

3p

Harlequin

Leisure Magazine of the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Research Group and Associated Organisations



A critical moment in the Clubs' Doubles Tournament as Tim Haste watches John Speake follow through.

MAY 1978

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ENERGY OR EXTINCTION

D.C. SAHIB, RAJA-BAJA

CUL. LAB. ARTIST: GEOFF BEST

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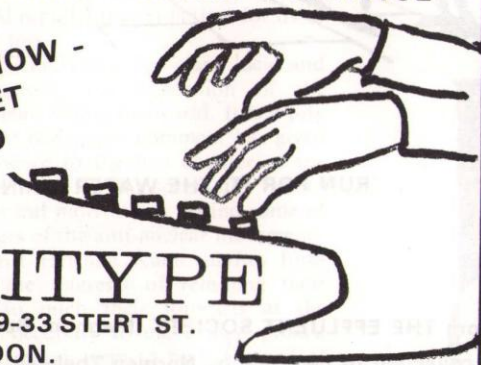
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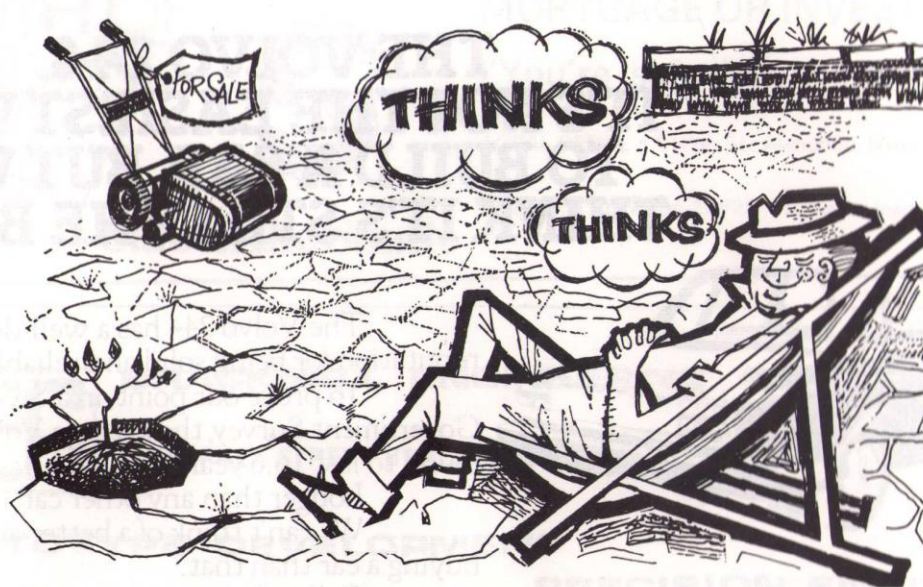
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ENERGY OR EXTINCTION

'Energy or Extinction' by Sir Fred Hoyle, was published by Heinemann Ltd in September 1977. It is reviewed below by L. G. Brookes, Economics and Programmes Branch, UKAEA.

When a man of Sir Fred Hoyle's distinction and capacity for clarity and originality of thought feels impelled to urge the governments of the world to waste no time in taking up the option of nuclear energy it pays us all to sit up and take notice. When he goes further and expresses grave concern about the danger of mass starvation and armed conflict throughout the world unless nuclear power systems are expanded rapidly, then it is time for us to feel concern too.

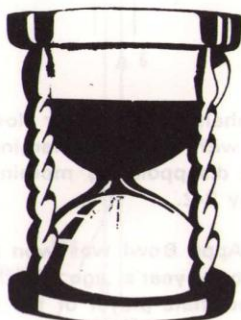
This book stands as a first-class, lucid and concise diagnosis and exposition of the energy problems facing the world. It is a pity therefore that newspaper comment has given such prominence to the first chapter of the book in which Hoyle speculates about possible political motivations behind some of the supporters of the anti-nuclear movement.

Futurologist Herman Kahn advises forecasters, in the interests of retaining their credibility, to pitch their forecasts at the lowest level necessary to make their points. But big men never seem to be frightened of big figures; and Hoyle is no exception. He argues that, for a politically stable world, we should aim at ultimately providing every member of a world population approximately equal to the present 4 000 million with an energy flow approximately 50 per cent higher than that enjoyed by the average present-day American. This means expanding world energy consumption by a factor of about six compared with the present level over a period which he does not define precisely but which is presumably about 50 to 100 years. He poses a dilemma which is basic to the arguments in his book: for consumption to remain at the present level, the world's poor must remain poor; but at the desirable level lifetimes for coal, oil and gas become alarmingly short.

"Nor can it be contested", he says, "that most of the world's population, presently 4 000 million, will die in a disastrous catastrophe should an energy source not have been developed by the time reserves of coal, oil and gas become exhausted".

"Nor can there be any serious debate over the statement that the only alternative source presently known to be technically viable (his italics) is energy from the nuclear fission of uranium or thorium."

He points out that the anti-nuclear movement never offers any well thought-out or quantified alternative to nuclear energy. Their usual answer, says Hoyle, is solar energy; but, when asked to provide precise details of how energy flows in excess of the present world level of consumption are to be obtained from solar energy, they have nothing to offer. "They say that some time in the future the details will become available and they then go on to demand that someone should take the trouble to prove them wrong . . . for every idea which occurs to them."



