

# FANFAROE

CHRISTMAS 1943



VOL. I

NO. 5

THE FAROE ISLANDS FORCE MAGAZINE

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John W. Above: April. 1944.

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THE FAROE ISLANDS FORCE MAGAZINE

Literary Editor: Kenneth Williamson. Art Editor: Owen P. A. Evans.  
Advertisement Manager: Jack Kampmann. Financial Adviser: G. L. Billson.

Vol. 1, No. 5

Christmas 1943

CONTENTS

Editorial, page 2; Announcement, page 23.

Articles

	Page
A Frenchman in the Faroes, by F. Scarfe .....	5
The Faroe House, by Kenneth Williamson .....	9
Our Bungalow, by H. T. Pinkerton .....	15
Grindaboð, by R. L. Lewelyn Collyer .....	17
Jól, by Hans A. Djurhuus .....	21

Humorous Sketches

Piscatorial Paradise, by "G. A. W." .....	7
Such Sweet Sorrow ... by J. D. Foster .....	22
"The Softness of Your Arms ..." by H. T. Pinkerton	24
An Economical View of Smoking, by W. H. Peckitt	25

Poems

Víðoy, translated from the Faroese of Chr. Matras	8
Summeníght, translated from the Faroese of Hans A. Djurhuus .....	8
"Farewell!" Faroes, by Eric S. Fellows .....	16
The Lanely Fisher, in Scottish dialect by R. McLennan	16
Yesterday's Thoughts, by J. Howard .....	26

Photographs

Tórshavn Scenes on pages 9, 11, 12, 13 and 14  
photographed by J. Brooke.

Line Illustrations

Cover and drawings on pages 4, 6, 17, 23 and 26 by  
Owen P. A. Evans and drawings on pages 19 and 24  
by Jack Kampmann.

We have pleasure in wishing our Advertisers, Contributors, Readers  
and Printers a very happy Christmas and a  
Successful New Year in 1944

## EDITORIAL . . .

THIS Christmas issue of FANFAROE, the fifth since the inception of the Faroe Islands Force magazine, brings Volume I to a close. If you possess all five copies you are lucky. In lieu of a medal for Sub-Arctic Service you may have them bound in buckram with gilt lettering, red calf, half-calf (or even *grind* for all we care) . . . after the war!

We regret having lost the services of one of the founder-members of our voluntary staff, R. D. Ball, M.B.E. The exigencies of war have taken him to theatres new, and wherever he goes he is assured of our best wishes for a successful future. Not only was his advice on monetary matters and the handling of accounts of very great value, but his interest and encouragement at all times will not readily be forgotten. It is a pleasure to record our thanks for such willing co-operation.

With the first number of Volume II we shall commence a new era and the magazine will be conducted on rather different lines. Editorial policy will continue to demand a good standard of literary and artistic merit in contributions, and we are prepared to consider the publication of work (in the English language, of course) by our Faroese friends as well as by members of the three services stationed here. As an incentive and encouragement we are offering prizes for the best contributions,—see the announcement on page 23. Should this attraction fail we can always retire to an enemy-occupied country and become an underground newspaper. These always seem to find no lack of contributions!

When each issue is published a panel of disinterested persons will be asked by the Editors to select the prizes winning items in each of the categories laid down in the announcement on page 23, and the results of the competition, with the names of the members of the panel, will be published in the succeeding issue of the magazine.

We await, almost with bated breath, the results of this change in policy. We hope it will awaken the latent talent and dormant Muses which we are sure exist in the Faroe Isles today, and enable us to make Volume II of FANFAROE an even more outstanding success than Volume I.

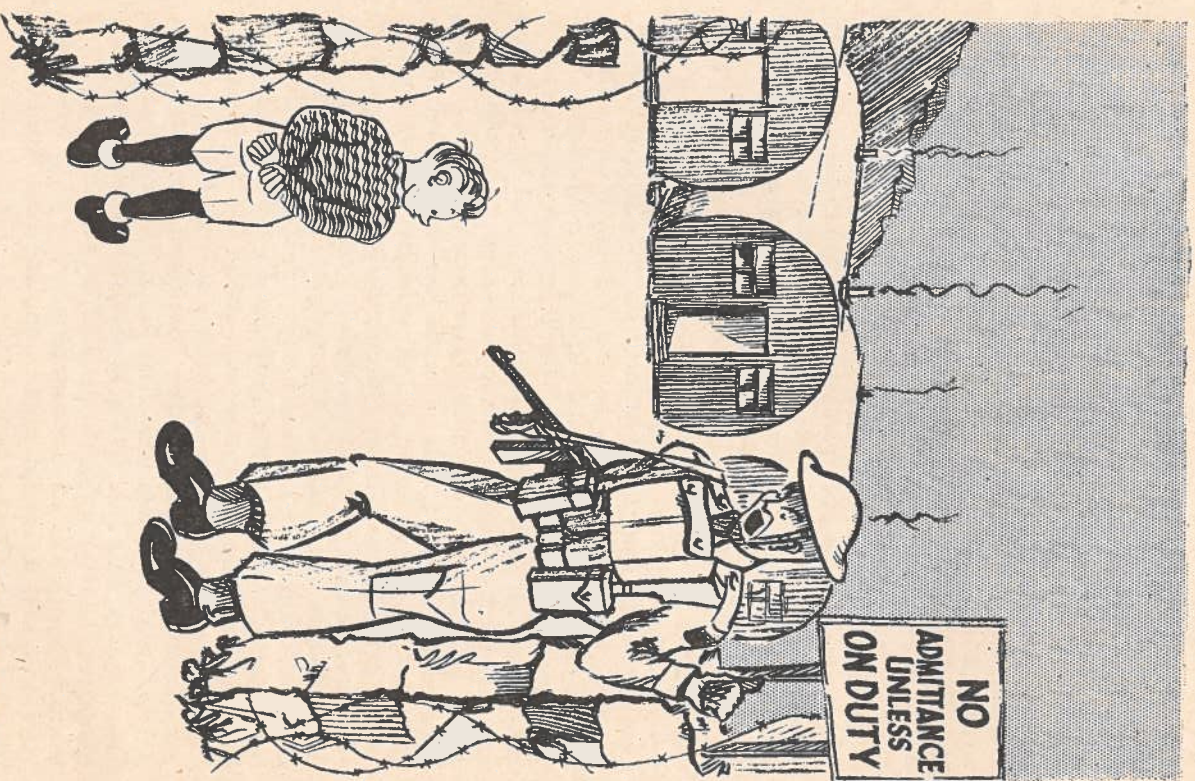
A feature of this issue is the appearance of work by

Faroese writers—English translations of short poems by Hans Andreas Djurhuus and Christian Matras, and some notes on Christmas celebrations in the Faroes, also by Hans A. Djurhuus. No prize is offered for an English translation of Robert McLennan's "The Lanely Fisher": it is a pity. The Lovat Scouts are not still with us, for there would then be no lack of interpreters. We also welcome the stirring account of a *grindadráp* by a British participant, R. L. Llewellyn-Collyer, for though we have printed similar accounts before, yet had the good fortune in the Force who have not as yet had the good fortune to witness this dramatic and spectacular event, and such an excellent description may serve to whet their appetites. We would like to see more articles dealing with Faroese life and customs, a subject of much value as so little is known about it in Britain. Our thanks are again due to the Editors of TAKE POST for sending us the short sketches by H. T. Pinkerton and J. D. Foster on pages 22 and 24.

