

REVIEW:

THE BURNING GLASS  
(Produced by The Players in April)

The most interesting part of this play is the long preface called "on Power over Nature", in which Charles Morgan discusses at some length this disquieting subject, and also enlarges on Christopher Terriford's reaction to his discovery of the Burning Glass. After all this it is not made clear why, after weeks of struggling with his conscience, he then decides to impart his discovery (which he himself described as "devilish") for purposes of war only, instead of suppressing it altogether.

It is a pity that the play is not more credible, for the subject is of vital interest and importance. But a play which begins "So be it" (and this phrase is used three times during the play) strikes a false note from which it never recovers. In a recent review of Charles Morgan's new novel "Challenge to Venus", the Daily Telegraph critic writes:- "there is also a new quality, namely a sense of humour - it humanises the whole book". The Burning Glass needs this quality.

The dialogue is pompous and over-complicated - what mother whose son has been abducted by the enemy would thus urge her daughter-in-law to ring up the police:- "do not hesitate. Act."? This preoccupation with the enemy gives a rather sinister aspect to the play. The time is now - not war-time - this is a serious play. Who then is this enemy which dominates the whole play? Stripped of its high-brow trappings this would be an excellent thriller; and would then make sense.

The set was pleasant to look at, except for the rather fussy woodwork decor all round the bookcases in the library. The raised window alcove was excellent, giving both height and grace to the stage - a slight drawback being that people entering from the garden had somewhat of a struggle to clamber in between the "sky" and the steps. The mirror, brass candlesticks and red tulips made a pleasant group over the fireplace, but were only visible to part of the audience. This was a serious drawback, since the mirror played an important part in Act III when Tony took the poison. The piano on the other side couldn't be seen at all. A beautiful red chair held the eye in the middle of the stage.

The producer, John Owen, had created an excellent team of players; and after a rather slow start the play gradually gathered momentum. This was a well planned and very successful production.

Roland Wedgewood convinced us of Christopher's struggle with his conscience; and with more life in his voice could have carried us further with him. Eileen Hazell made an excellent impression in her first big part. She had some dramatic moments in Act III, but in repose was apt to lose contact with the play at times; whereas Eileen Vernon who, as Lady Terriford, sat on the window seat in Act II in a lovely purple dress (a pleasant focus for the eye) with nothing to say for half an hour, was yet always part of the action.

Ferdie Hazell as the Prime Minister stole all the thunder as soon as he appeared. What a delightful P.M! We could surely do with one like him! His manner was charming, he had speed, and his long speech on good and evil was beautifully delivered and impressive.

Eileen Vernon succeeded brilliantly in putting over the tough proposition of Lady Terriford - conventional, full of snobbish chatter, a tiresome stage mother-in-law. She made us not only believe in her, but actually like her, reminiscences and all. But why the disfiguring wig? Lady Terriford was only 59, not 79!

Eric Shearer made of Lord Henry a sour, frigid, slightly sinister figure - disappointed in office, perhaps? His diction was excellent, and as always he made a real character of his part.

Paul Reichmann as Gerry Hardlip was a full-blooded melodramatic villain; a sort of Rudolph Rassendyll gone bad; and Tony Lack (Keith Kirby) took his poison and his final exit very convincingly. (Was it coincidence that the two ladies both wore black for this scene?).

Eric Newton in a tiny part as Inspector Wigg brought a refreshing breath of normality into the play.

Joyce Cook

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR (1)

Many of us have felt a growing concern about the proposed testing of the H-bomb on Christmas Island. So a meeting was called, representative of various organisations in the district.

We decided to draw up a petition of protest against both the testing and the making of nuclear weapons.

This petition was displayed in Jordans Library, the Jordans Hostel, Friends' Meeting House, various shops and several Churches.

As Secretary of Jordans and Seer Green Peace Group I wrote to our M.P. asking his views on the tests, and also letters to three local papers asking if people interested would send to our Peace Group for petitions. We have had quite an encouraging response and many signatures.

