

poison pen

THE ORGAN OF HASTINGS
A's

**STILL
FREE!**

Feb 22ND 1985

IN THIS SPLENDIFEROUS ISH:-

DUNGENESS IN A MESS

GET 'EM. YOUNG: RACISM AND SEXISM
IN SCHOOL BOOKS

RYE COPS IN THE DARK

SOCIAL SERVICES IN A STATE

PLUS! — THE MEANING OF LIFE

— SEE PAGE 9 FOR THE ANSWER.

Brrr! Ever tried typing with icicles dangling from your fingers? No, neither have I; but this is the next worst thing.....Still, here's some news from that time-bomb on our collective doorstep which could make things a little bit warmer than we'd like.... read on.....

THE DUNGENMESSENGER

Information from the inside of this highly dangerous heap of junk, this radioactive PILE on our doorstep (just 30 miles as the fallout and running releases fly) has largely dried up in recent years owing to increased security, mole trials, big sentences, etc discouraging leakages-- of a verbal nature anyway-- the radioactive leaks are less easily stopped! However, stories do still come my way sometimes, from the few operatives who have not sold their consciences.

This one is from deep and highly credible moles who tell me of their concern at the state of the station. Ever since the miners' strike started last March, Dungeness A has been boiling full belt, without letup. The CEGB has transferred load to non-coal power stations during this time in order to conserve coal stocks.

Dungeness A is old by engineering standards-- 25 years old with a design life of 30 years, despite a major shutdown and refit in 1980-82. Like an engine or any complex machine with moving parts, it is designed to run. Like with an ageing engine, if a fault occurs it does not necessarily stop or impair the functioning of the plant whilst running. Instead, degredative damage is done: increased wear on bearings etc. It is the purpose of routine preventative maintenance to limit this damage-- like regular oil changes for an engine.

If such preventative maintenance is not carried out at the correct intervals and an old machine is run and run, when eventually it is stopped, serious damage usually is observed, and a much bigger job of replacing worn components has to be undertaken. There is also the distinct possibility that a serious failure of a component can happen under such conditions. If routine maintenance is suspended too long, accumulated wear of components leads to say, a turbine shaft of 90 tons weight going out of balance at 3,000rpm and lobbing its 300 ton mountings through the turbine hall roof. An example of the other sort of wear damage-- catastrophic damage-- like an engine run too long or too fast and without enough oil, so it seizes up.

Another factor which disrupts a preventative maintenance schedule, is the large number of small faults which occur and have to be corrected to avoid stopping. This is increasingly taking up maintenance engineers' time and keeping them away from their important routine duties. This is how a well-organised preventative maintenance deteriorates into "cra h maintenance": repairing faults as and when they occur. This concerted process of disorganisation of Plant Management is a vicious circle-- the more faults that occur, the less routine prevention, the more faults that occur, etc, and is very difficult to reverse once the rot sets in. It has been the cause of more closures in the engineering industry in this country than Mrs Thatcher's lunatic economic (sic) policies.

Dungeness A is in such a dilemma. Desperate to avoid power cuts because Peter Walker has said there won't be any, the CEGB Board has been placing pressure on nuclear station managers to keep running at all costs, well aware that if a station stops, it will take months if not years to restart. The problem for them is the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (NII).

Continued on next page.....

From previous page....