Our cover-designer has again drawn vividly upon an imagination tempered and trained in the hard school of his two years' banishment to the Faroes. We wonder if any of our readers have tried "sparking"? We have. It is the sort of game that would doubtless appeal to racing motorists, T.T. riders and ski-enthusiasts, but for the ordinary mortal it is not to be recommended as a solo event unless he is desirous of leaving his ordinary mortal remains lying in the roadway. It is much better to leave one's *genta* to the manipulation of this deadly engine and sit on the seat in front, closing the eyes and praying as one has never prayed in one's life before (and may never have the chance to pray again!) There have been, and possibly still are, soldiers who actually enjoy this form of amusement, though possibly the propinquity of the fair pilot explains why: we knew one who used to hail the nearest "sparker" every time he came out of the Mess, as one would hail a taxi outside the Metropole, or a rickshaw outside whatever was the class hotel in Shanghai. But then he was an Orderly-Room Sergeant and very lazy; moreover, he was a Scotsman, and he said he would introduce "sparking" to Aberdeen—where, owing to its low running costs, it should prove popular—when he returned to the Insurance racket after the war.

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Drawing by O. P. A. Evans

"Can't you understand plain English?"

## *A Trenchman in the Faroes*

by *T. Scarle*

In 1901 M. Jean Charcot, son of the great pathologist, made his first trip to the Faroes. He again visited the islands in 1912, when he found an enormous increase in German trade and propaganda, and after the Great War returned almost annually. His impressions of these visits are to be found in his "Voyages aux Iles Féroé" published in 1934.

M. Charcot gives the following account of the founding of Tórshavn and the colonising of the islands. "It has been suggested that the Faroes were early visited by Norman (Norsemen) pirates who landed sheep to provide a victualling station; but usually their discovery is attributed to a Norwegian or Swedish pirate, named Flocke. In 861 Flocke found large numbers of sheep already on the islands. Professor C. C. Rafn's "Færeyinga Saga" tells how Grim Kamban, fleeing the tyranny of Harald Haarfager or Hártagrir (Harold Fairhair), landed with several families of Norwegian nobles and founded the town of Tórshavn, or Town of God Tór, in the ninth century."

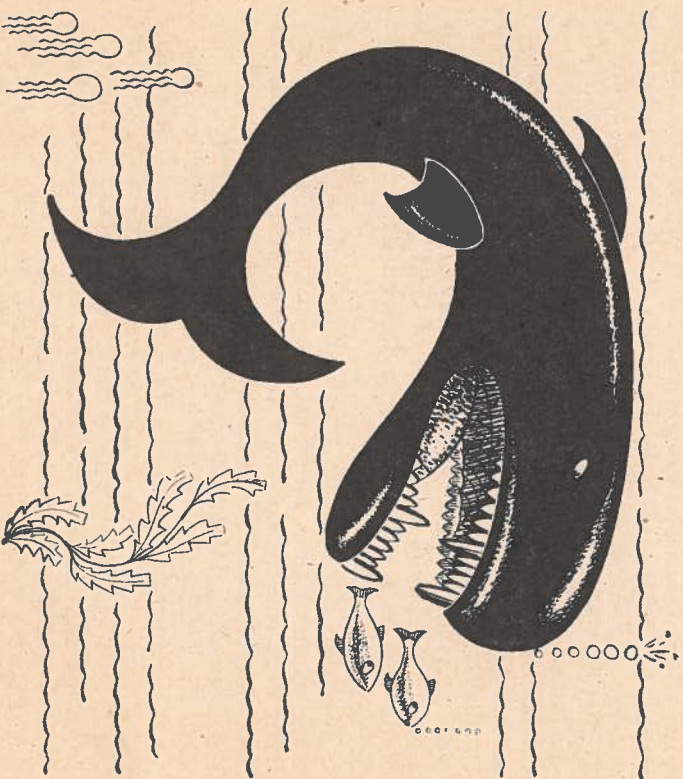
The early history of the Faroes is still shrouded in conjecture, and M. Charcot does not refer to the tradition according to which there were already Irish inhabitants (probably on Suðuroy) in the Faroes before the Norsemen arrived. These were probably Irish and Scottish monks, "Culdees" or "Comrades of God" (Irish *Céle Dé*), who were also to be found in Iceland before the Norse occupation in 1000 A. D.

Tórshavn has changed much since 1901. The first landmark to attract his attention, for instance, was the Tórshavn Fort, which has since been demolished to allow for port development. This Fort was built in 1550 by Magnus Heinason. Heinason was the son of a Norwegian who settled in the Faroes as a priest; as a youth he was wild, and very soon became a pirate of some renown. He fought the English and even Turks so well that the King of Denmark presented him with a corvette. He was at last captured by the English, who hanged him at Copenhagen in 1589. It must be admitted that English relations with the Faroes were not always very tactful. In 1803, says Charcot, an English frigate, flying the French flag, sailed into Tórshavn, destroyed the cannons in the Fort, and sailed

off with twenty-four Faroese fishermen as prisoners, whom they no doubt 'pressed' into the Navy.

There seems to have been much interchange between the Faroes, Orkneys, Shetlands and Hebrides in early times, but apart from the 1803 incident, the British left the Faroes alone until 1807. In 1807 the Faroes were occupied by the British, who stayed on for seven years. The islands were again left to their own devices in 1814, probably because they had little commercial attraction.

There is not space here to give a full account of Charcot's travels round the islands, but one or two points he mentions are of general interest. He tells how the catch of *grind* is divided: "A tenth of the catch is put aside and divided into three parts; one part is given to the church, the second to the clergy, and the third to the King. Of the remaining nine-tenths, one per cent is reserved for the schools, one per cent for the poor, and the remainder is shared among all those who took part in the fishing, even if they did no more than help to push a boat into the sea."