May I urge all who feel a concern about the testing of these nuclear weapons to do something about it. Either write to the Prime Minister or your M.P., letters of protest to the papers and obtaining signatures on petition forms. I shall be very pleased to send a form to anyone, if they will write for one.

Mary Spencer - Sec. Jordans & Seer Green Peace Group.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR (2)

Midvale,  
Jordans.

Dear Editor,

We in Jordans are accustomed to excellent stage sets to our plays, and in the last play "The Burning Glass" Robert Mabon designed and painted most delightful scenery and I would like to offer my congratulations to Mr. Mabon for upholding the village tradition in Jordans Players so successfully.

Yours,  
Doris M. Newton.

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===== A PROTEST! AND A TRUE STORY =====

I was wounded to my very last 'cc', when I realised that I had been omitted from that most interesting article on old cars by Giles Cooper.

I was introduced to this village by my late mistresses, Mrs. Glendenning and Miss Vaughan whom I served loyally in a

most ladylike and sedate manner as befitted my 13 years. In 1947 I was sold to the present owner-occupier of 'Covers', having accomplished a meagre 1800 miles.

It was from this date that my renowned breed was challenged, not once but many times in widely differing capacities. I am very proud to say that I never let my stable down. I am able to state this fact largely through the first class treatment I received from 'Doctor' George Morallee and from the careful driving of my lady and in spite of the consistent insistent and irritating attitude of her backseat driver.

I remember so well in Jan. '47 transporting goods and chattels, all my owners' worldly possessions from Christow Cottage to their motor cruiser 'Wendy II' moored at Shepperton opposite 'The Ship' and being bogged down almost to my axles on the flooded bank. I stayed through the the rest of that winter under a tarpaulin in the lee of Kenneth Gibbs' boatshed and came to no harm.

Later that summer we moved back to Jordans to 'Little Haven' to await the arrival of the Young 'un. I proudly carried that child Nicolette as my own especial burden all through the years giving her comfort and security whatever the weather and she was never sick through me but once, and that was when my silencer bust!

I was given a home in the Morgans' cosy garage when the family moved to 'Bridle Way' and it was during this period that my vocabulary was much enriched, especially during the cold weather when I consistently refused to start.

The summer of 1952 remains fixed firmly in my memory, for my adventurous family now established at 'Covers' planned and achieved, almost entirely through me, a journey of over 1200 miles in a little under three weeks carrying everything bar the kitchen sink for this touring-camping-holiday. It was a case of 'Much in and on little'. My 'Portarack' helped to spread my burden admirably, all the hard angular objects neatly packed on top of two 2 in. thick Sorbo type cushions which were covered in gay material by my mistress. They at one time formed the seats in an old omnibus and cost 2/6d each. An excellent purchase providing a first class shock absorber and a bed for my master at night.

When camps were pitched, quite a ticklish operation, I formed one side, a small tent another and a large orange awning was stretched out from my roof-rack to guyed bamboo 6 ft. rods to form a roof. Beneath this, the folding Marmet pram (oh yes! they had to take it!) with hood raised allowed the bairn to

sleep soundly every night whatever the weather. It was to be expected of course, that all this, together with the inevitable domestic equipment, caused passers by to stare in a furtive manner and to warn their children with a whispered "Gypsies! come away my dears."

Arrochar at the top of Lomond marked the northern limit of our journey, camping each night, by the wayside, in woods on windy moorlands and on lake shore and seashore. I well remember on our return journey watching the tide (at 3 a.m. bang on the seashore at Troon on the Ayrshire coast) creep to within two yards of the camp before retreating. I remember also at our camp among the bracken-covered dunes near Warkworth being roused one early morning by the whine of bullets from a rifle fired over our camp by an irate caravan dweller who insisted that we were trespassing and chose that way to tell us. Nothing has pleased or excited me more than witnessing the way in which my very angry master, who was enjoying his early morning 'smoke' in the bracken, dealt with this assault. My wheels have been parked in the most select and inaccessible places and I take my bonnet off to the driver, my mistress, who did this without injury to me.

