THE LANDSCAPE of Claude Simon's constantly illuminating The Battle of Pharsalus is a and neglected patch of ground in Greece whose historic past and negligible pre-sent haunt the narrator of the novel and merge with his own interior landscape and even his public stance watching life from a window by a Metro station. This is all contained in the stream of consciousness snippets, usually unpunctuated, that are a feature of M. Simon's other fine JOHN WHITLEY novels and indeed of Butor and JOHN WHITLEY the Tel Quel group of experimental novelists: the point about

beauty and contains on almost such a deeply honest and impres- debased demotic apparently used mark and is assassinated in a every page a memorable image, sive work of art there comes a even by the middle classes on w > It is a long prose poem about a sensitive Frenchman of middle- ture that the novelist wants to deliberately mechanical. dialogue is as drearly uninventive age and class who has visited impose becomes too complicated to From the start it is obvious as the situations, even down to Greece because of his interest in Caesar and who himself fought municate, where experiment slightly too cracker-barrel Elmo a there (in the cavalry, so presumably in the First World War)

technique—not so much cutting do not. as running on, in fact—is used In completely the opposite the human spirit, Thessally.

these stunning descriptive pas- environment. (and the translator has converted ture": his sentences are short America.

WHEN A POET decides to issue a "Collected Poems" he is inviting a rather crucial assessment. A large body of work, with the author's imprimatur, is delivered for judgment, and one COLLECTED POEMS 1958-1970 by George MacBeth/Macmillan would expect the poet at least £1.50, hardback £3.50 pp 254 to take it seriously.

THE GENEROUS DAYS by Stephen Spender/Faber £1 This seems not to have been the case with Mr MacBeth's PRISON POEMS by Yuli Daniel/Calder & Boyars £1.50 volume. The selections chosen from his earlier books are wildly. LYMAN ANDREWS random, with a disproportionate number of "set" pieces included —those scenarios for public read- Auschwitz Rag") are in almost exhibits the same virtues and ings which mean little on the pathologically bad taste in addi- flaws as ever. Once again there is page. But it is with the new tion to being rather awful as the undoubted integrity, the conpoems that the trouble really is literature: to be found. What can be made I walk on tip-toe of the schoolboy awkwardness to the Zyklon B, and lavatory humour in, for in- They're goin' to crucify stance, "Dr Crippen's Elimina-Little me. tion Kit," an A-Z rundown on his fellow poets?

Philip Oakes Appeared on Television Eulogising the Movement. Unfortunately, his bowels moved, No doubt with compassion,

At just the wrong moment. Indeed some poems (eg, "The lection in over twenty years translator, has introduced and, in

Two fine novels

THE BATTLE OF PHARSALUS by Claude Simon, translated from the French by Richard Howard/Cape £2.25 A FLASH OF GREEN by John D MacDonald/Robert Hale £1.80 OUR GANG by Philip Roth/Cape £1.75 SHEEP by Max Handley/Arlington £2

point where the theoretical struc- the Florida Gulf, and the plot is ingly called a "baggie"). The sustain what he is trying to communicate, where experiment slightly too cracker-barrel Elmo
teeters into trivial obscurantism
Bliss, will successfully use the
teeters into trivial obscurantism
The reader gives up The exinformation gethered for them

writing "blah, blah, blah . . " as
parody of a broadcaster, and
travel essays by V. S. Naipaul, 39,
information gethered for them

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parody of a broadcaster, and
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the reader gives up The exinformation gethered for the gives the gi superb section called Battle for dangers, where many of his campaign is under way, this be- Python manner: his vivid and

to its greatest effect by linking sense John D. MacDonald has Mr MacDonald, like Stendhal, is to Caesar's and the narrator's also written a very fine novel. a Romantic: his characters are to a battles in a tremendously vivid A Flash of Green is about the be fallen angels and fall they ni and immediate sequence. And defeat of some small town con- must, from the traitorous Jimmy contrasting with this is a sort servationists in America by a to his undeclared love, the young of lament for a rusting and group of local businessmen who widow Kat, and the model very funny trial when he gets to derelict reaping machine want to fill in a beautiful bay; Jackie, so proud of her body, Australia and a dubious relationwhich stands in the fields of and through this battle the who is tied naked to a tree and characters on each side are de- whipped by religious fanatics. All through the book there are veloped and changed like the Perhaps the tragedy is even

sages illuminated by the sudden Where M. Simon uses language only outlet for these people's juxtaposition of BC and AD, as though he wants to keep it aesthetic sensibility: they don't of France and Greece, war and alive, Mr MacDonald seems to seem to read or play music, it's love: the power and control of want to kill it or at any rate re- a far cry from Miss McCarthy's the writer are beyond question move the trappings of "litera- American coastline in Birds of