Drawing by O. P. A. Evans

"Don't look round now, but I believe we're being swallowed!"

## Piscatorial Paradise.

By G. A. W.

HERE are, I believe, two types of fishing, commonly referred to as "coarse" and "refined". Of the latter I know nothing, save that it appears to be a favourite sport, and even a fétish with certain Scotsmen here, who will cheerfully make long and arduous pilgrimages across mountains to little-known pools, murmuring as they go, "Nearer my rod to Theel!" These enthusiasts will discuss the relative merits of "Bloody Butchers" and "Jock Straps" for hours. Should one enquire how they fared the inevitable reply will be, "Well, actually I caught nothing, but it was simply wonderful there, — had several rises, but of course the wind wasn't really suitable." Wishing to take the line of least resistance, I determined to try the first method.

After bartering heatedly with a small Faroese boy who showed a reprehensible liking for cigarettes hardly in keeping with his tender years, I found myself in possession of a young telegraphpole which he assured me was, "Faroé rod — very good". To this he proceeded to tie an equal length of string, followed by a murderous looking hook, and then retired homewards happily smoking part of the purchase price. Further enquiries elicited the information that the local refuse dump was in great favour, if not flavour, as a suitable spot for tyros. And so, having dug up half the peat in the Faroes, I put both worms in a can and hid me hence with purposeful air.

I managed to reach comparatively clean but incredibly slippery rocks, where I immediately and forcibly discovered that the "Destiny which shapes our ends" had done little to provide mine with adequate protection against sudden and painful contact with terra firma. However, I completed the journey on all fours and joined the group of earnest fishermen already there.

From observation it was apparent that all one had to do was to bait the hook, drop it into the water and, on getting a bite, pull back on the rod and the fish would sail gracefully into one's hand, when it was easily persuaded to disgorge the hook. In other words, it was "a piece of cake!"

Alas, the rod, it transpired, was about as easy to control as a Faroese man celebrating Ólavssøku. However, after sundry Faroese boys had removed the hook from their, and subsequently my clothing, I finally managed to cajole it into the water.

Several uneventful minutes passed, and just as I was preparing to barter for some shellfish on which the boys were catching myriads of fish, the rod jerked violently in my hands. Mantfully controlling my excitement to the extent that I scarcely screamed at all, I heaved back mightily on the rod in imitation of the boys and a gleaming object shot through the air high over my head, detached itself from the hook, to land some fifty yards away, and cascaded gently back to its customary haunts.

Determined not to overdo it next time, I baited again, and almost at once had another bite. This time I heaved with caution, but nearly ruined the Faroé equivalent of the "Entente Cordiale" by hitting my neighbour a resounding blow in the face with a very damp fish. He took it remarkably well, however, and was soon induced to put away his knife.

I persevered to such an extent that pretty soon only my face suffered and I had a nice collection of fish, whilst the Faroese were so interested in my rapid prowess that they had given up fishing themselves and were watching my efforts from a respectful distance.

(Concluded on page 25)

Poems translated from the Faeroese . . .

### Víðoy

Sail, island, through the mist — now you are a ship  
And the mountain peaks are masts —  
You stand to the northward towards the vast world  
With your heights and valleys.

Foam froths from the stern by Enniberg  
And by Nanestanga the white wake spumes.  
Still you lie foremost in the fleet of islands,  
Where the angriest currents churn.

And now, look upwards to the mastheads,  
It lightens round clefts and crests  
And the fog rises now  
From the houses and mild sheltered meadows.

Rings of birds round stern and shoulder  
Revive the cliffs and stone heaps on the shores,  
And folk and farms and snipe-songs  
Are your rich cargo.

(Christian Matras)

### Summer-Night.

A dappled cow by the gate lows to go home;  
Bare-footed boys sail mussel-shells in the brook.

Dew falls on grass and reeds by streams and ponds  
And by the bogs and over the houses gnats are dancing.

A pied hen struts in the lane clucking and scratching  
And squints against the sloping staves of sunshine,  
Finding a little grain occasionally in the dust.  
A veil of mist drifts slowly over the hilltops.

The starlings dart singing among the grass roofs.  
An old man plods home with a peat-box on his back,  
And a little boy sets out seriously to meet him  
With a stick in his left hand, a bit of cake in the other.

A crow is calmly perching on the church spire  
Looking towards the west at the sky's changing colours.  
For gradually as the sun dips into the sea  
The clouds take yellow and crimson shades.

In the red hues of evening spurs and peaks glitter.  
You can feel everywhere the fresh odour of summer.  
Now the light fades, and the vast sea turns gray,  
And in a moment all is quiet as the sun sets.

(Hans A. Djurhuus)



## THE FAROE HOUSE

Pictures by F. BROOKE

By KENNETH WILLIAMSON

TORSHAVN has been described as a town of wood, concrete and corrugated iron, and so for the most part it is; but the description conveys an impression of cold, comfortless dwellings that is far from the truth. The town presents a totally different aspect to an English town or village; here bricks and mortar and slated roofs are practically unknown, and the fashion of house-building in rows, semi-detached pairs and garden "estates" has failed to impress the typically Scandinavian outlook of the people. The houses stand singly; they are usually wooden structures with a basement of stone, conforming to no established pattern or plan; so that each has individuality by virtue of shape and size and the bright colour of its walls.

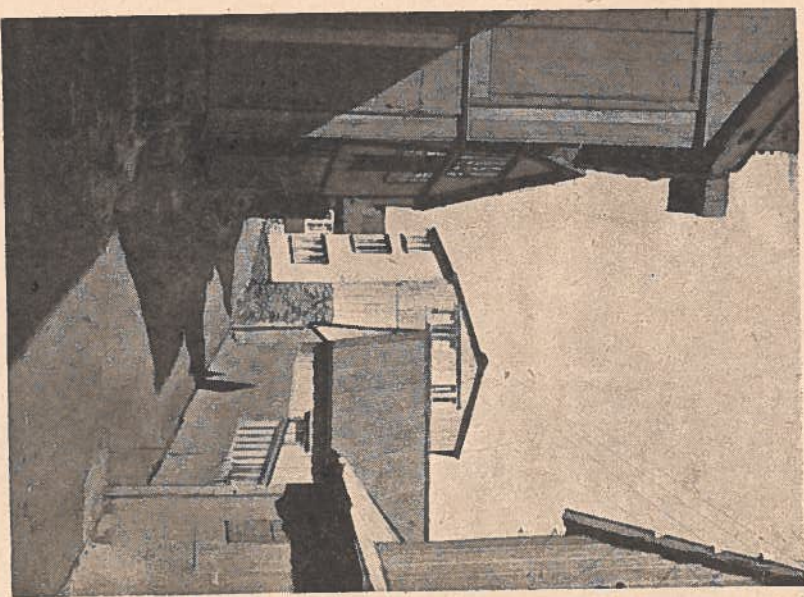
The older houses are small, some little more than cabins, and almost invariably their walls are covered with pitch as proofing against the weather; their roofs consist of sods on which the living grass flourishes no less than



