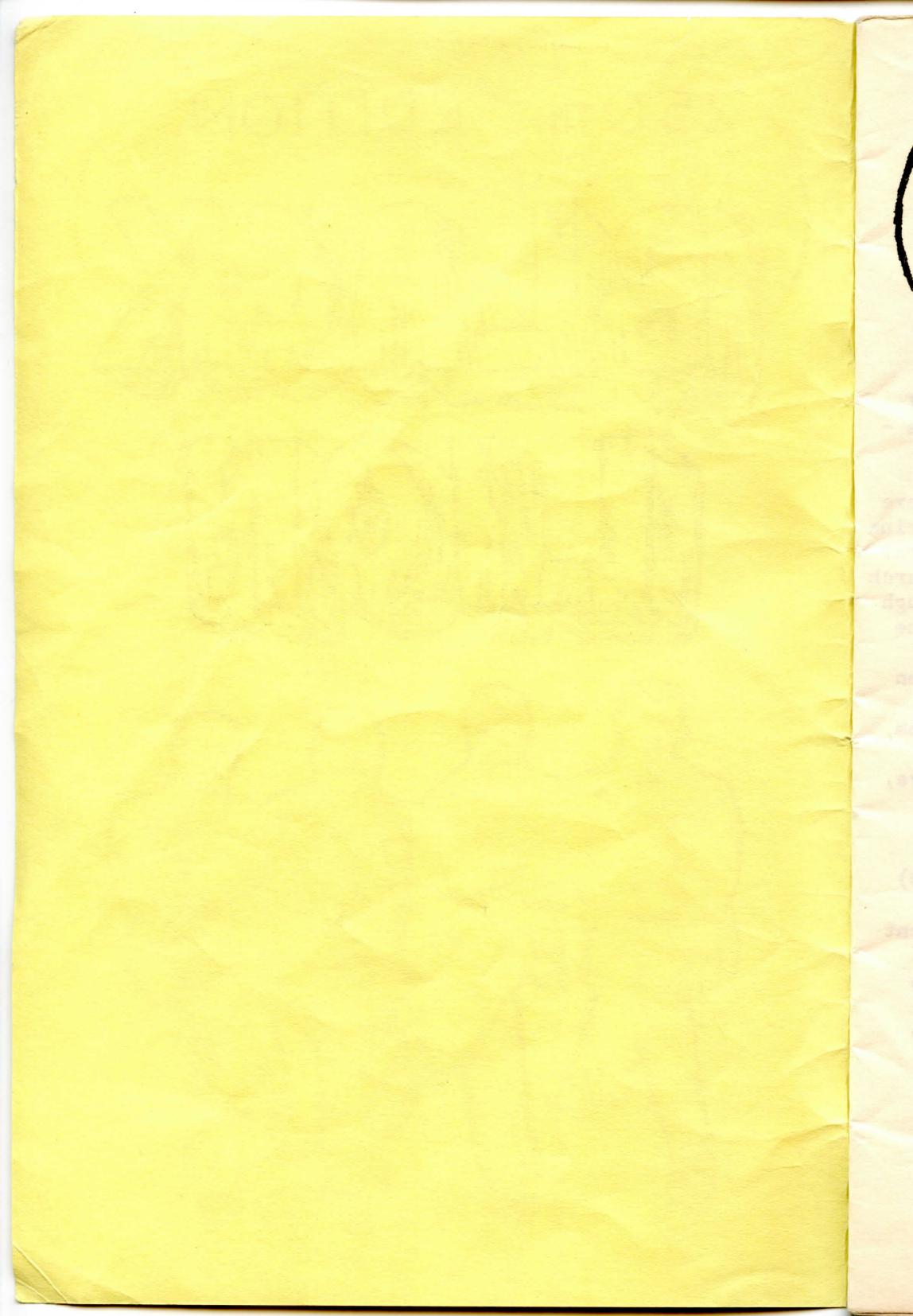


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Kirkman - Jones
250TH. EDITION.

BLACK

LION





... and on behalf of the editors, I would like to add that, in presenting the new Black Lion, it gives me great pleasure to announce that, although cash handling has necessitated a price rise to 3p, the number of pages has risen from 16 to 20, and I am further...