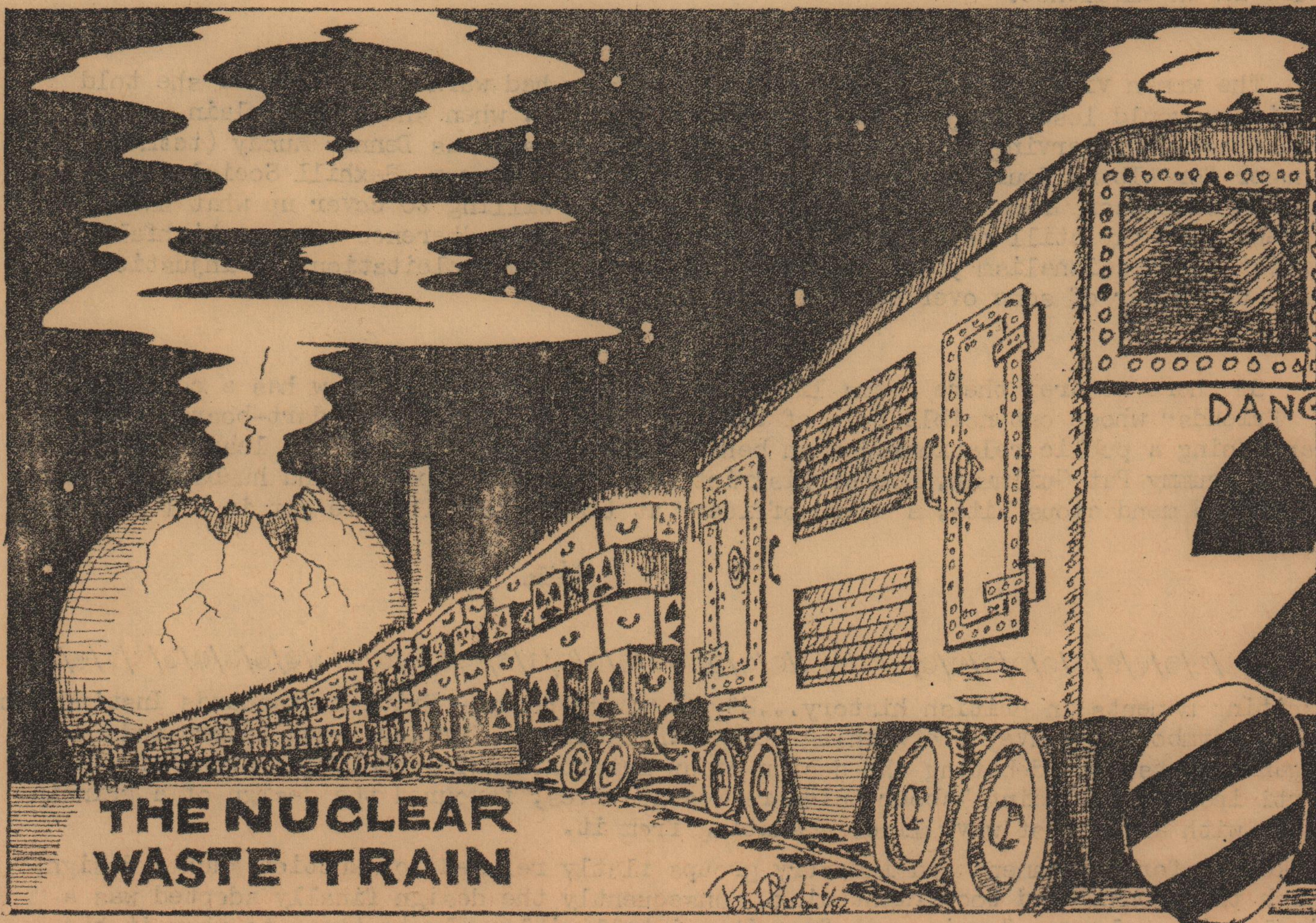
The NII has a legal duty to ensure the safe running of the nuclear stations and grants the CEGB their operating licence. The NII is also overworked and understaffed. Amongst the conditions for granting a station an operating licence is a list of mandatory (legally binding) maintenance procedures which HAVE to be carried out for the station to be run safely-- otherwise the licence may be suspended.

Could it be that some of these mandatory maintenance procedures are being neglected in the mayhem of crash maintenance now occurring at Dungeness A? Are the CEGB taking advantage of the NII being understaffed and overworked? Is Dungeness A being run into a dangerous condition for crude political reasons-- on Department of Energy orders?

Certainly engineers are concerned because they "can't keep the damn thing running right"-- experiencing trouble with both the nuclear bit (reactors) and the electrical bit (generators and turbines). May all their troubles be little ones-- nice, non-lethal terminal ones.

Pete.