in the fields. Sometimes the chimney is thatched, but more often it is of wood, or possibly of hand-made bricks. Many of the larger and more recent houses also have grass roofs and their walls are brightly painted green, yellow, red or brown, giving to the town a refreshingly picturesque appearance. Nowadays cement for the walls and corrugated iron sheets for the roof are replacing the older and more homely styles.

Inside, the houses are scrupulously clean, tidy and well (if simply) furnished, though the Englishman misses the lazy comfort of his home: no roaring coal-fire, no deep armchair by the fireside, nor mantel-shelf to rest one's weary feet upon! Large ornate stoves, burning peat or the poor quality Suðuroy coal, heat the rooms, and the armchair is replaced by a divan which often serves as a bed for the chance visitor. Next to the well-equipped kitchen is the *roykstova*, "smokeroom", whose name is a survival of the days when smoke from the open fire, seeking a way out through the hole in the roof, filled the room with a turfy smell and a thin fog, as it does in the more lowly homes of the Hebrides today. Next to the *roykstova* is the best room, the *glasstova* where visitors are entertained and the hard-working family "takes it easy" on a Sunday afternoon: again the name is a survival of earlier times, when it was the only room in the house to boast a window. The bedrooms today are in the loft, though formerly on the farms sleeping accommodation was provided by bunks built against the walls of the *roykstova*.

Almost every house has its small flight of steps leading to the kitchen door, and a little hallway at the top where muddy boots, wooden sabots or sea-boots are deposited before their owner steps inside. The steps are necessary, for the dwelling-house is often raised above the ground-level by the basalt walls of the basement. This cellar, *kjallart*, is as indispensable as the kitchen, for it is a storehouse of all the farming, fishing, birding and whaling gear without which the Faroeman could not live. It is in a corner of the *kjallara* that the cow is kept throughout the winter months,—and if the fact occasions any raising of the eyebrows, let it be remembered that until quite recently, in many parts of Celtic Britain, the cattle-byre was actually the lower portion of the dwelling, and at best was only separated from the family by a thin wooden screen. Keeping the cow below has its advantages,—one need only go down the ladder to milk her or give her

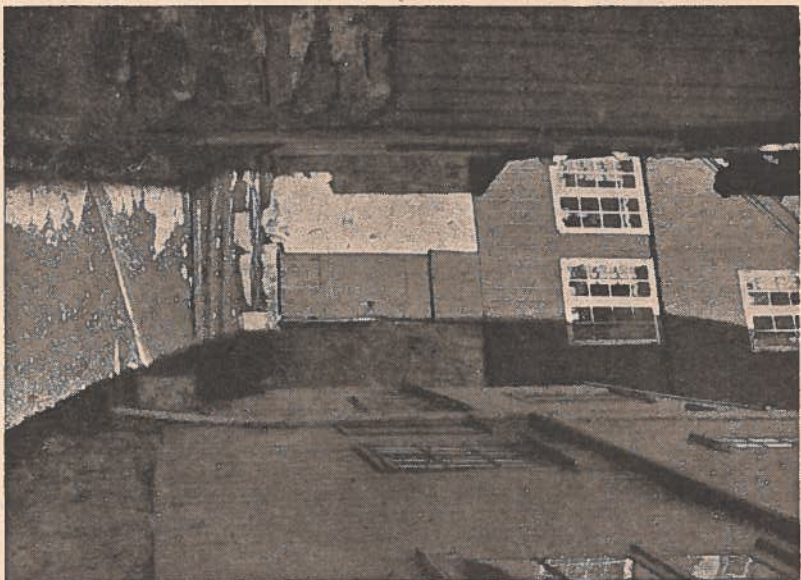


Street Scene

hay, and no matter how furious the elements one will return from duty warm and dry. One will be sure to spend a sleepless night, however, if Nature chooses the dark hours in which to bring her a calf! In another corner roost the hens, and the cock sounds the coming of the new day as vigorously as any alarm-clock summer and winter alike. And it is in the *kjallara* that the day's catch of fish or birds is cleaned and sorted, and the occasional sheep is butchered in the autumn and early winter months.

The Faroese—largely because they must—depend to a large degree on dried and salted food, and here is another use for the cellar in salting down birds, meat and fish against the hard winter months. Drying takes place in the open air, and a row of split cod and saithe and

Sunlight  
and  
Shadow

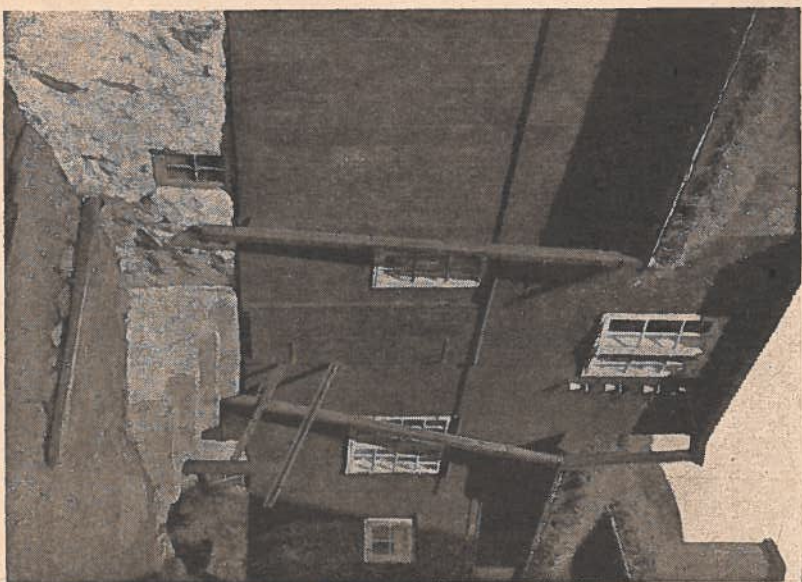


grind steaks suspended from a rod beneath the loft window, or ranged along the wall of the *hjallur*, is a very common sight. The *hjallur* is a small outhouse comprised of wooden laths which allow the wind to blow through the hut and cure the mutton and the legs of lamb hanging up within. After a few months of such treatment mutton—*rast kjøt* it is called—is a delicacy . . . but not for delicate English digestions, it is as well to note! A few more months (say nine for proper seasoning) and you have *skerpikjøt*: and I have been told that if there were enough of it Faroemen would eat nothing else! It has a strong flavour and a stronger smell, is the colour of congealed blood and is like toffee in its consistency,—and its taste is an acquired one which most Britons soon decide they can very well do without. Having persevered, I agree with the Faroeman, for once you overcome the English

man's inherent distaste for foreign food (especially that which smells), *skerpikjøt* is as tasty a luxury as smoked salmon or sturgeon roes.