Many writers have been sceptical of what the "alternative sources" have to offer. Hoyle goes much further than most of them. He sees fundamental obstacles in the way of harnessing the dilute natural forms of energy to substitute for the concentrated forms (coal, oil, gas and hydro-power are, he argues, examples of great concentration by nature itself of what was originally solar energy) on which industrial societies were built up. "I have not yet seen", he says, "any large scale sunlight collection project that will be likely in the foreseeable future to deliver as much energy in its use as it consumed in its manufacture."

To meet UK future needs by wind power, he estimates, would call for about 20 million windmills occupying about half the surface of England; and "when in full operation such an ensemble of mills would make an appalling roar and the number of serious accidents they would cause would probably run into hundreds of thousands."

To meet the needs of the world by wave power would, he says, require a boom length $2\frac{1}{2}$ times the distance from the earth to the moon.

He recognises that proponents of the renewable energy sources generally envisage much lower per capita energy yields but points out that "quite apart from the social resistance there would be in the Western democracies to the resulting fall in the standard of living, such a reversion to a hair-shirt economy would lead to short term disaster since hair-shirt economies cannot support difficult, cumbersome technologies".

Hoyle sees nuclear energy as the only relevant solution available to us at present. "[The problem] is solved for many thousands of years without needing any really major projections beyond what has been done already—the technologies are accessible now or accessible in a comparatively short term future, a decade or two at most".

He rejects the suggestion that nuclear energy is unsafe. It is, he says, "the safest energy source. . . . Because familiarity breeds contempt and because lack of familiarity breeds apprehension, we tend to think of unsafe chemical energy as being safe and to think of safe nuclear energy as being unsafe." He insists that the use of nuclear weapons would be most likely to be triggered by the major problems of a world short of energy and that since nuclear energy can avert energy shortage it is "really a safeguard . . . against the outbreak of nuclear war".

There is one point on which Sir Fred Hoyle differs from Authority opinion and that is in his preference for the CANDU system as the basis of world nuclear power programmes. This view seems to be based on his belief that the fast reactor presents problems of stability and control. However, as Sir John Hill said at the Authority's annual press conference, the prototype fast reactor at Dounreay is proving to be the most docile reactor we have ever built with the most robust fuel.



HARWELL WINNERS OF 1977 LONGMAN CUP, left to right: MIKE MORETON-SMITH, MIKE WATERMAN, MIKE DUCK, TIM HASTE, JOHN SPEAKE

CROQUET - ITS PRIZES

PRINCIPLES & PLEASURES

The Longman Cup, and the Apps Bowl are just two of the many, and often valuable, trophies - one gold cup is worth over £1,000 - awarded annually by the Croquet Association and individual clubs. The Longman Cup competition is a national, club knockout event open to players with handicaps of $3\frac{1}{2}$ and above. This was won last year by Harwell Club who succeeded Daten, the previous year's winners. Harwell had some tense struggles on their way to the final, the most notable being against the Roehampton Club in London, where a lunch-time score of 0-2 down was converted to a 3-2 win by the end of the day. The final, against the Bretby team from Yorkshire and played on a neutral ground at

Cheltenham, was another close-fought match with Harwell emerging victors after a disappointing morning's play, again by 3-2.

The Apps Bowl was won by Terry Wood two year's ago as the most improved male player of the year, his handicap having reduced from 8 to $2\frac{1}{2}$. Since then, he has continued his improvement and is now handicapped at $-\frac{1}{2}$ (slightly better than scratch) thus putting him amongst the very best players in the country. He is a regular competitor in the annual inter-counties tournament, playing for Berks and Oxon, and has once played for England in an England-versus-Scotland international.

The origins of croquet are somewhat obscure, but it seems it might have evolved from a game known as "paille-maille" (pall-mall) played in Languedoc as early as the 13th Century. The game was popular amongst the royal families of France until the 17th Century, when it crossed the Channel to England. By 1850 it had become known as croquet and was one of the most popular outdoor sports. In 1870, the All-England Croquet Club was formed in Wimbledon, later to become the All-England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club as it is today. By 1880 croquet had been practically ousted by tennis, but was revived in 1895. The foundations of the modern rules were drawn up in the 1920's, and the game has changed little since then. Today it is becoming popular again, particularly amongst scientific establishments.



by Terry Wood

Turning to the game itself, we all know of its vicarage garden-party image and of the Alice-in-Wonderland episode using playing cards, hedgehogs and flamingoes. The mass media are taking the game more seriously these days and one leading paper has described it as "a mixture of snooker and chess". This gives some idea of the skill and strategy required.

Croquet is played on a grass court measuring 35 yards x 28 yards (about the size of two tennis courts) which ideally should be perfectly level. Situated at fixed points on the court are six iron hoops measuring 1 foot above the ground and $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches between the uprights, and a wooden peg $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter. Four balls are used, each weighing one pound, which pass between the hoops with $\frac{1}{8}$ inch to spare! The balls are coloured for identification, and each side (singles or doubles) plays with two colours - red and yellow versus black and blue. The balls are struck by players using mallets weighing about three pounds each. Most croquet mallets have square-section heads, not round as in the popular image.

The object of the game is for each side to pass both the balls through the hoops in the order shown, ending by striking the peg. The techniques and tactics employed in achieving this end, and in preventing the opposition from doing so first, give croquet its unique character.

