealthy man who came to an infamous end in a highly insalubrious foreign port while searching for a male model to star in his latest toupee commercial. Not unnaturally the music has become known as "Dirk Bogarde's Theme". The reader's indulgence is craved while we try to set the record straight. It is in fact the counter-experience of the "grosster Vehemenz" of the second movement, a post-coital relaxation and recharging of the spiritual batteries in a world of ethereality and cloud-capped ecstasy. It transfigures the passenger and listener alike. It reveals that the thunder of the engines is the price we pay for this ultimate sensation of poetic At-One-ness. It goes beyond reason, desire or ambition. It is "Is-ness". It is based on a

song Mahler wrote, "Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen," ("I'm a comin' round the world mighty handy") and it centres the scene on Mahler himself the passenger, his duty-free Brut safely packed away and a nice tin of Coke open in front of him. A mini bottle of Lemon Hart sits beside it, the seal as yet unbroken. The wall of sound that surges forth from the strings speaks of a World Elsewhere that only British Airways can supply. The now triumphant "We'll Take Good Care of You" theme is heard in the violas as the movement draws to its incandescent close.

Fifth movement: *Rondo-Finale. Allegro*. All good things must come to an end, and how expertly this particular ending is brought about! The music now moves into a daringly minor key as the descent of the aircraft is adumbrated in first the violins, then violas, then cellos, then basses—another example of Mahler's devastating mastery of "music-painting". As the first tyre scrapes the runway and ten cubic feet of rubber are burnt away in one tenth of a second, the first trumpet must show us this by the very difficult technique known as "quintuple tonguing". The note has to be heard almost before it is played. Some players have been known to swallow the mouth-piece in the attempt. But this work has always been a challenge, just as having the maturity, discernment and yes, we will admit it, courage to fly the right airline is a challenge. Mahler knew this, and this is the experience which is being offered in this important work.

CHIPS WITH EVERYTHING (batteries extra)

by Our Micro-Processing Nodule

Within five (5) to ten (9)* minutes, experts predict, man will be able to place an automatic washing machine with self-cleaning rotisserie grill on the surface of Jupiter with an accuracy of + or -6.391 Jovian millimetres.**

Using the spare capacity of a 9.221 billion RAM digital computer etched into the molecular structure of an ordinary data-processing fingernail, scientists say, the matchbox-sized appliance could then be programmed to wash, rinse, spin and tumble-roast a full 22-kg deep-frozen burger without tangling, returning it as shrink-wrapped modules to any point on the M1 and charge the whole operation to your personal credit account. Any VAT or gratuities would be automatically displayed on your TV screen along with, say, the Burmese weather forecast or the times of through trains to Runcorn.

INCREDIBLE

Sounds incredible?

Already the technology practically exists and could be out of date in a quarter of an hour or so!

The total programming flexibility of the new generation of micro-processing systems may soon mean that, at the touch of a shirt-button, you could switch the entire operation to Uranus if you so wished, uprate your security profile by having the computer etched on a toenail known only to you, or dine on any minor road in Australasia whilst having your in-dash TV print out, say, the population of Rheims, calculate the circumference of any known coin placed thousands of miles away, teach your children to pit their wits in a game of electronic quoits with a fragment of programmed Jolium, or instantaneously spot-weld any faults it can detect in your credit-card-sized personal stock exchange!

TINY

Ten years ago, the computer capacity needed for such operations would have

*computer error caused by local voltage fluctuations

**6.392 between next Friday and 4 April, 1998, owing to sunspot activity

filled a room the size of Belgium. Yet at the time of going to press, a single silicon chip less than 1/1000th the size of an infant gnat and costing 13p for a gross, could handle the necessary sums in about

0.00001 nanoseconds using only the static electricity given off by the operator's teeth.

It certainly is rather exciting.