Anyone else got any news about Dungeness? It's been so quiet recently that there must be something well dodgy going on there. What about all that luvverly nuclear waste they've been storing there since the start of the miners' strike??? And whilst on that subject, does anyone know what's happening up at Broomgrove power station? Let us know if you do. Write c/o Hastings Free Press, or come along to one of our meetings.



Readers of P.P. may remember an article in the 21st September last year issue about Albany Court social services hostel for the 'mentally ill', Bexhill.

Copies of that issue were sent to, amongst other people, Harriet Harman, MP (Labour's spokeswoman on Social Services). I have recently received a reply from Ms Harman, who tells me: 'I have considered the contents of your correspondence very carefully and I do not feel there is any way I can take your case forward'. Oh no? What about a stiff letter of inquiry to Young, the Director of Social Services? Or even a statement in 'the House', utilising parliamentary privilege? It seems that this left-Labour feminist and former civil liberties activist does not really want to be bothered about the denial of rights to men and women who are labelled 'mentally ill'. Perhaps she considers that their "quality of life" is so low to start off with that it doesn't matter if it is diminished further. (This view must be held by East Sussex Social Services themselves: it is noteworthy that a social worker-cum-Catholic priest who indulged in a bit of pederasty at a Council-run children's home in St Leonards recently got the boot just like that.)

Other recipients of that issue of P.P. were uncharacteristically intelligent in lying low and keeping mum. Then there is the ubiquitous Jane Amstad, Councillor of this Borough and local branch chairman (sic) of the appallingly staid and pro-psychiatry National Schizophrenia Fellowship. I took the trouble to get one woman victim of the Deputy Officer, Mistry, to write a full letter to Jane about what had happened; the latter said she would "look into" Albany Court. Inevitably, nothing came of this. Neither did she display much concern on hearing that a male resident had been subjected to summary starvation on officer-in-charge Barwick's instructions (despite the subsequent concern and opposition of MIND's legal assistant) or that a middle-aged man had died of tuberculosis in 1980, days after being taken from Albany Court in an ambulance.

The woman victim told me last year that Mistry had warned her that if she told on him he would lose his job. He needn't have worried: when she did complain (doubtless an unnerving experience for her), persons such as Dennis Mundy (team manager for Albany Court), Brian Ashton (former area manager, Bexhill Social Services) and his successor Graham Shuttleworth were only too willing to cover up what had happened and may still be happening. I am not demanding adherence to some highfalutin, elitist 'professionalism', but am simply opposed to the exploitation and injustice which the power of some over others entails.

So there we are; there seems little we can do. Albany Court now has a committee of "Friends" whose ostensible role of raising funds for day-trips, dart-boards etc means doing a public relations job on behalf of the hostel. One of its leading lights is the scummy Pat Guilmant, Rother District Councillor (ratepayer) and husband of the snooty and mendacious Rita, a "care officer" at the hostel. They've got it all sewn up.

[illegible]

Exciting moments in British history...23 years ago today:- British Standards Institution adopts symbol to convey the warning "Danger:Radiation". Earlier, when interested organisations were debating the design of an international symbol, one group of participants, including labour union representatives, favoured the design of a grinning skull with an aura of wavy lines emanating from it.

Spokesmen for government and industry groups flatly refused to sanction such a design, which they considered too frightening. Consequently the design finally adopted was a circle with 3 leaves fanning out from it-- intelligible only to those to whom it has been explained beforehand.

Poison Pen goes international!.....well.... almost.....well, about as far as Rye, really.....

LET THERE BE LIGHT:::::

Rother Council really like to look after the welfare of their wonderful boys in blue-- at the ratepayers' expense. All that overtime strike-breaking in Nottingham has left the poor Woodentops of Rye exhausted and in dire need of a good night's sleep. But outside the nice modern Sty in Rye stood a nasty tall lamp standard, holding its light at just the height of the constables' accommodation, at the top of the station. The nasty light was so bright that neither blindfold nor blackout could keep it out, causing lack of beauty sleep and baleful bad-tempered Bill.