The players (in singles games - doubles are slightly different) take turns in striking a ball and may elect to play either of their two colours. The balls are brought into play by striking them from one of the baulk lines. Having struck a ball, the player's turn ends unless he either runs a hoop (i.e. the ball passes through a hoop in the correct sequence) or hits another ball. Running a hoop allows the player one

more stroke, whereas hitting another ball (known as "making a roquet") entitles him to two more strokes. The first stroke is "the croquet", where the striker picks up his ball and places it in contact with the roqueted ball before striking his ball again. The second stroke is "the continuation stroke", when the player strikes his ball again. This may result in another roquet or running a hoop and hence earning further strokes. In one turn he may only roquet each ball once unless he has run a hoop. This process of gaining extra strokes enables breaks to be set up as in snooker, and a large number of hoops scored during one turn. The problem is, of course, that a player will not usually be presented with a ready-made break, but will have to set one up himself. This is where tactics come in whereby a player can maximise his chances of making a break, at the same time minimising his opponent's chances. By leaving his own balls close together and the opponent's in the distance and separated from each other, he is likely to earn several strokes next turn. The opponent can get only one unless he manages to run a hoop (but, of course, he should not be given the opportunity) or roquets another ball. He may not even attempt to hit a ball if a miss would prove disastrous, but may play some kind of waiting stroke - and so on.

The skills of the game revolve around two types of stroke: the single ball and the

croquet. All single ball strokes call for great accuracy of direction, and the most obvious example is running a hoop. Although there is only $\frac{1}{8}$ inch to spare between ball and hoop, it is possible to run the hoop at an angle of over 45° by means of an extremely accurate shot, the ball passing through mainly by virtue of the spin it has picked up. Also, when running a hoop, a player will usually want to go a limited distance beyond, and hence his stroke needs to be accurate in both strength and direction.

The second instance of a single ball stroke is shooting at another ball some distance away with the object of obtaining the innings. Here a very fast accurate shot is necessary (two attributes that do not easily come together), speed being necessary to minimise the effects of irregularities on the court and to carry the ball to relative safety if it misses.

The third instance is the roquet, where you want the roqueted ball to come to rest in a particular position to help your objectives. Again, strength and direction of shot are vitally important.

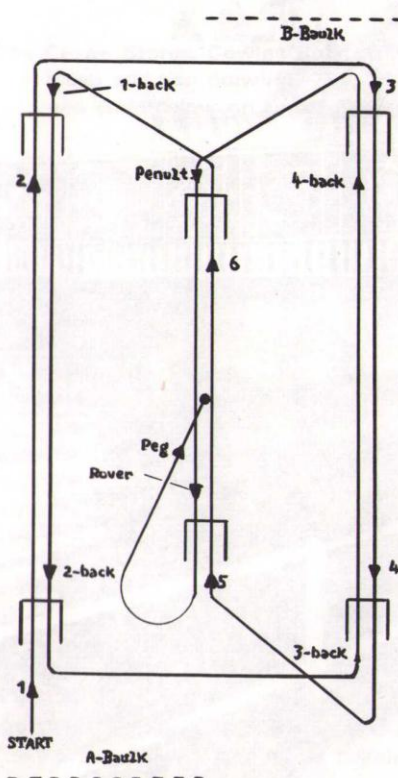
The croquet stroke provides the most variety, its purpose being to place two balls in accurate positions in one stroke. It will be clear that the outcome of the croquet stroke depends on the angle between the line of the two balls and the line on which they are struck by the mallet. What is not so obvious is that the way in which the player's ball is struck also has a pronounced effect. The amount of follow-through, or the deliberate lack of it, the position of the hands on the mallet shaft, and the angle the face of the mallet makes with the ground all have different effects on the path of the balls.

There are many facets of the game which are too detailed to go into here. A typical game lasts about two and a half hours, involving perhaps a three-mile walk for each player. If you go in for tournaments and play three games a day, you can be sure of a good deal of physical and mental exercise.

Croquet is clearly not everyone's cup of tea, but those who take the trouble to learn and acquire the basic skills find it a highly rewarding, if not outrightly addictive, game. I hope this article will make you more aware of what croquet is about and persuade you to have a go one lunch time on the two courts near the main gate.

Anyone playing will be pleased to give you a hand, but if you would like more help then Mike Moreton-Smith (Ext. 4547), Mike Duck (Ext. 2106) or Terry Wood (Ext. 2371) will be only too happy to oblige.

LAYOUT OF CROQUET COURT (NOT TO SCALE)