Editorial

"That is what is wrong with the world at present. It scraps its obsolete steam engines and dynamos; but it wont scrap its old prejudices and its old moralities and its old religions..."

(Major Barbara: Shaw)

And one of the major factors in the dwindling power of the Church is that it fails to preach - or even practise - the lofty moral doctrine of Christ. Protestantism particularly tries to go part of the way down the road with everyone, yet seems to leave Christ himself somewhere behind: rather than try to adhere to a fixed moral doctrine it is all too ready to compromise with the prevalent moral and social attitudes of its time. The Roman Catholic Church at least attempts to remain true to its principles, though many of these principles seem sadly out of touch with the teaching of the gospels.

Probably the most obvious example where Christ has been completely ignored is over the whole question of war. Clearly the implications of the gospels are that pacifism is an integral part of the Christian code of ethics:

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."

(Matt: 6: 38-9)

Yet in the past the Church has frequently been prominent in whipping up a war fever, the most outrageous example being the First World War, when the Bishops in the House of Lords were among the first to jump on the pro-war bandwagon - in a war that was fought over national pride rather than for any moral reasons, however dubious.

Today as attitudes to war have changed somewhat, the Church has predictably changed its attitudes as well. Yet the view is still taken that military training is compatible with Christianity, though I suspect Christ might have disagreed. Of course there are many good arguments against pacifism, but to combine non-pacifism with a profession of the Christian faith seems to me to be a completely untenable moral position.

The Old House

Is it that you,
who have been so long from the village,
remember now, with awe,
the old house,
where we played in the mornings:
the house with the ivy,
and the swing in the garden,
do you remember?
Can it be then that you have come back,
come back to look for the old house?
- Yes, we have seen you,
standing by the trees in the avenue:
it was raining,
and you were talking,
talking to a blind man -
were you asking for the old house?

Yes, it is here we have seen you,
by the gate in the hedgerow,
at the path to the old house,
do you remember?...
... the empty conservatory,
the fragments of plaster,
and the garden of weeds -
no, no, it cannot be this you remember,
this is not why you came back,
why you talked to the blind man,
in the rain, in the avenue.

No, it is an image which haunts you,
not words of a dim reminiscence,
not sounds of a swing hanging idle,
for you, who come back to the village,
seek a past which is wordless,
and a joy which is timeless,
and a song in the old house.

UNILISATION

World-shaking news has come from the Dorset village of Iwerne Courtney or Shroton of a revolutionary idea to replace decimilisation in our numerical systems.

The B.S.P.R.P.P. (the British Society for the Preservation of Rods, Poles and Perches) has announced in its annual report that the most effective way of counting is in ones. They have devised a system that does away with tens, twelves, fourteens etc, and which is based on ones.

For example, $1 + 1 = 11$ or (in words) one plus one equals one one. The concept of zero is abolished, so that $1 - 1 = _$ or (in words) one minus one equals a "dead one"... Which incidentally gives rise to the saying, "We had one but it died".

One great advantage of this system is that every numeral has a different number of syllables, so there is none of the old confusion between such figures as seventeen and seventy, sixteen and sixty, and three hundred and forty-one and two hundred and seventy-five. Also they claim that with very little practice 11111111111111 is immediately distinguishable from 11111111111111.

Money would be converted to ones as well: the "unit" would be the only currency, its value being equal to 0.18794p or 0.2562324d. To clearly differentiate between "p", "d" and "u", all the present coinage would be scrapped, and the "unit" would be represented by chocolate buttons - this decision was later amended to chocolate counters since (it was pointed out by an alert member) these do not melt in the hand.

The conversion of weight proved the most difficult problem, and it was eventually agreed that such standards as grams, kilograms, pounds etc, and the popular and much-used slug (= 32.174 lbs), should go.

The "plod" was born!

1 plod being the weight of a specific stick of Brighton Rock preserved in Bradford Town Hall.

1 plod equals $7/51$ lbs or 71.5 grams.