Poets' reckoning

many times his skill and pro- time, a rather slight book, it is

fessionalism. His reputation good to have it. And we can be

doesn't deserve what this hasty, grateful that this individual,

sloppy and rather sad book will somehow lonely voice is heard

experimental," it is written American with great skill). are rarely anything but flat, the of the unborn to have the vote, But I think that even with book is mainly in dialogue of a wages war on permissive Den-

instance where the inter-cutting colleagues, to my simple mind, comes an exceptionally good d novel about the corruption of too jokey for its own good.

greater because the boy is the

this book is that, though the density of the original into and to the point, his descriptions. Dixon, campaigns for the right

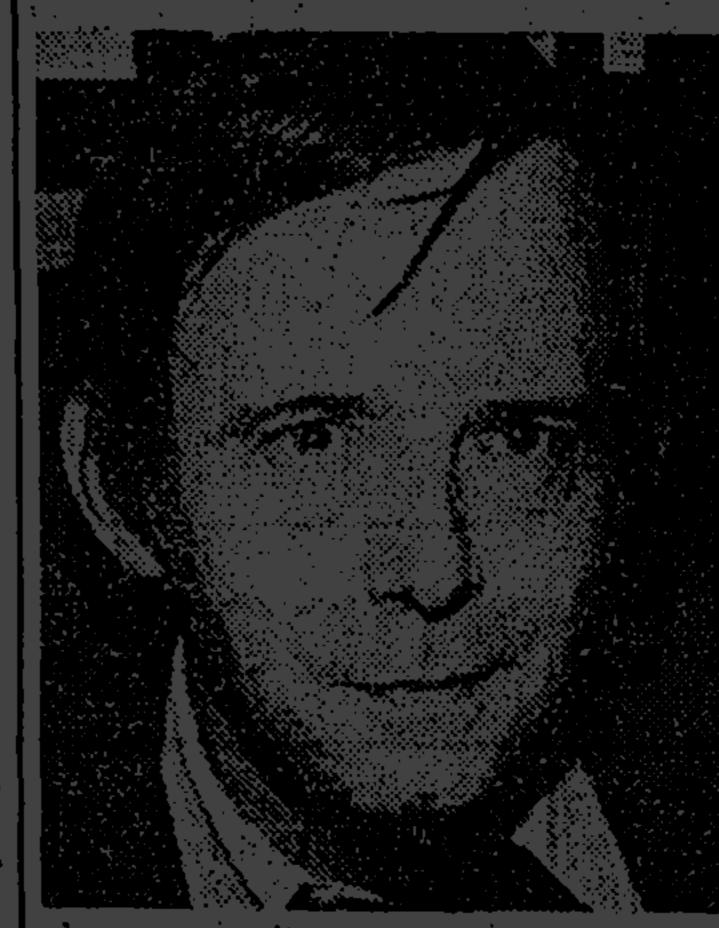
personally strangling every nally his self-appointed bioe beasts. The School of Surreal-(British Branch) cannot ard degrees; but Mr Handley ms to have attended classes

laboration with Arthur Boyars, assian and Soviet writing from Orfevres. olstoy up to the present day:

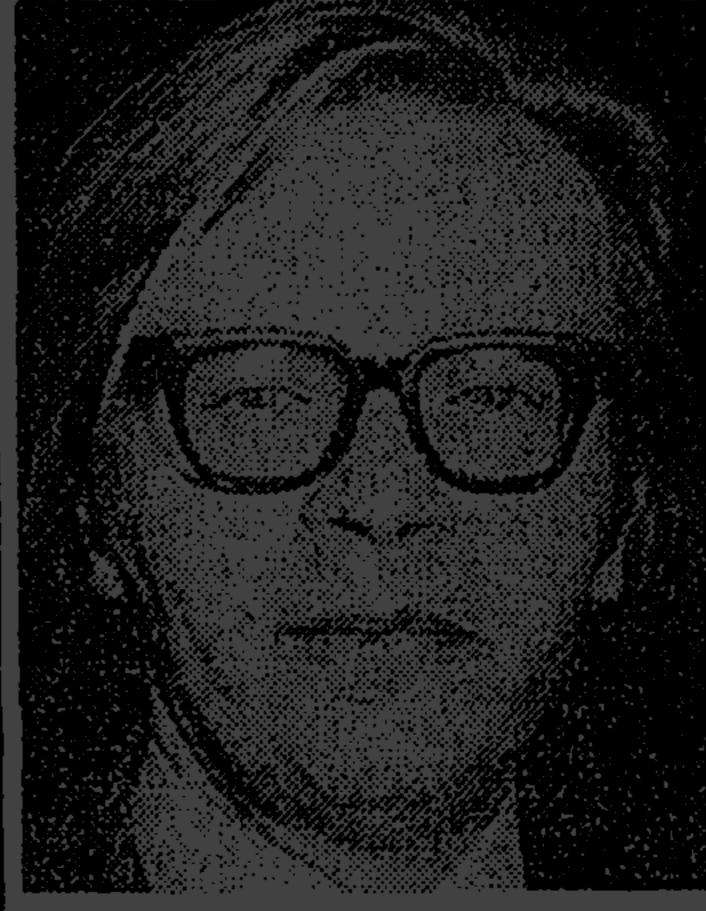
I looked through a window and I saw a house. An ordinary house, a miracle beyond belief. t stood seven or eight floors

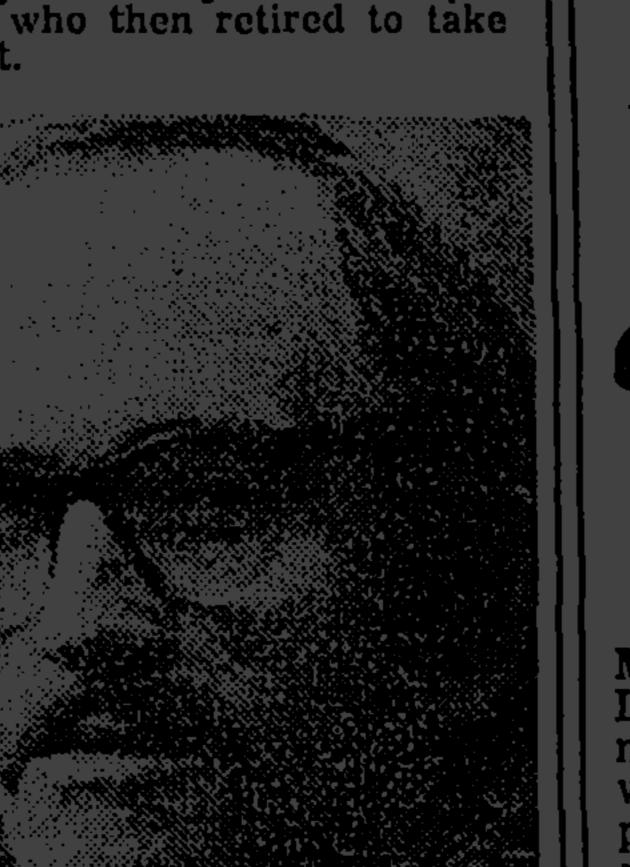
And every window was lit up Vith a special kind of light. rom the light of those adjoining it. And this because The windows possessed curtains. . . .