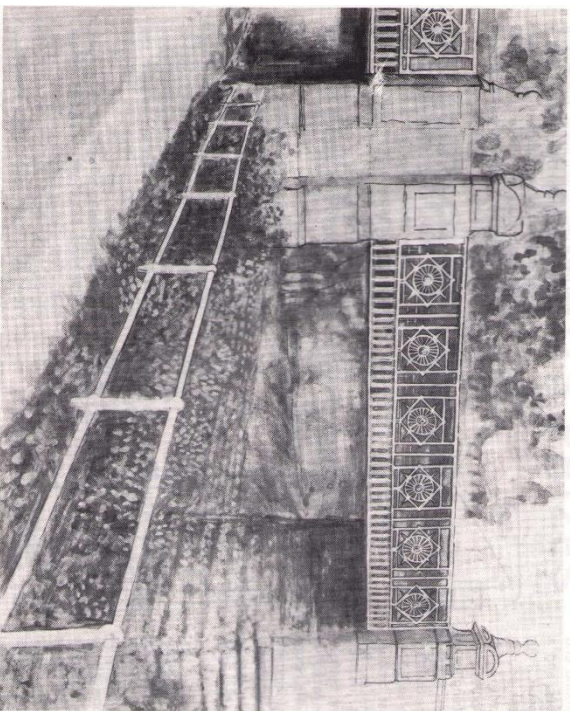
Artists Exhibiting at Barwell



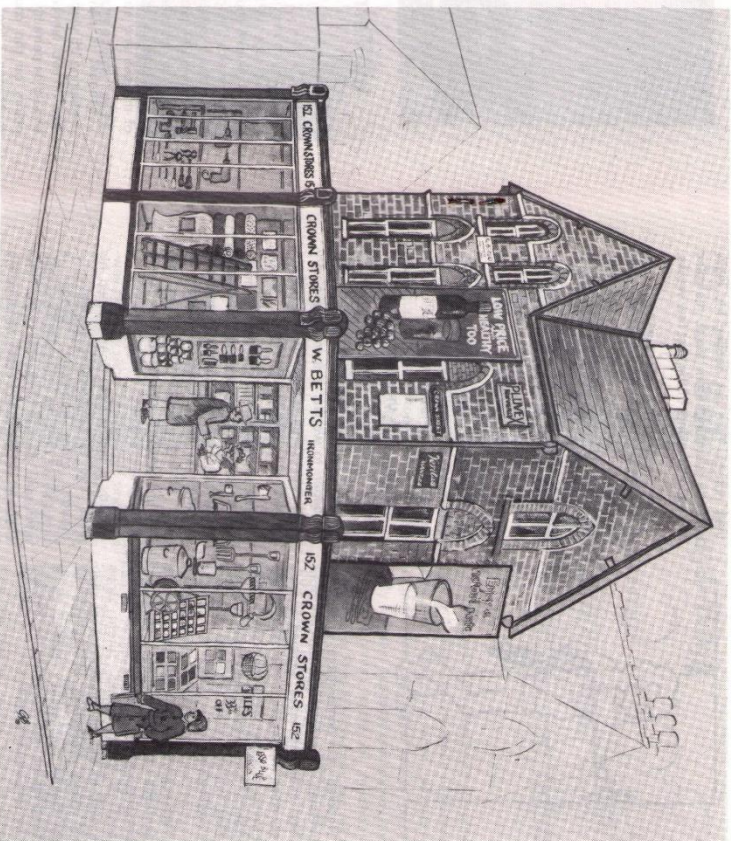
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Geoff Best

Geoff Best denies being an artist at all, but admits to a compulsive interest in artistic matters which have led him to try just about every known art technique, plus a few others. He puts the interest down to coming top in art in his first term at grammar school, only to be compelled by the curriculum to drop the subject at the end of the year.



Bridge over Headington Hill, Oxford

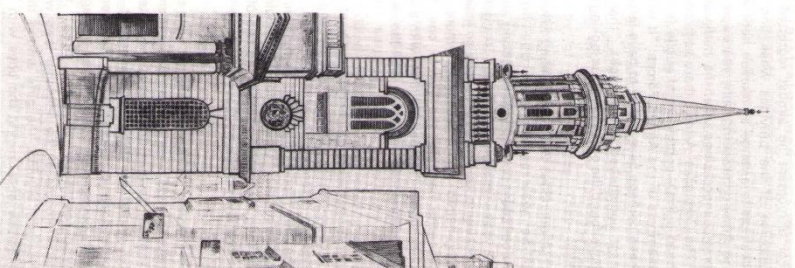


The Crown Stores, Cowley Road, Oxford:
- brush and pen drawing,
and watercolour on tinted paper

A first, and only, attempt at art classes ended in disaster when he discovered himself the only man in a class of seventeen would-be potters. Since then he has pursued the interest as a very private matter, and prefers not to discuss work in progress, or join clubs and classes. It was the fact that the Harwell exhibition was purely an exhibition with no other attachments, that led him first to exhibit and later to take over the organisation from Nigel Douglas. The show moved to the Cockcroft Hall, and artists were encouraged to sell their pictures. He feels that prices add to the interest, and that no compliment matches someone wanting to buy your work.

He is now reconciled to the fact that he cannot paint, and relies on design and drawing. His pictures are mostly architectural, with photographs often used as a basis for imaginative development. Formally beautiful buildings seldom appeal, but odd places, shops and houses are drawn in brown or black ink, usually with a brush on tinted paper, and embellished

St. Mary's Church, Turt Street, Oxford
brush drawing and water colour
on tinted paper



with inverted detail. Watercolour adds to the effect, which is enhanced by the mounting and framing which he sees as almost as important and interesting as the picture itself.

Recently much of his work has been engraved glass. In this uncommon medium crystal glass is scratched very lightly with a diamond, or steel needle, which cuts the surface. The glass is then lit from above or below, when the design stands out as white against the totally black background of a velvet-lined case. The work is slow and precise, but he finds it deeply satisfying.

Unlike many amateur artists he has no ambition to do more than have an absorbing hobby which pays for itself. His only regret is that he has kept relatively little of his own work, but even then he is consoled by the fact that other people usually choose the pictures he dislikes.

"THE COMRADES' ARMS"

Written for "HARLEQUIN"
by "Atom News" cartoonist
BRYAN BURNS, Nuclear Fuels

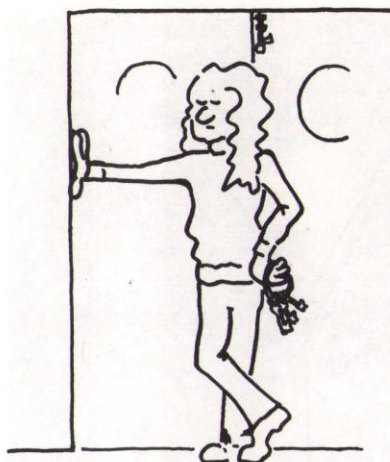
Passing through the doorway, Tom Fraser came to an abrupt halt. He had been prepared for some changes, as it had been a long time since he had last seen the old place, but the interior was almost unrecognisable. Garish modern decor replaced the cramped and badly-lit but vibrantly friendly inn of his memory.