They hope to bring this new system into operation on (1)(11111)/11/(1)(111111111)(111111)(11), or, as we say at the moment, 15th February 1972.

(Did you spot it?)

This date will be called "one day".



A.P. Wire Photo

And now,
a Message from Lord Fink,
Chairman of the Unilisation
Committee.

“ Very soon, on "1 day", we shall be "going unial". What does this mean? Well, from "1 day" everything will be in ones - yes, it's as simple as that!

Now here is an example: Mrs Sarah Brown is going shopping on the morning of "1 day". She gets on the bus with her two young children and fumbles in her purse, "1 and 11 little 1's, please." "That's 111 chocolate counters," says the conductor cheerily. "But I've only got a bar of chocolate," says Mrs Brown anxiously. "That doesn't matter," he replies, "I can give you 11111 counters change."

She gets off the bus and goes into the supermarket, where she sees some sugar marked 1111111111 counters: looking at her Shoppers' Table she thinks, "Ah, that's cheap," and puts it in her basket. Then Sarah Brown sees some apples at 1111 counters per plod. "Bramleys too, how lovely!" she exclaims.

At the check-out the girl, who has been specially trained, says, "111111 - (breath) - 11111 chocolate counters, please." Mrs Brown has no counters in her purse. "That don't matter, luv, have you any chocolate snowmen left over from Christmas?"

Australia

C was for Cook in the Encyclopaedia, not cook like you find in kitchens, but Captain Cook, with capital letters and a whole page which took ever so long to read and a colour picture called "HMS Endeavour 1768". In another book there was a drawing of the cottage on the moors where he had lived, which wasn't a bungalow but it looked like a bungalow, and the book had said, "From his earliest days James Cook had felt deep in his heart the irresistible call of the open sea," and he felt like that too, a call with a long word in front of it, but he had never seen the sea, and his brother had run his hand across the table-cloth until it was all rough, and said, "The Sea - just like in the books."

But Captain Cook had been to Australia, and his friend, who had a book full of maps, had shown him and pointed to an island, because it had sea all round it, which was red and ever so far away with "Australia" written on it. And they didn't know how far away it was because nobody had a ruler, but he understood exactly what it meant when it said "2000 miles: 1 inch," that meant that for every inch on the map there were 2000 miles in the real world. And he was so excited that he ran all the way to the classroom which had the big map of Australia on the wall, just Australia and it filled the whole wall, and he asked Miss Dawes, who was very nice, "Please, Miss Dawes, how do you get to Australia?" and he remembered his brother with his hand on the table-cloth.

Then she laughed, but that was because only he had heard the call like Captain Cook, and she didn't know that, she just said that the world was round and if you kept on digging one day you'd reach Australia. And he knew that if he dug all day, for lots and lots of days, then he would find Australia at last, but then he realized he'd forgotten the Encyclopaedia, and it was still out on the field with the wind blowing through its pages, crack! crack! like the sails in the story-book, and nobody had touched it, because it was his.

It was quite a big garden, and there were lots of weeds at the back because his parents hadn't lived there very long. The spade was almost too heavy to lift, and his mother had made him wear very old clothes, like the red trousers his brother had grown out of. He wasn't going to stop digging, not for a very long time, and his mother had smiled and given him a bag of sandwiches and a banana so he could eat in the garden, and she had called him a little navvy, which was like navy and Captain Cook but it wasn't said the same.

He was very hungry, but when he dropped the banana in the dirt it was all spoilt. And the hole wasn't very big, but that didn't matter because his friend was coming in the afternoon, the one who had the book with the drawing of the cottage which looked like a bungalow, and he would have some sweets.

There was only one spade, but they took turns, and his friend said they might find buried treasure, but that was silly because they were going to Australia, and his mouth was full of liquorice. His friend asked him where Captain Cook had been and what he'd done and what'd happened to him, but that was because he hadn't read any of the Encyclopaedia, and he had to go home to tea.