But not any more. Readers will be delighted to know that the Constables of the Happy Holiday Town of Rye will, from now on, be the most happy, sweet-tempered, eager to help, smiling, cheerful pigs (speciesist-- Typissed) in Sussex (except of course for the Beast Ellis-- this one has his own personality problems poisoning his demeanour ---including prolific piles and total paucity of promotion prospects-- ever since he was kicked out of the Waffen SS for cruelty).

The reason for Rye's laughing policemen? The nasty tall lamp standard has been removed and replaced with one of those--you know-- small-- really small-- dinky-- really dinky-- really small and dinky-- SHORT lampposts. We congratulate them and hope that the several hundred pounds spent on their improved slumber (instead of Education, Social Services, Hospitals etc) will improve Rye's cops' humour SO MUCH that they then become HUMAN BEINGS and quit the force-- THEN this money will have been well spent and we'll all live happily ever after.

Cornelius.

SCHOOL-BOOK RACISM AND SEXISM:::::

My present job at the YMCA under the Community Programme involves "cleaning up" tatty old text-books in preparation for their being fully repaired and returned to local schools. (Ideally, of course, they should be replaced but the education service is too under-funded to allow for this.)

During the course of my rubbing and bleaching I have had time enough to peruse the contents of certain text-books. I have just been going through a set of books entitled "Mastery of English (First Stage)" by J.C.R. Yglesias and I.M. Newnham. This book was first published in 1965, and the lot I was dealing with were in their ninth (1975) impression.

In chapter 14, on pp.146-147, there is an exercise which aims at helping pupils understand the tense of verbs. They are asked to re-write "this eye-witness commentary as if it had happened last night and you are writing a report the next day". The commentary runs as follows (in full):

"The two wrestlers are now in the ring. There's a great buzz of excitement as there always is when these two meet. Crack Sambo is kneeling down on a prayer mat in his corner. The bell has gone. He's still there. Zombie the Zulu walks over to him. Here's trouble. Sambo salaams in prayer, he is touching the canvas with his forehead-- he always does this between rounds, the crowds love it!-- and bang, Zombie has kicked Sambo on the most prominent part of his anatomy. He's out of the ring. The referee is running over. He's grappling with Zombie. Now he's out. Zombie is doing a war-dance on the bottom rope. He's tripped! Sambo has him by the leg and is dragging him out. Now they are all wrestling on the floor and the ring is empty. The crowd are joining in.