Looking around in bewilderment, Tom thought with a puzzled frown: "If the outside of the building had been as radically changed, I would probably have never found it again after all these years." For a moment he almost regretted his impulse of the previous week and his decision to arrange a reunion here with his Army comrade of many years ago. On previous occasions when he had visited "The Comrades' Arms", there had always been a lively contingent of nubile female members of the Armed Forces: "It would have perhaps been better to have left the past undisturbed" he thought, "than to have found the old rendezvous looking like this!"

A querulous voice, demanding to know if he was prepared to buy liquid refreshment or simply stand gazing about all day, interrupted Tom's thoughts. Looking in its direction, he saw an insipid, long-haired youth standing where his favourite barmaid, the buxom one, had once stood. Tom paused, then with a sigh of resignation indicated his choice of drink.

As he waited, he looked sadly at the once-so-familiar surroundings, shaking his head in deference to what had been, but then his mood brightened as he thought optimistically: "Ginger Hopkins shouldn't be long, and then between the two of us and a few drinks, we'll soon liven up this place!"

Carrying his glass to a small table that gave a good view of the main entrance, Tom sat down. Grimacing at the taste as he sipped his drink, he glanced at the other dozen or so customers. They were a fairly nondescript bunch: a few teenagers who certainly did not meet the requirements of the licensing laws were heatedly arguing, the girls among them blatantly encouraging the boys with the obvious desire of seeing the dispute end in a punch-up.



Huddled at a corner table, a bald old gentleman, eyes peering myopically from behind thick spectacles, seemed to note every small movement in the room before returning to contemplate the solitary drink in front of him: a very lonely man, without friends, but one who appeared to prefer his own company anyway.

Two portly housewives, fresh from the morning's bingo session, fortified themselves as they bitterly compared the extent of their losses. Intent upon returning to the fray once more, as their loud voices proclaimed to one and all, they looked belligerently around as if defying lesser, non-bingo-playing mortals to try to prevent them.

Lastly, there was a rather sad, middle-aged individual leaning against the bar for support and, although still only mid-day, well into his cups. Gravely drinking and smoking, he solemnly studied every minute detail about him, blinking rapidly and looking for all the world like a demented old owl.

When the doors burst open and a crowd of boisterous football fans surged in, for a short while their laughter and noise were to remind Tom of happier times, but their humour was totally different from the wartime bonhomie that he had shared in this room, so that he sat dejectedly, watching and hoping that his old comrade would not keep him waiting much longer.

Although a fairly steady stream of customers arrived during the afternoon, Ginger's conspicuous red thatch was nowhere to be seen. "Where the hell is he?" wondered Tom, "It's so unlike him - the Ginger of old was never late for anything."

Slowly, but inevitably, the building began to empty: the football supporters to the match, the loud-voiced women to their bingo, and the other customers to

their homes. Tom sat nursing his drink, absently watching them leave, his mind turning over events of the past few weeks.

After several years as a widower, he had decided to leave London and return to his native Tyneside. Before journeying north he had sorted out some old papers and stumbled upon Ginger's address. Realising that the train stopped en route at the military-based town where they had been in barracks and where Ginger had settled after his marriage to a local girl, he had written a brief note arranging a meeting. There had not been time for a reply, but Ginger would surely come, even if it was getting rather late.

Suddenly Tom thought with a chill of the many times down the years he had uttered that rather hoary joke: "Old soldiers never die, they only fade away." He began to wonder if there was a very good reason that prevented Ginger from keeping any more appointments.

Silence descended as the barman, gently but firmly propelled the mildly protesting drunk through the doors and closed them behind him. Then with his hand resting against the frame, the barman looked pointedly in Tom's direction.

With a heavy sigh, Tom drained his glass, and as he prepared to leave he thought more hopefully: "Ginger is probably all right; he could have changed addresses several times by now. The chances are, he didn't come because my note never reached him!"

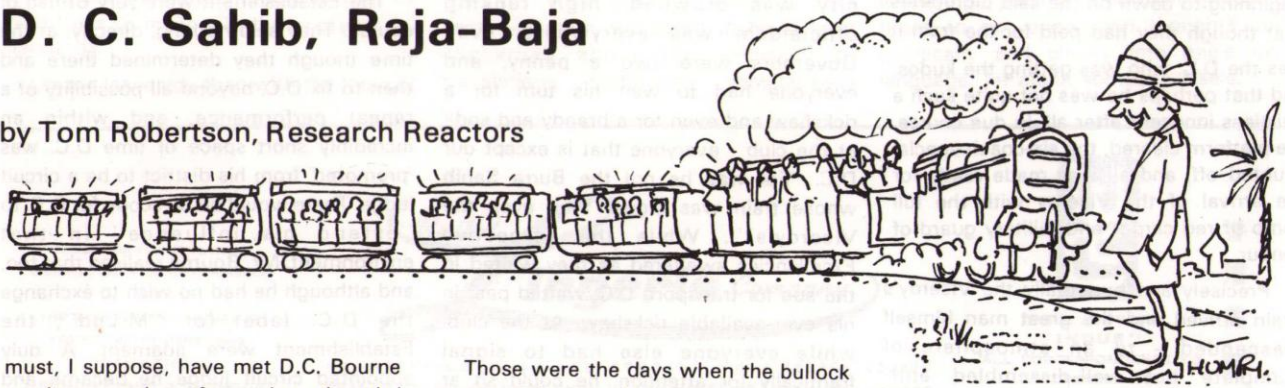
Looking at the alien surroundings with distaste, Tom shrugged his shoulders philosophically; "Well the old place has certainly changed for the worse, perhaps it is just as well that I didn't meet Ginger again after all these years." And he walked quickly out through the doors of "The Comrades' Arms" for the last time.