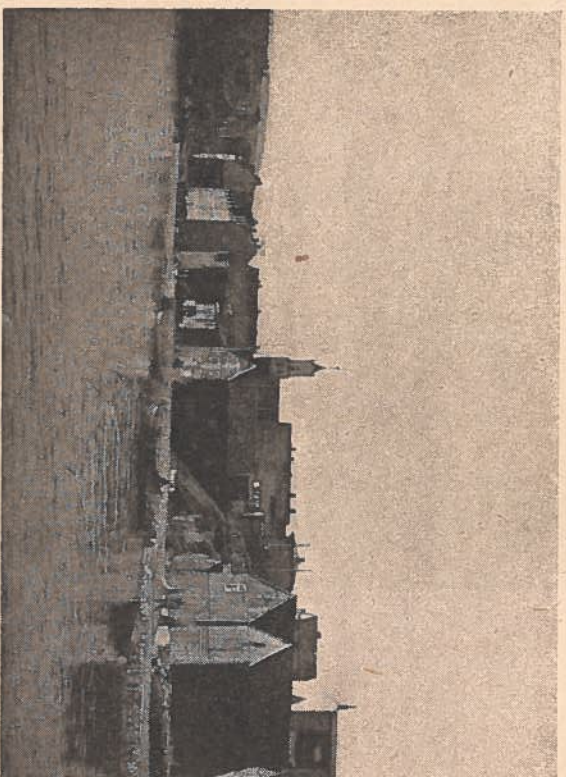
Out of the hard school of necessity the Faro folk have devised culinary methods which would astonish the English housewife by their thrift, economy and variety. The Englishman, living in a land of plenty, can afford to turn up his nose at *grind* and *spik* (which is its blubber), at *blóðpannakukur* and *pylsa* made from the blood of a freshly-killed sheep, at *rastan fisk* (which is wind-dried fish and smells like it) and the queer bodies of birds whose names he has never heard before; but in a largely self-supporting country food must be got in the season of its abundance, and saved in any way the ingenuity of the Faroemen can devise against the long, lean, bitter and unproductive winter months.

Olastova





The Larder



The West Harbour

## OUR BUNGALOW

By H. T. PINKERTON

THE hysterical Faro weather is up to scratch and the rain is beating a mad tattoo on the old bungalow roof. "Bungalow" sounds much better than "Nissen". Inside it is comfortable, and a roaring fire makes things cheerful. The teacan is slowly coming to the boil, so in a short time we shall have our mugs of tea before sleep descends on us all!

What sights one sees gazing around the beds. Each one tells a story full of character! Near the door two distorted shapes beneath the blankets, blue, general service, tell us that the unconscious occupants have been on heavy duty in this foul weather and are soaked to the skin. Now they are far away at home, round a fire, near the wife,—indivualists once more.

Close to the sleeping ones a chap lies on his bed, smoking his pipe and reading a Sunday newspaper, weeks old—"WREN found murdered" and stuff like that. Nearest the fire and the teacan a N. C. O. sits on a board placed across the coalbin. He's in his shirt sleeves—the stove's red hot—and there's a writing pad on his knee. Papers and oddments round his feet, too, among them a photograph of baby in the pram. He's just shown it to the rest of us, saying, "Carried her up to bed every night when I was home last. It's a great thrill that, carrying her up to bed." We smiled and understood. Photographs bring back—almost too vividly—our own memories.

His head is bent again and he is writing once more, the finished papers cast down at his feet. Then there's the lad who is going home soon to the wife he's talked about every day and longed for and the kiddie who was born two months ago. "Wonder who she's like?" he says sometimes.

Across the way is the empty bed with blankets folded for inspection. Its "owner" lies in "dock"—stomach in rebellion against tinned food and more of it. Yes, each bed tells a story. Why, the man who sleeps near the door is a local preacher back in the West Country. The Bible lies on top of his locker and beside it there's a book called "Child Psychology". He goes out preaching despite the gales and all the rain in heaven.

And the others, what of them? There is the fat man

(Concluded on page 25)

**"Farewell!" Faroes.**

Here in this strange, forgotten land,  
Lie things my heart alone could tell,  
Some lure or mystery perchance  
In silvery sea and barren fell.

People strange of dress, they seem  
A vision of a bygone year;  
On waistcoats red the buttons gleam  
Like sunshine on a falling tear.

An island bleak and swept with rain;  
The skies so grey with winter's snow;  
The cliffs I shall not see again  
Stand proud behind me as I go.

My thoughts on greater islands dwell,  
Across the waves, where sky meets sea.  
To Faroe Isles I say "Farewell!"  
And greet the land still home to me.

*Eric S. Fellows.*

*Poem in Scottish Dialect . . .*

**The Lanely Fisher**

By the wan watter o the Fjallavavn  
In the lang grey dim o a simmer nicht  
There lie to the feet o the lanely fisher  
The bluid-bedabblit feathers o the tjaldur,  
The peckit banes o the wee arctic tern,  
And daitth's angel, the deli-faured skua,  
T wangs in the eerie glume about his heid  
Like the fingert gut o a boss fiddle,  
Seeks in its lichtnin dive his thin-baned croun,  
Its wud een lowin wi the watter's licht,  
Its forkit tail the fleein skirts  
O a fang-tuthit troll; and at a likely rise  
He lifts his heid in fricht, and jerks his flee:  
The quick troot gowps in the toom air,  
Strauchtens, hits the watter wi a skelp,  
And waukens the hail heich craigie craik  
Wi the muckle black-back's bogle quaich  
And the hart-wrung wail o the wheelin whimbrel.