Now the hole was so deep he could stand in it, and it was nearly tea-time because his father was walking up the path, and just then at the bottom of the hole, where it was all wet like the sea and he thought he must be getting near Australia, he found a bit of flowerpot. It was red and broken, and his father asked him what he was doing, so he showed him the flowerpot and said, "Going to Australia," but his father laughed like Miss Dawes, and said, "That's almost as good as finding Australia," and he wanted to tell his father everything about Captain Cook, but he didn't understand any more because a long time ago he had seen his mother drop a flowerpot on the path, and his father must have seen it too, but he had said, "That's almost as good as finding Australia."

Neptune's Grandeur

Monotonous grey veils the sun in murky shroud,
Clouding the radiance belonging to the earth.
A curtain of gloom that gives life and heart
To little of mortal bearing, yet there is life.
The sea gains its strength, and hurls itself;
Proud to reign, given life, a renewed birth;
Resurrected force of which we see no part
In our world, but which to us will soon bring strife.

Flecking foam jumps from the azure surface,
Anger is seething in the roaming deep,
Welling up within the heart of Neptune;
The chains of hell will soon be released
Of all that is mighty, in a wicked grace.
Majestic yet evil, woken from a peaceful sleep,
The sea will show its strength so soon,
Whipped up swiftly by a wind, no longer a breeze.

Growl turns to thunderous roar,
Wind hurtles onwards with its restless ally,
Bearing down with relentless power
Upon a prey that as yet may feel no ire.
Neptune's sprites guide the sea, and now soar
To meet their friend the wind, and cry
Aloud so that all who watch may cower,
And be crushed and murdered in the mire.

Craggy cliffs, knarled with ceaseless pounding,
Watch with intrepid face as the waves build,
Bracing for the tumultuous crash to come,
One they have felt before, and again will feel.
Higher and higher rise the waves, sounding
Like Etna living, and Neptune's maidens thrill
To the power that centres on their master's home.
They see that all before his touch will reel.

Water shatters on the unyielding rocks,
Who are used to this endless thrust.
Repelling the gods who dare to venture
Their might against an ageless structure,
The only sensations they feel are the shocks,
Which vibrate through from solid crust;
Breaking little, and still unsure
That they will effect the Mighty's cure.

Seagulls screech their warning to all below,
Soaring, a flash of white in a darkening sky.
Plunging down they take a closer look:
The foaming deep fills them with Satan's joy.
Wild, untamed, their thoughts no longer flow
Along common lines; in their minds they fly
Towards the rocks, to home, and then they take
Their lost minds to look at the roaring brine.

Down, down they swoop, as souls in torment,
Not knowing where they will go,
Seeing the mighty battle raging.
But soon the Devil's thoughts will leave downy bodies,
Nests will be resumed by the tenant,
Feathers will now be preened for the show.
Now only flights, will then be for feeding;
The sea, their table, will soon be ready.

Through the murky cloud a ray of sunlight
Gleams, a happy, life-giving thought
To us who wait for the storm to subside.
Soon we shall find our wish being granted:
Sea, viewing its fate all too soon, leaves the fight,
And Neptune's home is then to be sought
By the sprites who all rush to hide
From the sunlight, to which their minds surrender.

1983

First instalment in the publication of this prophetic manuscript, discovered by a council workman in the Bayswater Road: the original was unsigned, but British Museum experts believe it to be forged.

It was fear, fear that held them now, thought Winrock, riding down the escalator in the heart of Tory City, clutching his underground ticket in his sweaty hand. Something had jarred - waking from vague bitterness he glanced at his ticket, boldly marked 50p: yes, at approximately 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ p per mile (as he remembered it) either he was going to Crawley or else... or else what? He shook his head: what was wrong with him? Where was he going? With a start he remembered: he was going to Blue Square, known the world over as the Kremlin of Tory City.

Winrock recalled only dimly the fading city of his childhood, the city where every film had been an "X", every bus-conductor an Indian, and every wall scrawled with obscenities like "Kill the pigs", "Think Liberal", or "Go home Ron Chapman". But now the long blue arm of Conservative legalism had removed obscenities and immigrants in the celebrated "White Face: White Mind" white paper, and printed indelibly on every cigarette packet "Do not eat the silver paper - HM Gov."