Meanwhile, another bald, bespectacled old gentleman, who had throughout the evening also been in the same bar, returned to his home nearby and was greeted affectionately by his grey-haired wife. "Did you meet your Army friend?" she asked with a smile. He slowly shook his head, removed his spectacles and, rubbing his eyes with a tired gesture, replied, "No: In fact I saw no-one that looked remotely like him."

He paused for a moment, as if seeking to capture an elusive memory. Then speaking his thoughts aloud, he remarked musingly, "I did see one old chap who seemed to be waiting for someone." Then, after a further pause, he shook his head with conviction as he said "He couldn't possibly have been Tom Fraser, he was much too old to have been in our war!"

D. C. Sahib, Raja-Baja

by Tom Robertson, Research Reactors



I must, I suppose, have met D.C. Bourne on quite a number of occasions though I have no recollection of doing so. Unfortunately, I was too young at the time to have any appreciation of those special talents of his which made him a legend in his time throughout the Indian Civil Service.

What Mr. Bourne's Christian names were I have no idea. He was always referred to as D.C., initials which stood for District Commissioner, a status he attained quite young and by various stratagems enjoyed to the full right up to the end of the British Raj.

His initial rise to distinguished attention was nothing short of meteoric and took place at the time of the Provincial Durbar - each Province, of course, covered an area much larger than Great Britain. The gathering was attended by no less a personage than the Viceroy of India himself, and occurred shortly after D.C. assumed the status of his first appointment as a District Commissioner in one of the small outlying areas.

D.C. waited till the official invitations had gone out to the various princelings and local rajahs in his district, and then set out on a circular tour to visit them all.

Once the preliminary felicitations had been concluded, he would tactfully broach the purpose of his unscheduled visit: "The Durbar will, I hope, be graced by the presence of Your Highness?". Both knew, of course, that the 'invitation' was a semi-official order to attend, so the reply was a princely bow and a gracious smiling assent. D.C. then casually mentioned that he had just seen Ram Das, the neighbouring princeling, and that he, Ram Das, was intending to take a sizeable retinue with him to the Durbar. "Your Highness will, of course, also be attended by a retinue of your position?", was the next offhand remark, which left his host in a very grave quandary. He was certainly not going to be outdone by that upstart Ram Das, but how was he going to transport "a suitable retinue" all the way to the provincial capital?

Those were the days when the bullock cart was the standard mode of transport, but that was very much beneath his dignity. The principlity motor car had only a limited capacity, and anyway it was in its normal state of mechanical breakdown. That left the train, but the rail fares for a following "worthy of his position" would amount to a small fortune. What was he to do?

The D.C. was still chatting away about this and that, but one topic suddenly riveted the rajah's wandering attention. Apparently Ram Das was intending to hire a special railway carriage to take his retinue, as he had found that this would be much cheaper than paying all the individual fares for himself and his following. Well! Well! One would never have credited Ram Das with enough intelligence to have thought of that, but it did seem a possible solution: "Er - um - how did one go about hiring a special carriage?"

When his guest had gone, the rajah thought that with due care and cultivation this new D.C. could be quite an asset. Nobody could have been more helpful in the matter of arranging a special railway coach. Mr. Bourne had promised to attend to all the details himself, and the price he mentioned had not seemed at all unreasonable. Indeed, when in due course he made his own checks through his wife's nephew's younger cousin, who worked on the railways, and found that Mr. Bourne was only charging the exact cost of the special carriage without taking a 'cut' for his services, the rajah was enchanted and set off to the Durbar in a highly festive mood. With an obliging and innocently honest D.C. like this young man, the future looked promising indeed to the wily oriental potentate.

The provincial capital was naturally in a state of considerable turmoil with the influx of all the exalted personages whose presence was required at the Durbar, and the local inhabitants were taking very careful note of all the comings and goings

so that, while not giving offence to those in positions of power, they would be able to extract the maximum possible return for any services rendered.

This most desirable commercial information is freely available in the Orient without any study of the fine structure of organisation or knowledge of the distinction between a Deputy Provincial Administrator and a District Commissioner. Indeed the status of the individual may be obtained without any understanding of English at all: the matter is simplicity itself. At any function, custom decrees that the later a personage arrives the greater is his relative importance.

From this it naturally follows that the passengers on the last scheduled train before the arrival of the Viceroy were worthy of careful notice. They were subjected to a photographic memory scrutiny by a fairly large section of the local populace, who then settled down philosophically to await the arrival of the special train with the Viceroy and his immediate entourage.

The stir of interest when the next train was signalled was, however, tempered with surprise. There were no other scheduled trains due, but there was some bustling about on the platform. Surely the Viceroy was not going to arrive before his appointed time! Western notions of punctuality were strange enough, but for a great man like the Viceroy to arrive early would be a terrible breach of etiquette.

Inexorably, the train drew in to the platform and stopped. The embarrassment at the breach of protocol, however, changed to interested curiosity when it became apparent that it was not the Viceroy's train at all, but a special one chartered by a certain Bourne Sahib. All took note of the six well-filled coaches as the train emptied and of the solitary white man calmly bowing and exchanging greetings with the alighting princes and their retinues. By this time it was

beginning to dawn on the said dignitaries that though they had paid for the train it was the D.C. who was getting the kudos, and that perhaps he was not quite such a guileless innocent after all. In due course, the platform cleared, the six-coach special shunted off, and all was made ready for the arrival of the Viceroy with the full pomp of red carpet and military guard of honour.