INCREDIBLE

Yet this is only the beginning, the electronic boffins claim. Experiments now at an advanced stage mean that by tomorrow lunchtime at the latest it will be cost-effective to interface a micro-processing nodule-chip with the brain of a baboon. Should you need to check up on any of the information contained in all of the books so far printed, say, you need only punch up the access code of your local zoo and, within picoseconds, back will come the answer for display on your personal video cuff-link.

All in all, the new technology could change the daily routines of every living thing from the mammoth to the microbe. Postmen, for instance, might soon be obsolete and makers of conventional car ignition systems will be things of the past.

TINY

By midsummer, it has been reckoned,

The world's first micro-processing integrated circuit, fashioned by the Chinese Emperor Wang in 1161 from the semi-conducting nostril hairs of the Great Snail of Wuhan. Not for nine more dynasties, however, did the Chinese invent the 9v battery and so Wang never realised his ambitions to put a Shanghai peasant on the moon or revolutionise washday.



SHOPTALK

PAUL
THEROUX
on
Chemists

CHEMIST'S shops are not drug-stores, but then neither are drug-stores. Anyone in my home-town who wanted a birthday card or a hot-dog or a cigar or a banana split or a camera or a pound of fudge or a fountain pen—you name it—went to Craddock Apothecary. Drugs were a sideline, and the name "apothecary" the sort of seventeenth century locution considered stylish in Massachusetts, like "hosiery" and "drapery". In fact, like all the rest, Craddock Apothecary was the most general of general stores, not run by Abel Drugger (complexion the texture of Weetabix, scrabbling his pill-roller or socking his pestle into his mortar with a view to curing quinsy), but rather by an Armenian whose degree in pharmacy had turned him overnight into a soda-jerk.

"You don't sell used cars," the joke goes, "and you have the nerve to call this place a drug-store?"

In my own neighbourhood there was a drug-store run by a man called Fordie White. His politics would have qualified him for the Grand Kleagleship of the KKK, but he was otherwise a good druggist (as Ezra Pound was otherwise a good versifier), which is to say that along with his soda fountain and Back-to-School Department, he had a post office. "Greece?" he snorted, weighing a letter for me one day. "Hell of a name for a place, Greece." It was said that if you pushed a fifty-cent piece at him, palm downward, he would understand immediately and hand you a box of contraceptives.

How drug-stores came to sell everything is easy enough to explain in American terms. For a very long time, and because of the putative nature of their business, they were the only places open on a Sunday. Now

many are open all night (*We Never Close!*). They grew departments to meet the demand; they are usually at the centre of town, and they are at the very centre of American culture. If I am in Washington and need a typewriter ribbon or a pair of socks on Sunday morning, I know where to go—Peoples' Drugstore (the commie-sounding name is misleading: it was founded by Gurney J. Peoples).

The only thing an American drug-store does not sell is liquor, which is interesting, because their British counterparts have made a reputation selling beer—and wine-making apparatus. No, those rubber tubes and bizarre diaphragms are not the latest thing in colonic irrigation, but merely a way of getting yourself blind drunk on gallons of fructified joy-juice. *Save 5p a Pint!* the advert says, over the price tag—a hundred quid's worth of plastic dustbins, retorts and beakers. Justifying alcoholism by turning it into a hobby one can pursue with do-it-yourselfer's virtue is very much a British thing. Americans can always buy the same kind of urinous Chablis from California for next to nothing, because the grapes are harvested by pathetic Chicanos who are paid in pinto beans.

At what point did the British chemist's shop branch out? Was it the same year the Automobile Association began selling pony-trek holidays and waterbeds? It is hard to say, but the result is odd. There was a time when the only place you could buy jars of babyfood in Britain was at the chemist's (figure that one out), but now the babyfood is lost amidst the records, books, radios and kitchenware. The drug-counter (*Prescriptions*) has become foreshortened and moved sideways into the corner—just over there, where the bespectacled baldy in the white smock is funnelling green pellets into an amber bottle (is the pharmaceutical game more than pill-counting and doing sentry-duty on uppers and downers?)