Not satisfied with this sort of jaunt it was decided that I should be able the following year to tow a small County Tent Trailer to Devon and Cornwall. Dr. George Morallee was approached and agreed the project should prove successful. He strengthened my chassis, fitted a substantial tow-bar and tuned my engine. The trailer was delivered prior to the commencement of the journey much to the amusement of the wits of Jordans who were sure that we were setting up an ice cream business!

This journey was accomplished without mishap and with great pleasure after learning to avoid the long steep coastal roads where my master lightened my load by hopping out at critical stages and ran alongside puffing and blowing mallet in hand ready to jam it under the rear wheel if the need arose!

A light well-sprung trailer and an American tent of excellent design both kindly and often lent by my master's brother were used to great advantage on our recent journey to North Wales in the wet summer of '56.

Fifty-two thousand miles to my credit attained without complaint and often with joyous abandon. I have given excellent service as is expected from careful maintenance and now I am

so sad to have to transfer my loyalty to another for I have been remarkably happy and much honest praise has been my reward. Now a pre-war Lanchester of greater power has taken my place. A good car, but will that do nearly 40 miles to the gallon? Will it get them to the lovely almost inaccessible beauty spots so quiet and so secluded. I hope so but I doubt it. Can that car be parked on a sixpence? However, I accept the change and will always try to emulate 'Barkis'.

So you see Giles Cooper, I had to tell you these things and how I felt. Twenty four years old but not dead yet by a long chalk. I'll see some of these modern double-enders on the scrap-heap yet.

Nicko. Austin 7. YY 1142.

(The manuscript of this article, somewhat tyre-marked and oil-smearred, was handed to the Editor by Mr. N. Carpenter. - Ed.).

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### C U M B R I A N R U R A L I T Y

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"When one sees the hills it's going to rain and when one can't it's raining" goes the old adage up here, which last summer proved to be very true. And we are in an excellent position to forecast the weather - to the south lie the Lakeland Hills with the imposing outline of Skiddaw dominating the view - to the east the rounded humps of the Pennines and northwards the blue ranges of Scottish Lowlands separated by a silver line, the Solway.

Our cottage is about 200 years old and is typical of the many cottages in villages near the Solway. Built of stone and clay it rests on enormous boulders which jut into the sitting room and out into the garden. The slate roof is supported by enormous tree trunks, a reminder of olden times when young couples used to build the framework of their cottages and after the wedding ceremony the guests would come armed with material and help to build the rest. On completion the newly married couple held a belated reception. The cottage used to be a farmhouse. There still remain meat hooks in the kitchen ceiling. Red flagstones pave the floor and solid stone shelves line the walls of the larder, formerly the dairy. We are indeed well barricaded - wire fencing keeps sheep from roaming the front garden and iron bars prevent cows from looking in at the kitchen window.



It is amazing how soon one becomes used to the livestock which is inherited with a cottage. There is always a collection of hard-backed black beetles, earwigs and woodlice to be found under the carpet. Spiders and Daddy long legs come out of the walls and even baby frogs squeeze under the front door. One learns to live with all these creatures, but not with mice and never with rats. Perhaps one will be sitting peacefully by the fire when one hears a faint but definite scratch. Petrified one opens a cupboard door and there is a little wiry tail hanging down. Hastily one closes the cupboard, and even more hastily one procures a cat. Or perhaps at night one is woken by a series of tremendous crashes. One sits up in horror only to relax again realising the rats are running races in the loft - but surely this must be their gymkhana.

Ours is a small but flourishing farming village of 100 people typical of many of the small 'border' villages. It dates back to the Roman era and records recall the times when it was surrounded by a rampart and ditch; and chains were nightly fastened across the road for a defence in the time of border raids.