Precisely and punctually the Viceroy's train arrived and the great man himself descended - to an atmosphere of complete but well-dissembled anticlimax! For all could see that this, the Viceroy's special train, had but three coaches whereas the Bourne Sahib's train had required six. Truly this Bourne Sahib must be a personage of the very greatest importance!

Reactions were inevitable, but they came in various forms: the most immediate was at the Durbar itself; the

city was crowded, high ranking officialdom was everywhere, even Governors were two a penny, and everyone had to wait his turn for a rickshaw and even for a brandy and soda at the club - everyone that is except our D.C. "For was he not the Burra Sahib whose train was bigger than even the Viceroy's?". While the respective Excellencies sweltered as they waited in the sun for transport, D.C. wafted past in his ever-available rickshaw. At the club, while everyone else had to signal frantically for attention, he could sit at ease in the cane chair directly under the club punka, with an iced drink which was replenished at the lift of a finger - "For was he not the Burra Sahib, etc etc?".

Junior officialdom and those not connected with "The Service" relished and recounted the incident and passed it into cherished folklore (or how else would I have heard of it?).

The Establishment were very British of course. They said nothing, directly, at the time though they determined there and then to fix D.C. beyond all possibility of a repeat performance, and within an incredibly short space of time D.C. was 'promoted' from his district to be a circuit judge. There would be no scope for D.C. to "extend his influence" in that environment. Mr. Bourne realised that too, and although he had no wish to exchange the D.C. label for "M'Lud", the Establishment were adamant. A duly appointed circuit judge he became and was sent on tour to work out his own salvation - if he could.

The Establishment had, however, sadly underestimated their man: D.C. devised an original solution which he applied with due aplomb to set up an unassailable record for the shortest career as a circuit judge in the entire history of the British Civil Service in India. To be continued

COMMUNICATIONS

THE VITAL LINK

C A N G E R S L I N E S

LOOKED AT WITHOUT CONDENSATION BY SUE COWLES

Among President Carter's many achievements during his term of office will be that of bringing to the notice of the world the fact that the western world suffers in general from a lack of competent and qualified interpreters. His "clangers" during his recent nine-countries-in-nine-days visit did more to focus everyone's attention on this than a hundred articles in learned journals might have done.

I am not referring to his faux pas, such as addressing King Baudouin as "Your Royal Highness" instead of as "Your Majesty", for these may simply be blamed on President Carter's ingenuousness which is today a welcome characteristic in an American President.

However, mistakes made by his inadequate interpreter are of the kind which should and could have been avoided in the first place, the cause being that the Western World in general and its English speakers in particular has never seen the necessity for a proper and recognised training in interpretation and translation.

Any language brings changes from year to year, as is patently clear from any film or play written as recently as the "twenties" - we don't say "dear heart" any more - let alone going back to Dickensian habits of speech. A professional interpreter would be required to keep up with changes in the language he specialises in, much as a doctor should keep up with changes in drug therapy. In this way he would avoid such things as translating to "leave" his country by to "abandon" his country; or "desires for the future" by "lusts for the future". Remember Gerard Hoffnung's letter from an Austrian hotel proprietor - "There is a French widow in every room, affording delightful prospects - I insist that you will enjoy this!".

England in particular has functioned on international trade. But only in wartime, and then strictly within the services, has it

cared to worry enough about accurate translating to establish an adequate training programme. Business deals are usually made in private with one interpreter the only person present who actually understands both sides in a proposed deal. If that interpreter feels more sympathy toward one party than the other, it is easy to see how he could modify expressions. He could substitute "We require an absolute commitment of several years" for "We prefer to deal with clients on a longer term basis". He could sway things in favour of one party or the other. Written translations are not so problematical, because they can be double checked if necessary by a native speaker of the language. But sheer training and experience become invaluable in simultaneous spoken interpretation, for it requires the rendering of meanings, phrase by phrase, with only seconds to think it out. This is a very different thing from just substituting one word for another.

This brings us to the code of ethics which would be an absolute requirement, and which would necessarily be fostered by the academic institution conferring the degree in interpretation. It would be jealous of its graduates' standards and reputation, like any other alma mater. And no doubt a professional association would

acquire the power and influence over its members to maintain the profession's standards.

Let me leave you then with the thought

that in this age of instant, live communication, we ought to be at least concerned about the accuracy of translations, particularly simultaneous

verbal ones, for it is indeed hard enough at times to put one's own thoughts unequivocally and clearly into one's own language, let alone someone else's.

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Punk skateboarders like to pinch other peoples' boards and smash them up on rough pavements.

"We aren't in it for gain, we just want to rebel against the companies who are conning kids to spend a fortune on what is basically an anti-social habit," said Harve, 24, an Oxford graduate.

"We want to show the kids it isn't worth it."

He claims he has had to go as far afield as Highworth to find pavements with a good slope rough enough to smash a board.

And the new tougher skateboards are also causing problems.

"I just can't afford the bus fares," says Harve, who lives in Swindon with his common law wife and four children on social security.

A TEAM of Harwell scientists — their leader lives in Wantage — have come up with the answer for people allergic to egg yolks.

After working on the project for more than two years, during which they estimate they used 2,001,324 eggs they said today they had achieved a breakthrough.

Using a syringe they pierce the shell without cracking it, then suck out the yolk. The egg can then be cooked in any of the many traditional ways.