In another age, chemist's shops were at the frontier of preventive medicine. The great shift came with their misguided Americanization, but as with most British imports a dead hand was laid upon it. And yet, look closer, as I did not long ago, and you see one of the most sinister developments in British life since those vertical logs of sinewy meat started appearing in shop windows—you know the ones, dripping poison and basted by hairy fellahin and so germ-laden they ought to be served in petri dishes.

I began to understand. Head Office (actually, Ray Quelch at his office in the satellite town of High Tar) sent down a memo: *Why isn't the toothpaste moving? Shift it!* And then a genius—it wasn't baldy

in the white smock, more likely it was the hag at the check-out counter bucking for a promotion—said, "You want to sell more toothpaste, ducky? Then sell sweets! Sell them by the peck, sell anything that threatens the enamel of their canines!"

The logic was irrefutable, and so it obviously went: you couldn't sell trusses if you did not also sell rowing-machines; hi-cal soft drinks were the answer to those diet pills gathering dust on the shelf, and the wine-making equipment must have increased a thousand-fold the sale of aspirin and stomach-pumps. Of the merchandise that began to appear in chemist's shops over the past few years, there is very little that does not make you fat, sick, drunk, crazy or that does not damage you in a way that will, in time, be undone by that very same chemist's shop. Chemist's shops are now harmful to your health! Sorrow makes me mute on the subject of sleeping pills taken by pregnant women which have resulted in horribly deformed babies, but the women certainly didn't get these pills in an off-licence, and it is a fact that the shops that sold thalidomide also sold wheelchairs.

I cannot read the rest of my notes. Something here about American pharmacists becoming paramedics ("That's a real nasty rash—here try some of this") because American doctors are so expensive. Something about the British being mad about patent medicines and Americans fixated on antiseptics and bad breath (name another country where you can buy mouthwash by the gallon). And what's this? Oh, yes, the Hammersmith episode. I'm in Hammersmith, returning from the Frayn satire on business, *Make or Break*. I see a shop window: rakes, watering-can. Gardening gloves. Dish of fuchsias. *Must see to the garden, I mumble, even if it gives me a backache, which it will.* I look at the shop-sign. Boots.



GOB STOPPERS

WHETHER because of industrial action, or because of the BBC having to eke out its wretched remittance on repeats, or because of incomprehensible serials based on the works of John le Carré, or because of Des O'Connor, television looks like relaxing its stranglehold on the nation this winter.

What, then, will the nation be doing with itself during the yawning void between the cocktail hours and Closedown, apart from propagating the species, stockpiling letters to *The Times*, ferreting down the side of the sofa for missing chess pieces, and growing a moustache?

The answer is that it will be resuscitating the art of conversation.

As is well known, conversation was just about killed off by the arrival of television, the only surviving topic for popular discussion being television itself, with especial reference to that bloody rubbish they had the nerve to put on last night. Even that once flourishing branch of the art, motoring talk, has withered and all but died. In an age of motorways, when a barked "M5. Exit 12" passes for detailed route directions to someone's weekend cottage, who wants to hear a ten-minute set-piece on the best way of getting from A to B without going through Z?

Through the long decline of what older readers will recall was a pleasant form of social intercourse, however, the vocal chords have generally remained in use, mainly for ordering drink in public houses or asking what is on the other channel. With this equipment in reasonable working order, a revival of the art of conversation should be possible. It has been so long neglected, though, that it will be necessary to get back to basics.

What conversation is

It is a verbal approximation of the game of rugby football, where one player has the ball and the other side try to get it off him.

What conversation is for

Like vanity publishing, it is a harmless method of inflating the ego. Unlike vanity publishing, it does not cost any money, since the last thing the conversationalist in full flow is going to do is interrupt himself to buy the next round of drinks.