*(Robert Mc Lennan)*



By R. L. LEWELLYN COLLIER

It was a beautiful day, one of the best I have experienced in this country. There was a complete absence of wind, which in itself was unusual, and the sea was that same blue which you see on picture-postcards of Swiss lakes, with just a faint ripple on the fjord. The scene was one of complete peace and solitude.

About twelve o'clock we got our first hint that something was happening. A Faroe fishing-boat entered the fjord and passed close to our camp. Someone aboard hailed us in Faroese, waving his arms and gesticulating wildly. We thought he was signalling the size of the big one that had got away, and made appropriate answer. However, a Faroese man who had just come by boat with our rations appeared to think it most important, and urged us to unload as quickly as we could. When asked what the excitement was about, he replied in one word only,—“Grind!”

The hunt was on. As soon as the boat was unloaded away went our Faroeman, heading seawards. Shortly afterwards boats of all kinds began to issue from the fjord,—tention fishing-smacks, thirty-footers with motors, and rowing boats,—all heading for the open sea and disappearing round the headland to find the whales and drive them in for the kill.

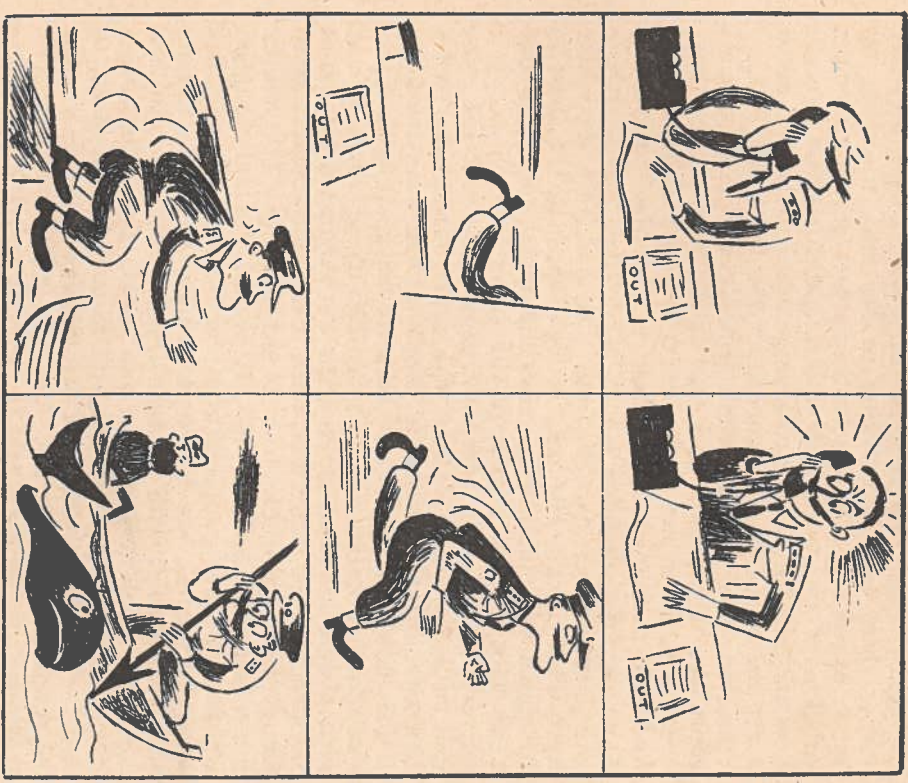
Between one and one-thirty we heard a steady drone: the boats,—the Faroese Battle-fleet, as some irreverent soul called them,—were coming back. And there in front of them, marked by a swirl in the water and occasional bursts of spray from their blow-holes, were the whales. We counted between thirty and forty. And it is an old Faroe saying that for every whale visible there are at least

ten below the surface. This, then, was a mighty catch. Slowly but surely they were herded into the fjord, the small boats dashing hither and thither like sheep-dogs. Men standing in the bows were hurling large stones to keep them moving in the right direction. It was an extraordinary picture: the whales, many as much as twenty-five feet long, jumping like porpoises, except that they never quite left the water; and behind them Faroese craft of every description, with men shouting and waving and hurling their stones, the noise echoing from the tall hills and filling our erstwhile silent and deserted fjord with a pandemonium of sound.

And so it continued until the whales were opposite the camp. There the Faroemen considered they were safe for the time and, leaving two boats to mount guard, the rest carefully skirted the whales and went off home to collect their offensive weapons for the kill. The two boats left to do guard were the two that had first spotted the whales out at sea. The finders are entitled, after the kill, to the biggest whale, over and above their normal share: also during the hunt they are entitled to fly a distinguishing pennant from their boat, and the gentlemen in question on this occasion had chosen to fly khaki shirts!

As soon as I saw the boats returning I went down to the nearest house. I found the owner and his son assembling their equipment. First there were long ten-foot poles, three inches in diameter, into which were fitted eighteen inches of good steel blade, three inches wide. To the end of the haft was tied about thirty feet of slack rope, which would be fixed to a seat in the boat so that when cast the whaling-spear could be easily retrieved. Also being prepared were grappling-hooks for hauling the carcasses ashore, harpoons and knives.

The harpoons were wicked-looking instruments, three feet long and with sharp points. They had hinged bars, so made that when the point entered the flesh the barb would catch, and the whole point turn on the hinge, forming a "T" shape with the shaft, when the whale wrenched to get away. All the hunting instruments are made so that they will come out of the flesh again, to avoid the danger of a boat being towed by a whale. The last instrument of the whale-hunt is the knife used in the final kill and subsequent cutting-up of the carcass. It has a blade of tempered steel with all but the cutting-edge protected by a covering of soft iron, and usually a decorated wooden sheath.



We were rowed out into the middle of the fjord and transferred to a ten-tonner which was to take us to the shallow bay to which the whales were to be driven for the more serious part of the day's work. We landed and took up our stations on some high rocks at the water's edge. After half-an-hour we heard, as before, the shouts and splashes and the noise of the engines, and round the corner came the hunt: The whales were manoeuvred into the bay and the boats closed in: then the signal was given for the kill to start. The whales seemed to sense their danger, and tore towards the shore making great waves like the bow-waves of a speed-boat. The boats were amongst them. And then such an orgy of slaughter started as I have never seen.

Some whales grounded on the beach, where they lay lashing their tails and rolling in the surf, throwing up clouds of water. Immediately they were set upon by men with knives who waded up to their necks in water to reach their struggling prey. The remainder swept round and dived under the boats, going right under the inner ring and up setting one boat as they went. It had every plank smashed from keel to gunwale, and one of the men swam ashore at my feet, drew his knife, leapt into the shallows, and proceeded calmly to cut through the blubber behind the blow-hole of a stranded whale. The whale was thrashing with unbelievable strength, and then suddenly its whole body went slack. He had cut right through the flesh to the spinal column, and severed the spinal cord with one rapid stab between a joint in the vertebrae.