Emerging in Blue Square, Winrock immediately noticed the 40-storey, luxury, hot-line-to-number-10 extension to South Africa House, dominating even the statue of MacMillan poised far above the great circus of traffic, where every vehicle was running on new Rand Superblend (bought bulk, Winrock half suspected, in exchange for the remaining British Navy, following a Gulf embargo).

To tired eyes the National Gallery seemed much the same as ever, but Winrock recalled that it had, in fact, been taken over by Unilever-Barclay-Rank, one of the True Blue Tory Supercompanies. At close range one could see the Classical pillars were adorned with adverts and lurid colour pictures:

ADMISSION ONLY 30p - PAY BARCLAYCARD

See BRONZINO'S sensual "ALLEGORY"

CORREGGIO'S naked "VENUS"

CEZANNE'S big BIG "BAIGNEUSES" and many many more
PLAY MOSAIC BINGO IN THE BYZANTINE ROOM
POSTCARDS ON THE RIGHT: CLOAKROOM ON THE LEFT
TOURISTS ONLY

Suddenly, on the neon headlines above the square,
Winrock read "BRITAIN'S GOLD RESERVES SOAR: PROCTOR
& NICHOLSON-THORNEYCROFT TO BUILD BIGGEST EVER
PRIVATE YACHT FOR ANONYMOUS BRITISH PREMIER".

Was there a connection? Winrock's mind raced: did
Britain still have an Air Force?

More and more of the previous decade's events
flooded back through his bewildered brain...

Corporation tax had been abolished...

The Royal Commission Novelty Co. had been founded
under Lord Roskill to manufacture departmental
security leaks, Gerald Nabarro moustaches, and Colin
Buchanan commemorative medallions at a small factory
in Cublington...

Industrial rumour had it that Unilever-Barclay-Rank
were processing a deep-blue cleanser for the stubborn
factory floor, and had taken over the Lyons Maid
Fruity Blue ice-lolly...

Meanwhile, Imperial-Ford-BP had moved their new
Superplant (employing 350000 Pakistanis) to Poland,
whose industrial unrest had been met in the dark
'Seventies by a True Blue Shoot-the-Workers-Fortnight,
and Rolls-Royce had been bought up by BAC-Guinness,
who had decided to put RB-211 engines in the Concorde,
and so (literally) kill two birds with one stone...

The loudspeaker system in Whitehall was burbling
"Rhapsody in Blue" (the Commercial Radio theme tune)
as Winrock passed the BMC-Playtex skyscraper block
in King Charles Street...

Further amazing fragments to be published later...

Bedsitter

She awoke next morning, her bed was empty:
just the empty glasses and stale smoke
reminded her of the night before,
when she had felt so happy,
surrounded by people.
Now she was alone again,
rejected, used,
and as she tried to tidy the mess
she found herself crying,
returning to bed,
and as she lay there, she smelt the gas,
spreading around the room:
she turned over and slept.

Derek Ive

My time is alone, the party is gone,
the show is finally over,
the music is undone,
and the butler lies on the floor,
dead with a knife in his back;
and the blood-stained clover
won't grow any more,
where Kerrygold cows
ate a lazy snack,
and her hair was tied with bows.

RTNM

Foetae

Warm mmmmmmmmmmm
close
Love
Joy of being
mmmmmmmmmm

Dark
Warmth enfolding
Warmth securing
Foetal memory
Curl tight
curl close warm

I lie with you
But CH sharp kicks pain
pounding pound poundpoundpound
confusedpain searing falling falling f a
choking gaspshock

Shock
Cold
Light blinding
cold
tears gasping cryingWhere Are You?

New feeling
Twoness

Not one but two
Not two but one
Cold no womb
Numb no you

Nothing
only
coldness emptiness nakedness sobbing why
why
why?
why?

A Survey on Television - reported by Vaughan Freeman

The questionnaire was designed to gather information on people's television viewing habits, though the questions could not be too complicated nor too specific.

As its distribution was limited to thirty people, the results cannot really be completely accurate, especially as they are only from one age-group. The questionnaire was filled in by giving out copies which were answered mainly by deleting inappropriate alternatives. Such limitations may produce inaccurate figures in the following survey.