What conversation is about

Conversation can be about anything except religion, which is a non-starter. In the old days it was usually confined to the

weather or medical matters, but field-tests have indicated that the following topics would be regarded as acceptable in a more broadminded age:

- Conditions at Heathrow airport;
- The reluctance of American hotels to take real money;
- House prices and mortgage rates;
- Double glazing;
- The difficulty of finding window-cleaners, in the context of the unemployment figures;
- Postal delays;
- The black economy, as typified by cowboy plumbers;
- The genealogy of London taxi drivers;
- Car thieves, coupled with the names of these friends whose grandmother died while they were halfway across Greece, so they had to put her in the boot;
- Irish affairs.

How to start a conversation

A quorum (i.e., one other player) being

present, the conversationalist should blow ostentatiously up his nostrils, at the same time observing, "Typical!", "Doesn't it make you want to spit!" or "Would you sodding credit it!" Although his opponent(s) will see the trap yawning ahead, there is an obligation upon the opposition to ask, "What?" Whereupon, waving his newspaper—but on no account allowing the other side to read it—the conversationalist should briefly state his theme, e.g., "This Maltese chef," "Bloody town hall bureaucrats" and "Flaming building societies."

Note the cryptic nature of these gambits. By over-elaborating, i.e. "Bloody Maltese chef, tries to make a crème caramel with HP sauce, gets fired, and blow me if the Industrial Tribunal don't reinstate him!", the conversationalist would be extending an open invitation to other players to seize command with something on the lines of, "Oh, you ain't heard nothin' yet, as Al Jolson used to say. What about that petrol pump attendant who was sacked for persistent arson? Now it so happens my brother knows that case from the inside..."

Even the ambiguous opening shot has its perils, for it is not uncommon for other contenders to retaliate at once with, "Don't talk to me about building societies, I'm up to here with them," or "Town hall bureaucrats? Have I told you the latest on my planning permission saga?" What the conversationalist must do is discard his lead the moment he has played it, launching without delay into a story or series of connected recollections that the others cannot easily interrupt: "This Maltese chef. Reminds me of one year we thought we'd try Tenerife, it was total and absolute



"Fascinating, just watching 'em at it."

disaster from start to finish . . ."

How to take over a conversation

In the event of a conversation being already in progress when the conversationalist arrives in the playing area, he should watch for the speaker drawing breath and then interject: "Same as a friend of mine, only in his case he was coming back from Marbella . . ."

It is not necessary to wait for the end of the story, or even of the sentence, before interrupting.

Having seized the initiative, however, the conversationalist must not assume that the deposed speaker has necessarily relinquished his position for good. Should he chime in with an echo effect at the end of sentences ("... hotel, yerss," "... stomach-pump, mm," "... British consulate, quite") it is a sure sign that he is looking for an opportunity to make a comeback with, "... damages, exactly. But if I can just very quickly finish my story . . ."