Everywhere on the beach the same scene met the eyes, men struggling in the water with great beasts three times their size. Mingled with the shouts of the men, the noise of the motors, and the splashing of the great bodies, was a constant squealing of exhausted and dying whales. Many whales were killed at once, others too exhausted by loss of blood to escape were left until later, and continued to plunge and lash feebly with blood gushing out of their almost severed necks. Those that were killed were dragged ashore with the grappling-irons, and almost before they were clear of the water men descended on them, ripping open their bellies with a single slash of their knives to seek the liver, which was cut out and set on one side. More groping ensued in the gash at the back of the neck, to find the heart, and then the carcase was left until it could be quartered and shared.

Whilst this butchery was in progress on the beach, those whales which had temporarily escaped in the first wild dash under the boats were being rounded up. For an hour the wild chase continued, the numbers of whales gradually decreasing, until it was decided that enough had been killed in this spot and the rest should be taken elsewhere. So the almost exhausted remnants were driven out of the bay and up to the head of the fjord, where later that night they were herded round and round until the tide receded, leaving them utterly exhausted on the beach.

"GAIN FUNEARE". The new revue by Noel Corbett and Richard Mayor, which played to full houses last week, delighted its audiences and brought a welcome change in the Force entertainment fare. It would be unfair to single out individual performers: let it be sufficient to congratulate everybody concerned for their hard work and willingness to make an excellent show in a good cause.

# Tol

By Steins St. Djurhuus

CHRISTMAS is the greatest celebration of the year in the Faroe Islands. The most important thing beforehand is the cleaning of the house. This was hard work on the old farms and was done by the men whilst the women busied themselves with baking and sewing,—for the men, women and children always had new clothes at Christmas-time. The next thing was to carry peat to the house to get it warm and comfortable; and then those who could would go to Tórshavn to buy brandy, sugar and other good things for the holidays.

The holiday begins with "the little Christmas Eve" (*Tollaksmessa*) on December 23rd. On Christmas Eve itself (*Jólaaftan*) the people attend church in the evening, and afterwards the family always exchanges its gifts and greetings. Church is attended at midday and in the evening on Christmas Day, and on St. Stephen's Day, December 26th, there is a midday service, and at night the dancing begins. Between church-goings the people visit their friends, bringing gifts and greetings.

This dance is the Faroe Dance, and to it they sing the old historical ballads, some of more than 200 verses. There are still people living in the islands who know two or three thousand such verses by heart! It is because of the remembrance of these sagas and ballads that the Dance has been, and is, a pillar of the Faroe culture. Every Sunday evening thereafter until Lent the Dance is held, and then it ceases until the following Yuletide, except for special occasions such as weddings and the killing of *grind*.

Christmas food in olden days was mainly *rastan fisk* eaten with melted sheep-s-tallow on *Jólaaftan*, with some kind of meat and cakes on the following days. The children would have special cakes made in the likeness of little men, with currants and raisins for eyes and the buttons of their coats. The Xmas goose is very new fare in the islands, and the use of a Christmas Tree is also new and came from Denmark, although formerly each family would cover a wooden framework with moss and ling to make it green and like a tree.

Always a light was left burning in every room on Christmas Night, and particularly in the place where the animals were kept; for there is an old story that on this

## Such Sweet Sorrows . . .

By G. D. Foster

I SUPPOSE everyone feels it the same, she thought, when confronted with this leave-taking business. That forced gaiety; that concentrating on nothing for an interminable time, while one's eyes well up with the overflow from the heart. And the crowds, busting and swirling around at the station. How well he looked! Standing beside him, with his tousled hair, laughing eyes and that eager, boyish way of speaking which even the parting could not entirely subdue.

He was hers! And no one could change that; no, not even the passing of the years. But he was going from her, into a new, strange and possibly hard world, where only he himself would be able to show whether he could come up smiling, or go under in the vicissitudes which would certainly confront him.

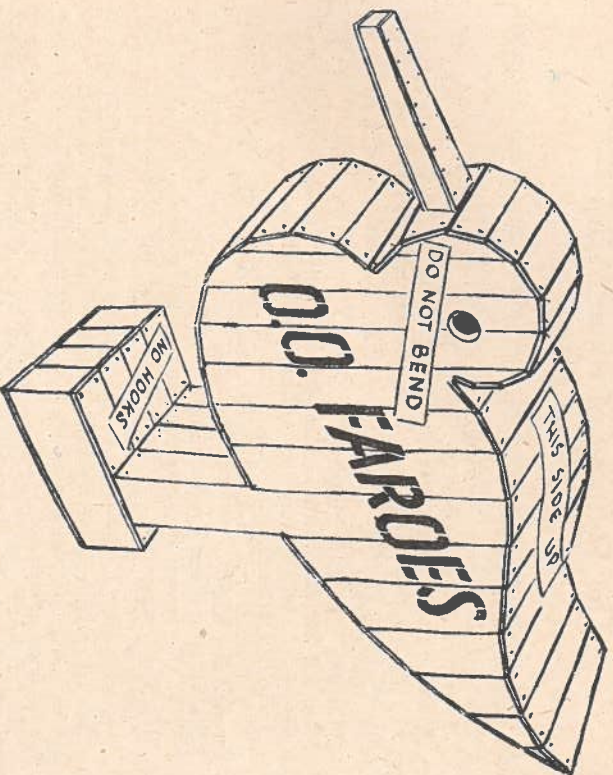
She looked at him again. It was near the train departure time; the sonorous voice came through the amplifier . . . train now standing . . . the twelve-forty . . . telling everyone. The train came slowly alongside, snorting and hissing as though impatient to be away again. Trains had no sentiment. They were merely instruments which separated loved ones . . .

He climbed, or rather clambered, into a compartment and leaned out of the window, and now she could see he was struggling to keep his composure, to keep cheery and light-hearted. How her heart ached . . .! She held him tightly again, not trusting herself to speak. The whistle shrilled and the hiss of steam filled the air.

It had come! She managed to sob "God bless you, dear! Be good and don't forget to wash behind your ears and clean your teeth, darling." The last words came in a rush as her little nine years' old boy was carried away on the first stage of his journey to the country, another evacuee!