Section A gave basic information about the people's televisions. All thirty people had at least one television, in fact 66% had one, 30% had two, and one person (3%) had three. 80% of these people had BBC-2, and 7% had colour.

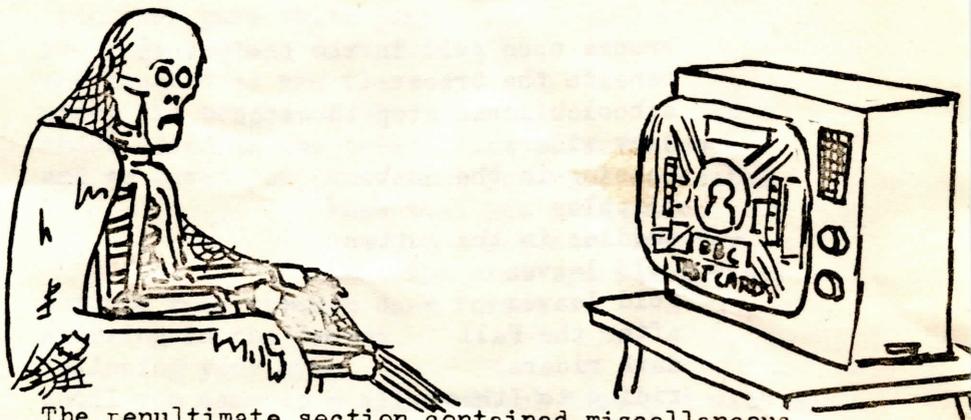
The next section was designed to probe the amount of viewing. It was discovered that the weekday personal average was 2.8 hours viewing per night. Saturday viewing averaged 4.4 hours, and Sunday viewing 3.3 hours. The average weekly viewing time was 22 hours in total. Of the two channels (BBC & ITV) 75% preferred BBC.

The third section asked mainly about parents' relationships with their sons over television viewing. About 50% of parents prevented their sons watching what in their opinion was unsuitable. One question asked whether parents most objected to sex or violence - 50% most objected to sex and 50% to violence. There was possibly more objection to violence but this could not be determined with any degree of accuracy.

About 66% of boys admitted that they neglected homework for television - though this does not indicate whether it was actually never done or merely delayed for a while. 80% of the parents did take heed of their sons' opinions in the selection of programmes, and almost 80% did not use television as a punishment or reward.

The fourth section asked questions on types of television programme. Seven subjects were listed and the people were questioned as to whether they would like to see more, less, or about the same of these subjects.

Most people wanted about the same amount of sport, but a significant minority would have liked more. These results were similar for documentaries and comedies. People requested the same amount of drama and education, but more music was wanted. The only subject which earned the verdict "less" was feature films, and even for this approximately equal numbers voted "less" and "same".



The penultimate section contained miscellaneous questions. The results were that 70% thought the BBC should continue repeating programmes; 80%, having forgotten their meagre 22 hours of television per week, claimed television viewing was not their major recreational activity; 80% thought that BBC and ITV should consult each other to avoid programme clashes; and voters were divided equally on the question of more television channels.

The last section was designed to obtain opinions on television commercials. 60% of viewers resented programmes being interrupted by commercials, and also about 60% did not like them at all. 75% claimed not to be influenced by commercials; 60% would rather pay a licence fee than suffer commercials on BBC.

It must be stressed, however, that due to limitations of number and age it is difficult to draw accurate or definite conclusions from such a survey.

autumn song

clipclop
down the long road
far far

bronze upon gold in the hoofprints
beneath the trees
schoolchildren stop to watch
dark riders
passing in the dusk
plipplop
puddles in the gutter
old leaves
gold leaves
after the Fall
dark riders
riding to Ithaca
reaching
into the distance
into winter
like twisted tinsel
returning
to Eden
far far

old leaves
gold leaves
clipclop

Alan Hill

P

O why did you do it
riding through dark forest 'pon your pure white pony
everyone loved you everyone cared
so why?