Hints for speakers

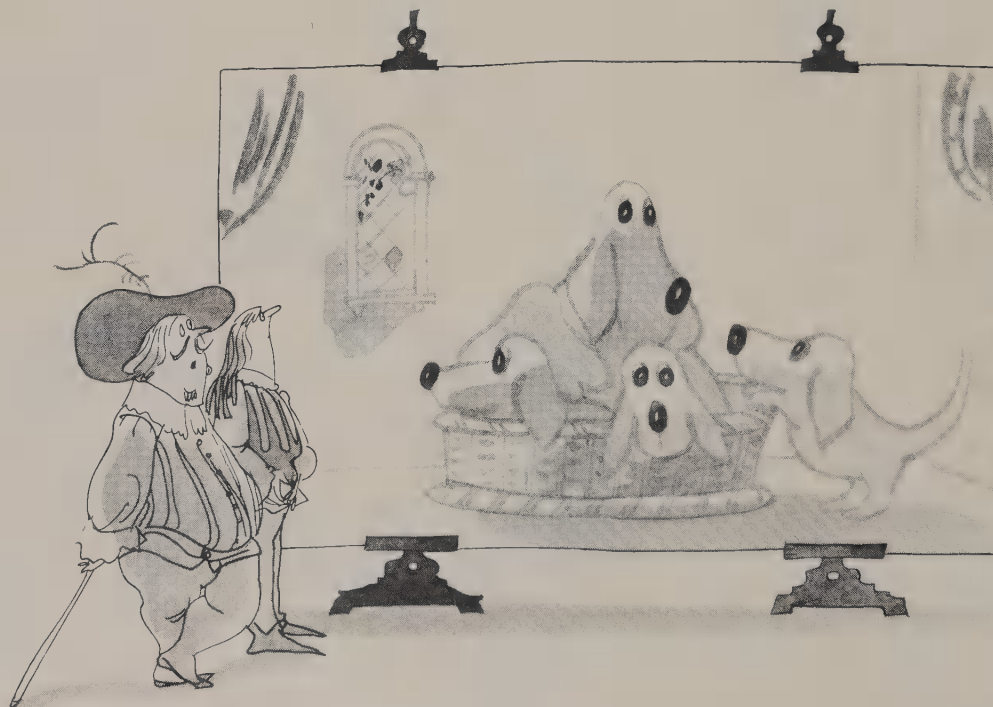
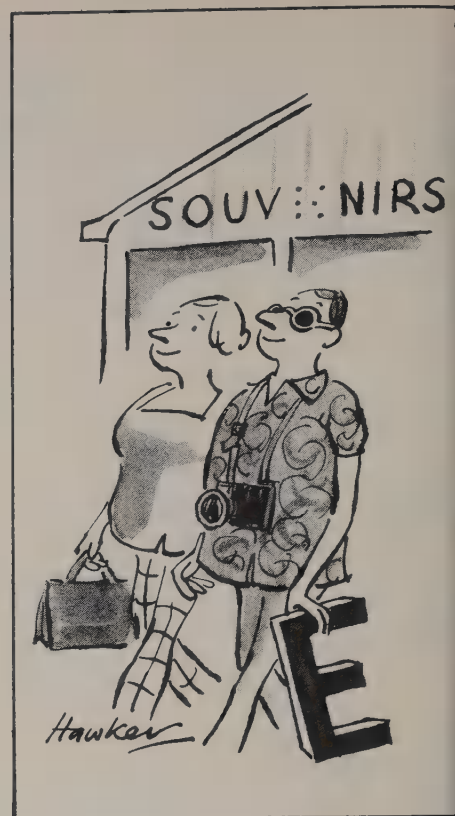
When engaged in a conversation, never put anything in question form, whether rhetorical or otherwise. To ask "That restaurant in Throttle Alley, what's it bloody called again, used to be a sawdust mill?" is to invite a takeover bid from someone who knows that its name is Chompers, was present at its opening night when it showed promise, used to eat there regularly until prices started to go through the ceiling, finally told them to go and stuff themselves when he had that punch-up with the head waiter which he'll tell you about in

a minute, and now uses a place that's just opened up in the same street curiously enough, used to be a heel bar, absolutely charming but you've got to book because there's only one table . . .

Never generalise. One specific illustration of an item of first-class mail taking three and a half weeks to get from Paddington to Notting Hill is worth twenty minutes' invective against the Post Office. Beware, however, of the capping ploy, whereby other speakers will vie to give better examples.

Direct argument is frowned upon in conversation. If you do not agree with a speaker's contention that the cross-Channel ferry is making us the laughing-stock of the world, do not contradict him but simply go on repeating, "I had the opposite experience. I had the opposite experience. I had the opposite experience," until you have the floor. (The phrase "Speak as you find" may also be employed in this context.)

It is not etiquette either to call another conversationalist a liar or to make snide remarks suggesting that the truth and he are strangers. Should an opponent relate how a friend of his found eight human fingertips in his car boot after disturbing thieves and driving away at speed, do not sneer that this is very funny indeed because the last time you heard that story it wasn't a Cortina, it was an Austin Allegro, and it wasn't eight fingertips, it was four. All that is required of you is to say that talking of car-thieves, these friends of yours were touring in Greece with their grandmother, who was ninety-seven . . .