(Continued on next page.....)

~~~~~

Anecdotes we have known and loved No.389:-This one came our way recently: self-styled solicitor and self-confessed Labore councillor Michael Foster was at a national Labore conference some time back, rubbing shoulders with other party luminaries, when he came upon an officer of the Special Branch. When our Mikey announced that he was from Hastings, this cop then uttered something along the lines of "Oh yes, that's where Poison Pen comes from". Fame at last!



School-book racism continued from previous page.....

It's a fantastic sight, and the bell rings. Nobody cares. The bell goes for the start of the next round and there's still nobody in the ring. It's all over. The M.C. is declaring a no-contest. Well, that is the best all-action no-contest I've ever witnessed!"

Given that a senior policeman can refer publicly to "our coloured brethren, the nig-nogs" and a government minister talk contemptuously of "bongo-bongo land" it is perhaps not as surprising as it should be that a passage like this could appear in a book first published only twenty years ago. There is little need to spell out the meaning of the underlying assumptions and prejudices but the sectarian attack on Islam is especially noteworthy. Is there anything more ridiculous about the prostration of the Muslim than there is about the kneeling and clasped hands of the Christian? The crude alliteration of "Zombie the Xulu" is indicative of the racist assumption that there need not be any differentiation between certain voodoo-practising rural blacks in Haiti and a black tribe of southern Africa.

There is another example of racism, of a more benign, patronising kind, a little earlier in the book. Chapter 12 is introduced by a short extract from Gerald Durrell's book "The Bafut Beagles". (Durrell is the man who for years has been kidnapping animals from their wild habitats in Africa and Latin America with the supposed aim of "preserving" them by breeding in zoo conditions in Jersey.)

The passage describes an open-air market in an African village, the "colourful" nature of the scene being emphasised. There is no mention in the piece or by the text-book authors of which country we are in, but only a reference to "Hausa tribesmen". Durrell relates how he set up his camera (without even the thought occurring to him of asking his prospective subjects for their permission) when, to his surprise, the villagers started fleeing in panic. He was surprised because, in his experience, Africans everywhere just loved being photographed, and of course he assumed they were all the same in this respect (and in most other respects?). He tells how he asked a by-stander the reason for the panic and was told that the villagers feared that a piece of each of their souls would be "stolen" by Durrell's capturing their image on film. Durrell found this hilarious, and a story well worth re-telling; neither then nor later was he worried by the thought that he had been the cause of real fear and apprehension. I mean, it's not as if any white European has ever held a deeply felt belief in some silly superstition, is it? In their list of questions testing memory of this passage, the authors of "Mastery of English" express no criticism of Durrell's attitudes.