we told you your master was coming
and that he would be here soon
but you wouldn't listen and hurried away
'pon your pure white pony
you rode through dark forest
and laughed as you flew
under the boughs of the trees
which moved in the breeze that pursued you
and we loved you (knew that you were wonderful
knew that you were fine
knew that you were sweeter
than the most sparkling wine)

but you rode through dark forest
stirring in the leaves
following your eyes
until you came to a silver birch tree old with age
where you halted and climbed to its top
and as you felt the wood give way beneath you
you called

O I wish that you could follow me/
and as you felt the branches breaking your fall

O I wish that you could follow me/

O I wish I could have followed you

for I heard your story

carried as an echo 'pon your pure white pony
through dark forest
to my ear

CHANGES?

1581218LC Bertram Block, quiet, conscientious and unassuming. So ran the words of the report. In fact, as the Boss Block so rightly put it, he was a regular brick, smugly aware that no-one would deny the veracity of an OFFICIAL report.

Bertram Block was a creature of precise habit, neat and tidy, always punctual. He fitted as well into the structure of his work as did the bricks of the walls surrounding him.

However, something was amiss in the equilibrium of the structure: there was a fault somewhere, upsetting the normally well-balanced order, and this fault had been traced back to Bertram Block.

To the horror of his incredulous superiors, Bertram Block was changing! His usual well-cut features had softened and sagged, and his flat slab sides were swelling out! His increasingly irregular shape was distracting and disturbing his fellows!

This metamorphosis came over Bertram Block like a growth - truth to tell, it was a growth - and one of the more worldly superior blocks recognized it and whispered its cause to his hushed colleagues:

"... Character..."

Slowly Bertram Block completed his transition: his nonplussed superiors could only sit on their flat, regular bottoms, and watch as their neat, regular, multi-faceted structure rocked, trembled and finally collapsed.

Bertram Block alone was left unscathed: he viewed his smooth, glistening, perfectly-proportioned and rounded form, and decided that in this guise he had POWER! He altered his number 1581218LC to 1 and recruited a number of other fellows with similar characteristics to help him with his project.

Before long, Bertram Block had achieved his aim, and there stood in front of him a tall, gleaming construction, every component a perfect ball and a veritable hive of industry.

Every day the workers would roll along and assume their rightful positions, everyone regular and punctual, fitting perfectly into the mechanism, until the whole structure operated smoothly like a well-greased bearing...

One day a harassed official came rushing to see the great Bertram Block: he called his attention to the case of a certain Stephen Sphere - somehow this creature was causing friction among his fellows and upsetting the equilibrium of the organisation.

Alarmed, Bertram Block went to see this fellow, and saw to his horror and amazement that one part of Stephen Sphere had gone a little flat.

DGF

A Poem for You (My Bathroom) 3: The Razor

Annual

I cut myself
shaving
last night
thinking of you and me
on the snow
last winter

plj

Letter

Dear Editor,

I was recently shocked and horrified to find in the possession of my young son a copy of the (shudder) Black Lion. Never in my entire career as a fair, magnanimous and forgiving critic of press and television have I come across a publication so crude and low as this.

Curse your Black (Lion) hearts, once again I find sex rearing its ugly head in both full-frontal blatant statements and pornographic allusions, the like of which I have been unable to divine even in my close studies of Oz.

I cannot bring myself to put pen to paper to attack the lewdness found in such articles as the Superman strip cartoon, with its unwholesome story of male transvestism. Nor can I bear to imagine the effect that your wicked references to the aardvark has on the pure, unpolluted minds of such nice young boys, strong, healthy and vigorous as my own beloved son. I took immense trouble to uncover, in an obscure 15th century manuscript in the National Archives of Nepal, the significance of the aardvark, and I find myself too shocked to tell you of its function in the fertility rites of a now extinct 8th century Himalayan hill tribe.