"I don't think Rubens has discovered his own style yet."

Springtime for Edna



FUNNILY enough, if it hadn't been for spring my wonderful mother would still be living at home. I was going through an old box-room a few Septembers ago (I'll never get used to your spooky EEC idea of Springtime in April) when I discovered that my old darling had been living under our roof for ages in a cocoon of motherly Melbourne memorabilia.

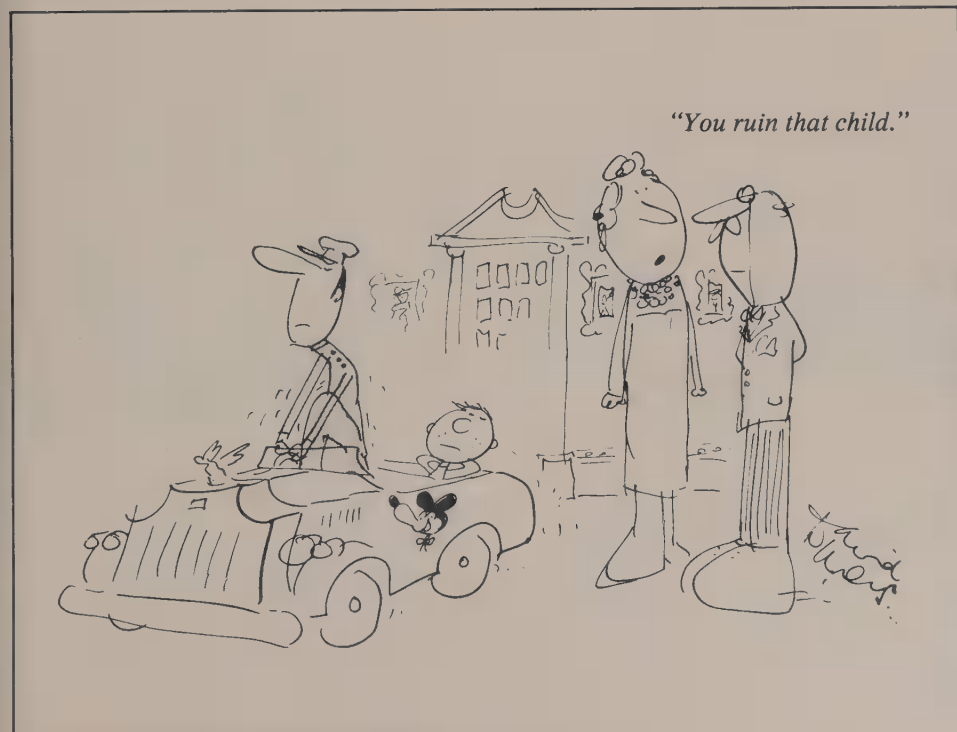
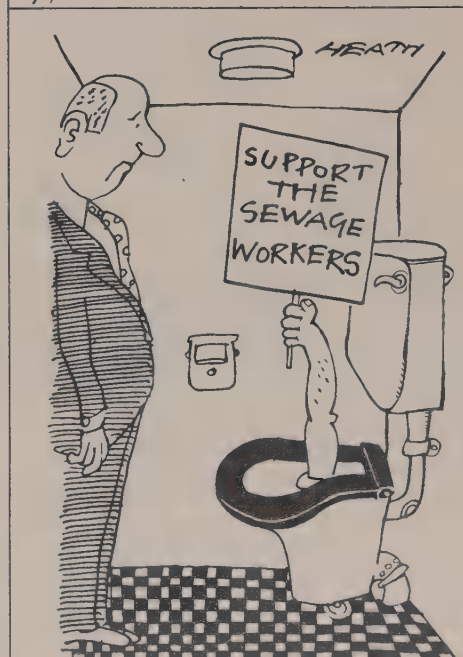
Our local Twilight Home sent their van around almost immediately after my phone call and the driver—a delightful chappie—assured me that it wasn't a bit unusual for conscientious Australian spring-cleaning families to stumble across the odd senior citizen. In those days Norm (later Lord Everage) was still living at home and although he had already felt a few tell-tale twinges his slippered feet had still a very long way to shuffle along the road to international Urological Stardom. He was a tower of strength—so firm, yet gentle, as we bundled my blinking oldster cuddling a hastily packed bundle of by-gones off on her new adventure. It was when I saw her peeky little face peeping through the grille of the fast receding Grannie-van and turned to help Norm and the children stoke our incinerator, that I thought how much Mummy reminded me of a cuddly Australian marsupial which had just