In chapter 13, Yglesias and Newnham decide it's time to analyse a sentence-- you know, subject and predicate and all that. And which sentence, boys and girls, out of all possible sentences, do you think they've chosen? Yes, you've guessed: "Ten Ancient British wives nagged unnecessarily". I bet they did. That's women for you, throughout history. Those poor Ancient British husbands! I hope a refuge was set up for them. "What have the Romans ever done for us? Well, they introduced social services"....

It's nice to know that the secondary school pupils of Hastings are being carefully prepared for life in a society which supposedly regards racial and sex equality as ideals worth working towards, isn't it?

Tim.



ONGOING SITUATIONS, ADS, EVENTS AND NON-EVENTS.....

Up-and-coming thingies: The two people nicked by the local constabulary for dishing out anti-meat leaflets outside a local butcher's towards the end of last year will be appearing at Hastings Magistrates Court on Tuesday 5th March, 10:30am. Come and support them in their struggle for truth, freedom, justice and all those other things which we all know don't really exist..... Oh, and by the way, a big HI! to the Rye butcher who's such a BIG FAN of Poison Pen, and does an ecstatic boogie every time one passes his way. Better watch that blood pressure though!

On Wednesday 6th March, there's intended to be a mass picket on Parliament in support of the miners. We hope to have transport going, so see us if you want to go.

On Friday 8th March at the Pig in Paradise/Palace Bars, there's a thingy to celebrate International Women's Day, with local women presenting music, songs, poetry etc. Admission's free and I suppose it starts about 8pm or so.

Then on Saturday 16th March there's a meeting of the South-East @ Federation, formed recently at a meeting in Maidstone (see P.P. of a few weeks back for the report). It'll be held at the Unemployed Centre at 2:30pm. Everyone welcome except for the Special Branch...on second thoughts, if they want to come, we could all have a good laugh for a couple of minutes playing 'Spot-the-Cop'!

An appeal: does, perchance, anyone know them, or do they themselves read P.P., cos we'd like to hear the real story of the people given the boot from Doreen-Karen-Alun-Wobbly-Gut-Tory-Scumbag-Thornton's concentration camp. Please get in touch if you can help out on this one.

By the way, the recent jumble sale at the Blind Centre in aid of Ethiopia raised over £100! Well done! And thanks in advance to everyone who's helped with our jumble sale for the miners tonight.

Cheers also to the contributors to this week's Poison Pen. Don't forget we're always after articles, news, comment etc for inclusion in P.P. Don't be shy! Either write to us c/o Hastings Free Press, 92 London Road, St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex, or bring 'em along to one of our regular meetings, held in the Palace Bars every Monday evening at 9:15.

Poison Pen was typed by melita, & Steve did the proof-reading, so blame him for any toping nitsakes. P&P by Hastings Free Press.

Hmmm....I think I neglected to say that the next meeting of the Animal Rights Group is on Wednesday 6th March, 7:30pm, Friends Meeting House, South Terrace. We should also have Ronnie Lee of the Animal Liberation Front down to speak just as soon as I get round to phoning him.....

can't think of anything else to say.....  
y.



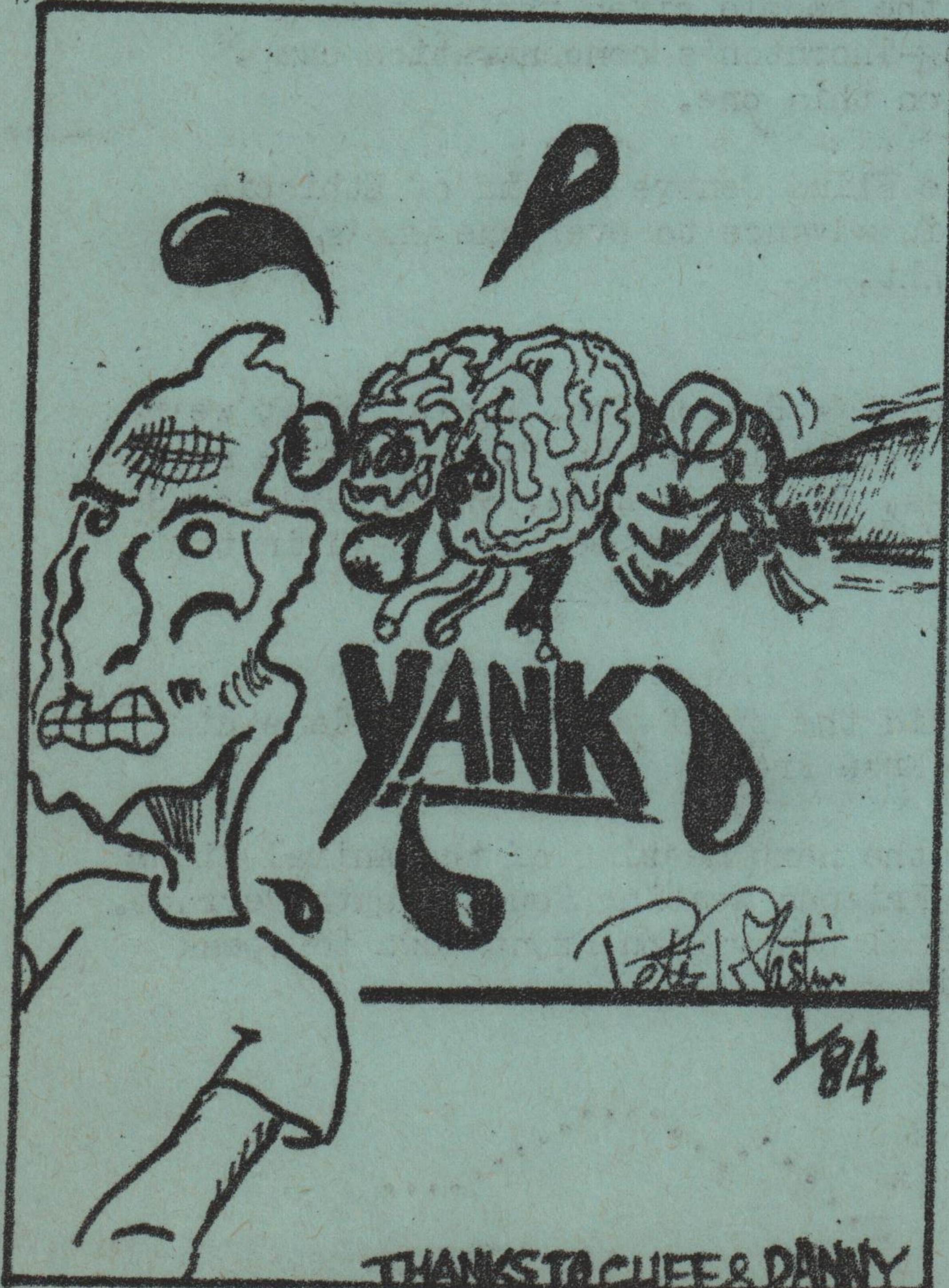
# FASHION BOMB

© FASHION 1984 MAD PETE MARTIN

HEY MY PLAITS  
GETTING GOOD



I HATE THAT STUPID FASHION  
TAILS ON THEIR BRAINS



THANKS TO CLIFF & DANNY  
(I THINK?)

SEE WHAT I MEAN??



BOMB