Although we have no shop - the nearest little village store is three miles away and one has very carefully to make out a shopping list on each marketing day - we do boast of a new village hall, a school, a State Owned Public House, a garage, a P.O. and a bus. (The bus deserves a story of its own).\* The new brick-built V.H. with its stage, central heating, sprung floor, small side lecture room, beautiful velvet curtains and floral china is the envy of all the surrounding villages, who hire it on many occasions. But we did have a shop run by a very old lady who used to store her sugar and soap together and sell pre-war tinned food. She used to make her fortune by selling her wares trotting round the countryside in a pony and trap, producing cigarettes absolutely flattened after their journey under her buxom figure (She had no licence).

The villages are extremely friendly and all loneliness is soon banished. The women appear highly domesticated. They are hardworking and practical, having little social life apart from perhaps a weekly visit to the cinema or the monthly W.I. Every day apparently, cottages are cleaned from top to toe, mats brushed and windows polished. The first fine week in spring, cleaning begins in earnest and the last fine week in autumn finds them once again 'backend cleaning'. A whole day

\* And received it in our last issue. Ed.

is devoted to washing. Every house has a separate wash house where the women bend double over their great dolly tubs; yet another day to baking, indeed one is not considered a housewife unless one makes one's own pickles and jam and bakes one's own bread. All are attired in enormous unflattering aprons and shod with wooden clogs which clatter over the cobbles, and are only dispensed with on Sundays.

Every village has a few remarkable characters and ours is no exception. At the end of the village in a 2-roomed cottage overlooking the Lakeland hills, lives Betsy, a kind motherly old soul with a good word for everyone but incredibly dirty and lazy. The living room is completely full of pictures and photographs, ornaments and knick-knacks. Great-grandfather peeps up, from behind two elaborate candlesticks and a whole pile of magazines and newspapers, to great grandmother, half hidden behind a clump of flowers in a jam jar, while sisters, aunts, and uncles look on from other walls. The whole is dominated by an enormous black range from which the frying pan and stew pot are never absent, suspended over a large fire on an even larger pile of ashes which I swear have never been removed. The other day the end of a large tree trunk was pushed in the fire, the opposite end resting on a chair. As it burned so the chair was moved nearer.

At the other end lives Alice who is always at the door when one walks by asking where and why you're going. An old black beret never leaves her nodding head. They say during the war the village lads sprang on her, tying her up for a joke during an air raid and she, poor soul, thinking the Germans had arrived, has nodded her head in fright ever since.

In between lives Mother Jones who knows everything about everyone in the village but who after being with for five minutes imparts her whole life history on her unsuspecting victim's ear; Mrs. Brown widely renowned for her plate cakes and her rum butter; Old Jim who walks his little grandson daily up and down the village gleaning knowledge from one door and imparting it at the next except on Thursdays when it's P.O. first stop to collect his pension ...

And surrounding everything and everyone are endless stretches of fields and meadows and winding lanes - on and on to the hills. Heather and bilberries, fields of mushrooms, blackberries and nuts - all are in abundance, waiting to be gathered. As the evening draws in one gazes overhead to watch the birds, occasion-



ally geese and sometimes swans, return from their day in the Pennines to the nests on the Solway.

When one leaves the quiet villages with their happy healthy placid inhabitants and arrives in a busy, smoke-grimed city one is jolted out of one's dream and watches in amazement the hive of industry and the constant rushing of pale, care-worn folk\* hither and thither like bees. Is it all necessary?

Margaret Redpath

\*(Contributor's housekeeping money supplied by pale, care worn husband employed in hive of industry! - D.R.).

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AN ANECDOTE, AS AN ADMONITION AGAINST AMOROUS ADVENTURE.

Amy Atkinson, an attractively attired airwoman, arrived at Amersham Airport amid applause. After arranging all appointments and activities Amy ambled around Amersham.

After ages and ages another aeroplane appeared at an adjacent airstrip.