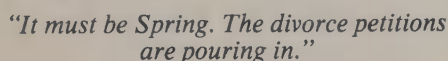
scratched its way out of hibernation.

It's incredible what does come to light when spring erupts in the Antipodes and I don't think I'd have the strength to cope with it alone now that Norm is more or less the property of Science.

Can you imagine yours truly, sickle in hand, hacking my way through a sea of glads to get to the front gate to collect my fan mail? Come spring, that was always Norm's job and the brave old possum used to risk life and limb every morning as he battled his way through the sticky stalks to my chock-full box. You spoilt EEC softies can't imagine what perils lurk in suburban shrubbery. Sometimes my beauty sleep would be interrupted by a hoarse cry from the front lawn and the family knew that some venomous marsupial or creepy-crawlie rudely roused from its long snooze had successfully penetrated my husband's slumber suit. This was in the years before Australian laboratories perfected our internationally-acclaimed spider repellent pyjama bottoms.

Deadly funnel web spiders, or Webbos as we affectionately call them Down Under, can be a darned nuisance in the mating season, and it's no fun jumping out of bed in the middle of the night for a glass of water only to find, too late, that your favourite





It's happened to my old friend and bridesmaid Madge Allsopp more than once, foolish wretch. Being a New Zealander, she never picked up the sensible Australian habit of shining a torch inside her mules before her nocturnal excursions and it's a miracle she's alive to tell the tale. Ever since Madge first moved into my mother's old room the screaming sirens of the Surburban Serum Service waited to a halt outside our front door night after night, making sleep in Humoresque Street an impossibility. Many is the time the Webbo Squad have hacked down our front door to find Madge repulsing the advances of an amorous wombat or grappling with a killer blow-fly on heat.

I am a bit of a bluestocking underneath.

Dame Edna Everage is a Division of the Barry Humphries Group.

If working to a budget, there are a number of cost-effective "tricks of the trade". New knobs and escutcheon plates can be fixed in minutes to all internal doors and bold tinted nylon fittings give the humblest semi a designer look for under four figures, or a fiver's-worth of Tuscan tiling on the front step gives callers a new dimension. Finish off '79 jam.



Contributions by

Alan Coren	George Melly
Paul Theroux	Richard Gordon
Keith Waterhouse	Katharine Whitehorn
Roger Woddis	Jill Tweedie
Basil Boothroyd	Simon Hoggart
John Wells	Alan Brien
Peter Tinniswood	Hunter Davies
E. S. Turner	Anthony Holden
Jonathan Sale	Humphrey Lyttelton
Benny Green	David Taylor
Terry Jones	Alexander Frater
Robert Morley	Cyril Ray
Barry Humphries	Tom Crabtree
Jackie Gillott	Kenneth Robinson
Guy Pierce	Sheridan Morley
Paul Jennings	Barry Norman
Nigel Dempster	Angus McGill
Jeffrey Bernard	Miles Kington
	R. G. G. Price

Cartoons by

Bill Tidy	Honeysett
Mahood	Langdon
Hewison	Breeze
McMurtry	Larry
Jensen	ffolkes
Harpur	Handelsman
Heath	Stott
Roth	Dickinson
Haldane	Albert
Williams	Martin
Collins	Nick
Dredge	Noel Ford
Lowry	Cookson
Pyne	Hawker
Chic	Spencer
Holland	Donegan
Rees	Allen

Pick of Punch

Edited by
Alan Coren