"It's so simple anyone can do it. And providing the syringe is sterilised after use is 100 per cent safe," said a spokesman.

- One of several unusual news items published on page 3 of Swindon's "Evening Advertiser" last month. The date? April 1st! Now the yolk's on us!



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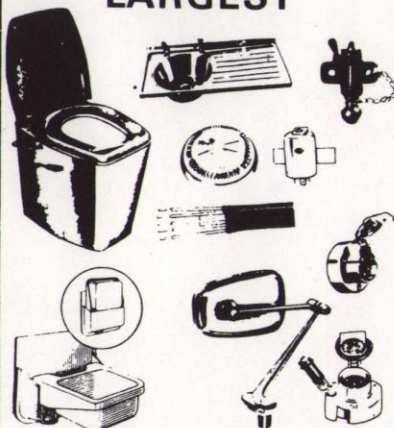
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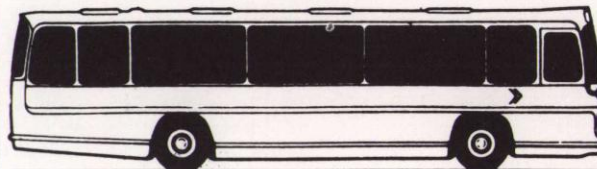


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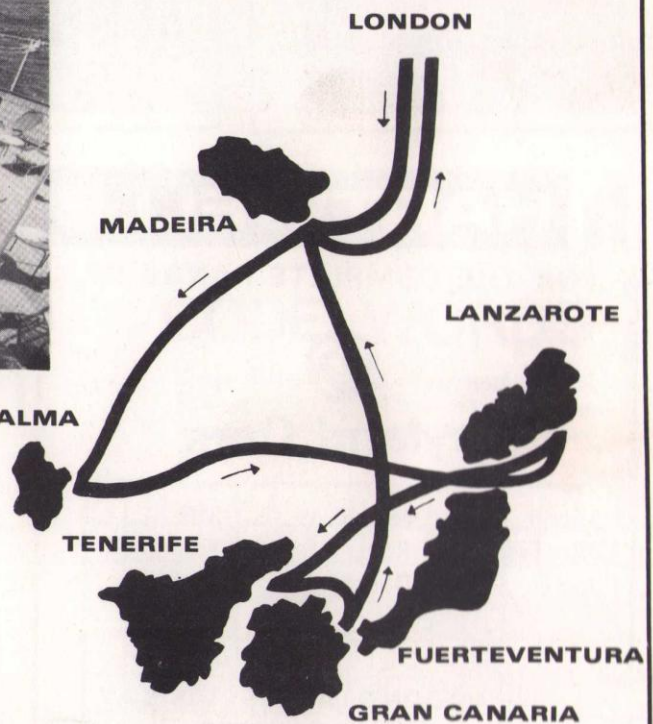
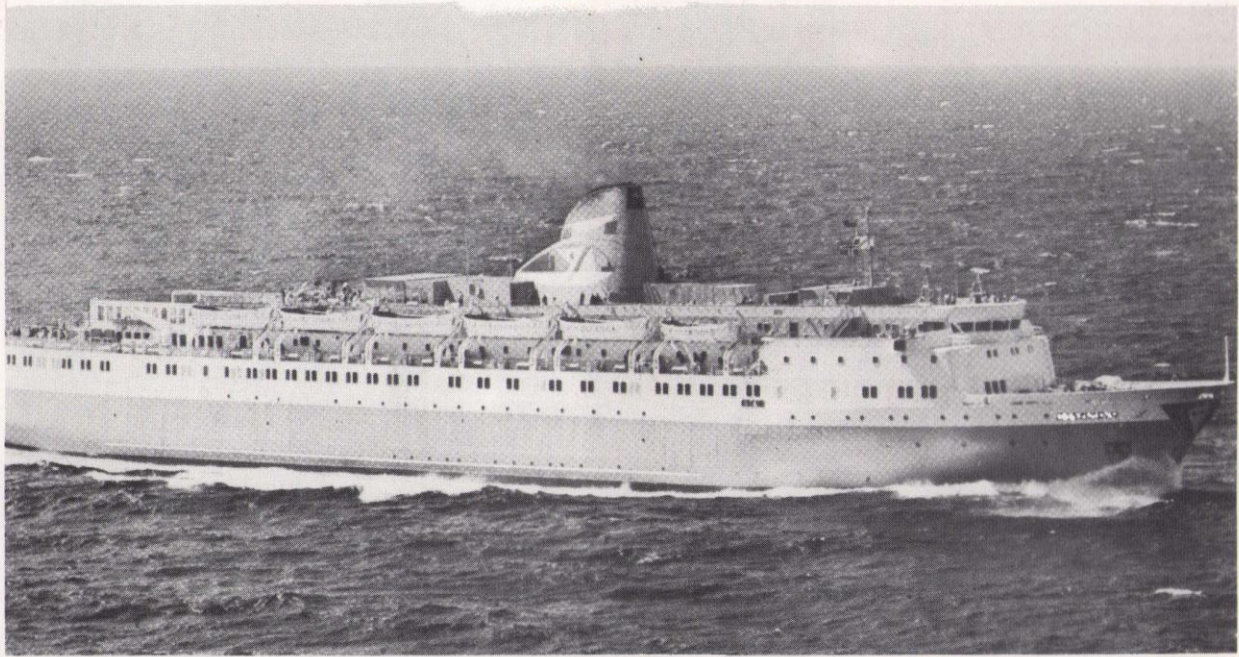
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