Algernon Astor, an able-bodied and affable American, an albino and ambi-dextrous, alighted and approached Amy, ardently affirming attraction and adoration.

"Away, aggravating ass!" abused Amy, awfully agitated and all a-tremble.

Algernon, aghast, advanced again, all agog, affectionately asserting "Angelic Amy", and adding as an afterthought "Angels are always alluring".

Amy, absolutely antipathetic and arrogant, angrily abandoned Amersham Airport. Algernon, altogether appalled at Amy's attitude, abused all airwomen and also (alas and alack) abjured all amorous affairs afterwards.

Leila Sparkes.

(Readers are invited to attempt a similar fantasy on the letter T. - Ed.).

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GOOD NEWS FROM THE NORTH

"Undetected crime is now decreasing" - Headline, Cumberland News.

I N D E P E N D E N C E   D A Y ,   G H A N A

(The following is an extract from a letter, written from Takoradi on March 13th).

The transformation from Gold Coast to Ghana went off in a most orderly and quiet manner. All the little anxieties that we felt as the 6th drew near were baseless. However, most of the white population kept very much out of sight. We didn't!

On Tuesday night at midnight all the ships in the harbour sounded their sirens, the airport its siren, the churches their bells, etc. On Wednesday morning we went down into the town armed with cine and still cameras and took a lot of pictures of a procession of school-children and scouts all with little Ghana flags which they wagged as they sang about freedom, Ghana and Karame Nkrumah. There was a brass band marching with them and their teachers accompanied their respective classes. They were followed by hundreds of mammies all dressed in white head-gear, white cloths with photogravure prints of Karame Nkrumah all over the cloth, and their faces whitened with whitish fuller's earth (dug locally) mixed with water. This last has something symbolical to do with freedom. Several mammies caught me as I filmed and plastered it on my legs and arms. Several insisted on shaking hands with me and the whole procession would mark time to give me a chance to wind my camera so as to get them! I saw hardly any other white people about.

On Thursday we saw (and heard) the local Asafa companies collecting at the roundabout below the bungalow. Asafa companies are irregulars - a sort of local H.G. where you provide your own muzzle-loading musket. The procession was of two local chieftains and several Asafa companies. Each had a banner and a flag which was twirled around and swept across the road as they marched. There were several bands and a tumbler in a gold cloth. Every so often they would stop to permit the tumbler to tumble or some others to do a dance. They kept firing their muskets in the air and minor tussles ensued when one man made the men in front jump by firing too close over their heads.

The chiefs sat on palanquins borne by relays of men on their heads. They had beautifully coloured umbrellas over them which the holder twirled round and pumped up and down in the air. Hordes of mammies crowded round them flapping cloths at them to keep them cool. Even the palanquin bearers jigged up and down

and it was a wonder that the chiefs were able to maintain their "regal" dignity.

Having filmed them here we dashed round to get in front of the slow-moving procession again. This time I left the family plus two little friends beside the road and went up on to the balcony of an African house. Pat and the children were besieged by friendly Africans. They were smeared with "freedom" white. Nothing like having four children to win the esteem of the Africans.

I was smeared with white again. Africans would stop and point and say questioningly "Uh, Uh?" in mock serious tone. "That's freedom", I'd say, and they'd laugh and slap me on the shoulders or pat me wherever they could. The mummies got really saucy and would deliver smacks on my bottom, jostle me or make even more familiar attacks upon my modesty. So many wanted me to photograph them and their piccaninnies that I had to pretend to, so as not to give offence.

Saturday and Sunday were if anything gayer than "Independence" (pronounce "In-dee-pen-dance"). There was one party which started early on Saturday afternoon and went on right through the night until 7 a.m. on Sunday. We know, because the drumming and the singing woke us several times.

Peter Newton

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#### JORDANS YOUTH HOSTEL

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Jordans Youth Hostel, that most elusive place which plays hide-and-seek with so many hostellers, is situated, as many 'locals' know, on the hill overlooking The Meeting House. A cyclist recently passed through Denham about 7 o'clock in the evening, on his first visit to the Hostel, and arrived here three hours later, having ridden up and down almost every lane in the district, finally approaching via Beaconsfield.