Concluded from previous page

one night the animals are able to come together in the stable and talk to each other. All work such as knitting and sewing that had not been finished by "the little Christmas Eve" was hidden away out of sight. If any was left about it was taken and hung on the open chimney and was considered great shame on the one to whom it belonged.



Drawing by O. P. A. Evans

## FANFAROE

announces that, with the commencement of Volume II, prizes are offered as follows for the best contribution in each of the categories below:—

- A. Short story not less than 500 words, any subject, 15 Kr.
- B. Article or essay on the Faroes or Faroese life, not less than 1000 words, 10 Kr.
- C. Article or essay on a general topic, not less than 500 words, 5 Kr.
- D. Short sketch or article of less than 400 words, 5 Kr.
- E. Poem, any length, 5 Kr.
- F. Page of photographs (may be one full or two half-pages), 10 Kr.
- G. Page of humorous line illustrations (may be one full or two half-pages), 10 Kr.

Entries for these competitions should be forwarded to the Editors, FANFAROE, Force Headquarters, not later than 31 January 1943.

# "The Softness of Your Arms —"

By H. T. Pinkerton.

She lay back on the mossy bank. Her golden curls seemed to sparkle in the moonlight.

"Away from everything here, aren't we?"

He moved closer to her.

"Yes," he said, "right away from everything."

He felt her trembling . . . looked and saw that her eyes were closed and her soft lips slightly open.

He touched her arm.

"Darling!" he said, "Darling!"

She put her arms around him. He felt himself falling . . . as if in a dream . . . but the urge to waken wasn't with him.

Their lips pressed close . . . closer.

Not a sound . . . even the water seemed asleep. She ran her fingers through his hair.

"Have you changed your mind?"

"No," he answered, "I haven't changed my mind."

His voice was thick . . . her beauty made him prisoner.

"Then —"

"Your arms," he murmured, "the softness of your arms!"

She lay passive in his embrace. She knew she'd have to wait, despite all he said. She was getting used to it, though it hurt . . . thoughts are so cruel sometimes.

He was kissing her now. She tried to want him, but couldn't force herself.

He moved closer, murmuring . . .

"Cut! Cut!" yelled the man in the blue shirt and flannels. The cameras stopped turning.

"You wanna get the mood right . . . how many more times do I have to go through it? Come on! Let's try it again."



Drawing by J. Kampmann

# An Economical View of . . . SMOKING I

By W. H. PECKITT

Let us take as an average (smokers only) that each member of the Forces stationed overseas, where Cigarettes are approximately four pence for 10, smokes 25 Cigarettes daily,—which is as near as makes no difference 800 monthly and 10,000 annually.

Taking for granted that an average smoking-life is 50 years (including the smoking done at school and the tapering off after the age of say 60 years) one would, if stationed in the Faroe Islands for a lifetime (and hoping that the climate would not put a quick end to one's existence) and being able to purchase Cigarettes at the usual NAAFI prices, smoke 500,000 at an approximate cost of £830.

A month's supply of Cigarettes placed end to end would almost coincide with the length of the leave-boat, which we would all like to see more often. A lifetime's supply would also, placed end to end, extend a distance of 1063 ft. 4ins. over 21 1/2 miles, equal to four times the height of the highest mountain in the world, or the distance from Dover to Calais across the English Channel.

## PISCATORIAL PARADISE

Concluded from page 7

At this stage, proceedings were interrupted by the arrival of a load of refuse and having witnessed, and smelt, the contents en route for Iceland and points west, I came to the conclusion that there was no future in this fishing racket, and conducted a strategic withdrawal upwind.

I found myself watching the Mess devouring the spoils with considerable speculation, whilst they, for their part, were quite unable to understand why my customary fondness for fish caused me to abstain from this particular variety. Not wishing to spoil their gastronomic pleasure I refused to enlighten them, for after all one must not waste food in war-time. In any case, apart from slight internal disorders, for which they blame the water and from which, strange to relate, I am immune, they seem perfectly healthy.

If anyone wishes to buy a bamboo fishing-rod, scarcely used, will they please apply to me.

## OUR BUNGALOW

Concluded from page 15

who boasts that his wife clouted him once. The architect, always reading but never drawing, with a cigarette between his lips, the ash drooping weakly. Yes, and then there's "Stitcher"—repairing boots all day, airing his views on women all night.

Bits and pieces all right—so different, yet so pathetically dependant on each other all day long, every day, for months on end. Hopes and fears, gaiety and sorrow all pay a visit to our bungalow. Here is no quiet drawing-room atmosphere, but oaths, chatter, sweat and laughter mixing together to produce an environment that men have endured, in this land of wind and rain, since the early days of 1940.



### Yesterday's Thoughts.

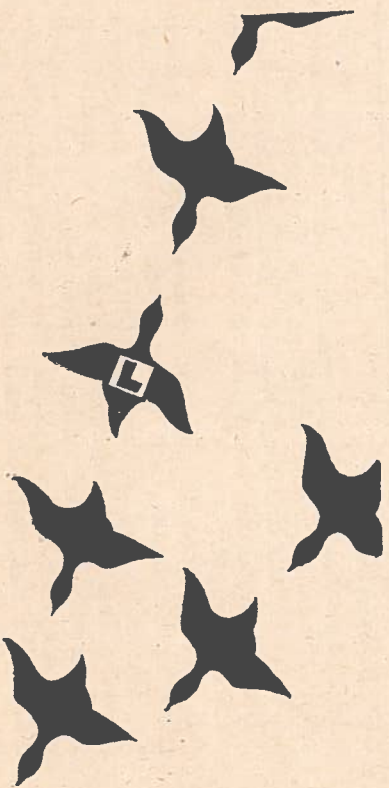
Can you remember yesterday,  
And England on a summer day,  
With fields of sunkissed wheat and corn,  
And clear blue skies at break of dawn;  
The fragrant perfume of the flowers  
In parks, where you spent happy hours?

Can you remember, too,  
The crowded Strand or Leicester Square,  
With endless streams of taxi-cabs,  
And huge shop-fronts in which to stare,  
The shows and films you used to see,  
And nights you spent out on the spree?

When your thoughts to England turn  
And your hearts for summer yearn,  
Picture April in the highlands —  
That's summer in the Faroe Islands.  
And when it rains it simply pours,  
And no-one wants to go out-doors.

Then if at times you get the 'blues',  
Of winter you're inclined to muse,  
When icicles hang from your nose  
And feeling wanes from all your toes;  
The thought that strikes you like a shot  
Is, Why leave Home for this 'ere spot?

J. Howard.



Drawing by O. P. A. Evans

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