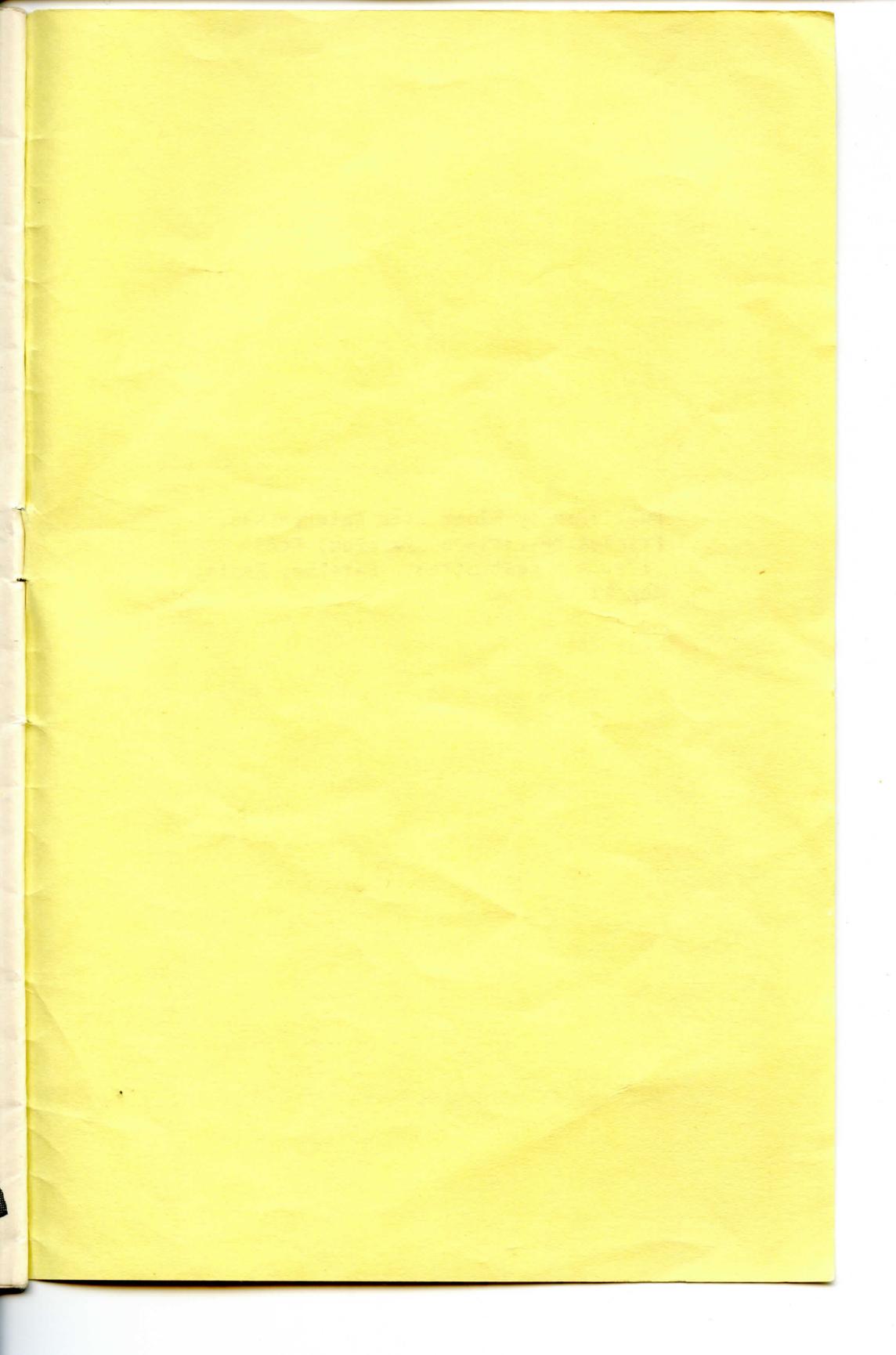
I am now almost too exhausted to continue, but I must conclude that your obscene effort at contemporary writings would not be missed from any sphere of art or science. I wholeheartedly condemn both you and Black Lion. Yours,

Mary Hightmore (Mrs).

PS I enclose a plain stamped addressed envelope:
please rush me your next issue.

... and with great pleasure, on behalf of the editors, I award the Black Lion Competition Prize of £1.00 jointly to:
TJ Smithin,
DG Fry...





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