During the immediate post-war years the Youth Hostels Association membership increased enormously. In order to give the members the accommodation required, large country houses, mansions, etc. were bought or borrowed and at these one can spend a night in comfort and enjoy prepared meals and, sometimes, even a bath. Whilst serving a most useful purpose

these large hostels do not meet with the approval of all hostellers. A large number prefer the small primitive type of hostel and to them 'Jordans is a Gem' - a simple timber building, situated amongst trees, where the city dweller can sleep at ground level and wake to the many strange sounds of nature - the pattering of squirrels' feet on the roof - the call of birds, or the cows in the distant fields - all sounds which delight the unaccustomed ear. Yes, it's a simple little hostel, and judging by the low state of Y.H.A. finance it will remain a simple place for years to come.

Amongst the all-the-year-round hostellers, it is well known that one needs to 'book up' well in advance to get into Jordans Youth Hostel on Saturday nights during the winter. These keen members ranging from about 14 to 30 years of age enjoy a weekend walking or cycling in any kind of weather, and it is at this time of the year that many are most willing to do building maintenance, decorating, gardening work, etc. Their enthusiasm is unlimited, and it must be a source of wonder to many parents that their children, who would grumble at the thought of sweeping out the garage at home, will be delighted to spend the day up a ladder washing whitewash from a ceiling at a hostel.

From Easter onwards many new faces appear at the hostel, usually at week-ends, but gradually, as summer approaches and summer holidays commence we get more and more visitors arriving mid-week until by August we are full up every night. No longer do we see the well known faces of the winter hostellers, who by now are our personal friends. They are away 'discovering' new counties and countries, and the following winter will, no doubt, be sitting at 'Jordans' telling of their summer adventures, or showing colour slides of the exciting foreign countries they have visited.

The midsummer hostellers, although usually strangers to us, are nevertheless most interesting. They are usually on a walking or cycling tour and seldom stay more than one night. Some are young and experiencing the first great thrill of travelling independently, and without parental guidance. They are usually rather shy, and oh, so keen to do everything the right way. Others are more experienced and perhaps have come from Ireland or Scotland to visit London. No doubt the most confident of our visitors are from the continental countries. Many of them arrive in England with very little money, but with such enthusiasm and eagerness to see everything, that by hook-or-by-crook,

and often going hungry, they see more of the British Isles in a month than many people see in a lifetime.

Why do the Germans want to go to Scotland? So often during the summer they bustle into our little Common Room carrying a large rucksack and wearing very short leather shorts. One gets the impression that they haven't stopped rushing since they stepped off the gangway, and so often the opening phrase is - "Which way for Schot-land"? A variation last summer was the Finnish girl who asked "Can you tell please, the best footpath for Bristol"?

An analysis of last year's records show that we had 2525 visitors who stayed overnight. From abroad came 100 Germans, 56 Danish, 46 Dutch, 24 from U.S.A., 20 French, a few from most other countries, and a great many from the British Empire.

All these, mostly young, people have been lucky enough to find out about the Youth Hostels Association, the objects of which are:-

To help all, especially young people of limited means, to a greater knowledge, love and care of the countryside, particularly by providing hostels or other simple accomodation for them in their travels, and thus to promote their health, rest, and education!

Many older members cannot but regret that the Association's rather limited funds will not permit large scale publicity. Few children, or parents, know that a person under the age of 16 can spend a night at a Youth Hostel for 1/3d or that for 7/6d one can have bed, breakfast, lunch packet and supper at most hostels.

The Wardens

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IT DEPENDS WHAT YOU MEAN ...

"It is explained that, for convenience and brevity, the term Communist is used to cover Communist and Fascist alike".

Mr. Powell, Financial Secretary to the Treasury.

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