and as poems in their own right. his is an important and a

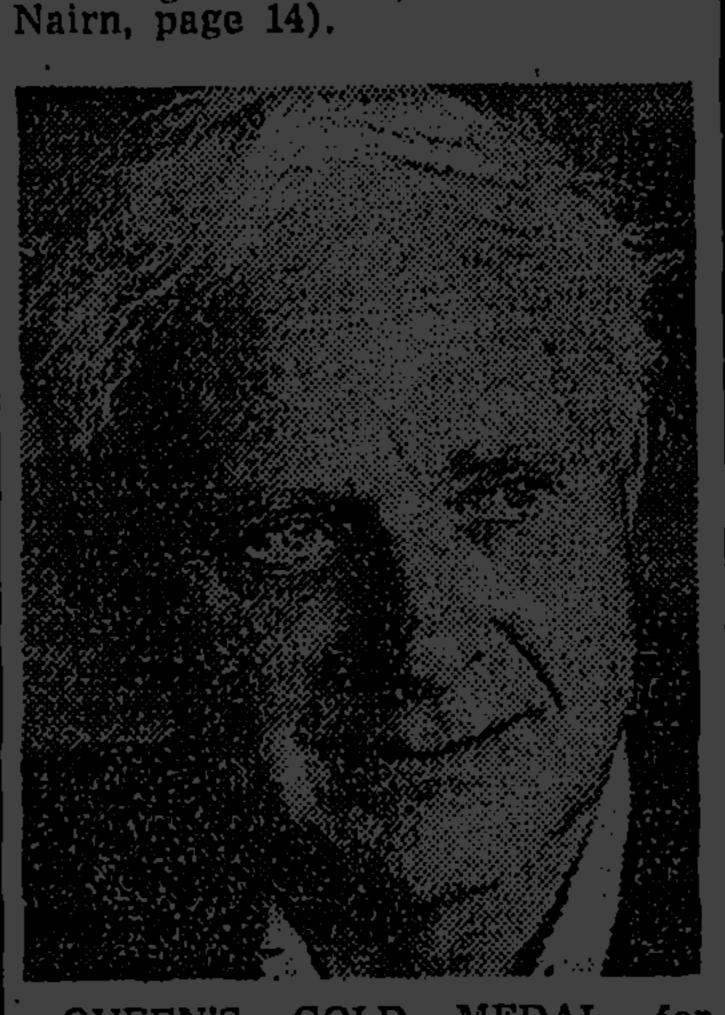


l and imprisonment. These Cely, 52, prolific right-wing polemi- his single head? Certainly after te as a sort of epiphany, that nyms with which he has won other prizes including Prix du Quai des full-time concern.









concept of his power. He had but left the Prime Minister in By 1920 he was saying: founded the Daily Mail in 1896 office. and fast become the owner of This is not to advocate peace first time in their history entirely

journalists who have been all too demanded from Lloyd George an depart.)
ready to do a Minister's bidding. involvement in the peace conferThere is much that is absorbing Yet it was also a symptom of a ence. He was spurned. He cam- in Paul Ferris' well-researched complaint common to Press Lords paigned ("They will cheat you book, not least his excursions into —delusions of power. yet, those Junkers") in his news-the Harmsworths' private lives Alfred Harmsworth, the first papers for full revenge on Ger- and his account of the faltering and only Viscount Northcliffe, many. He was demolished by and final derangement of Northfounder of the Daily Mail and Lloyd George in one passage of cliffe's mind. BOOKER: "In a Free State," mix- Daily Mirror, onetime owner of Commons invective which mocked Mr Ferris also underlines a

and the reader gives up. The exinformation gathered for them taining attempt by the dead Llewellyn Rhys Memorial Prize of the future forms of governpoliticians. Even Northcliffe's the inevitable over-dependence and the reader gives up. The experimenters may retort that if the of a moment of adultery.

The narrator is also interested in painting: much of his imagery in painting: much of his imagery refers to Uccello, della Francia and Caravaggio. in the cases and Caravaggio in the cases and the reader gives up. The experimenters may retort that if the by the detached journalist statement or un for Satan's job, the whole sad affair makes Prises to Uccello, della Francia and the reader gives up. The experimenters may retort that if the by the detached journalist statement or un for Satan's job, the was a belief that nephew, Cecil Harmsworth on advertising for its revenue.

Some reservationists into dropping the was a belief that nephew, Cecil Harmsworth on advertising for its revenue.

Complications in their work. M. Simple was a belief that nephew, Cecil Harmsworth on advertising to its revenue.

Complications in their work. M. Simple was halling the gold-mine the worths and other proprietors.

Sheep, by Max Handley, is Simple was part of the detached journalist statement to run for Satan's job, the was a belief that nephew, Cecil Harmsworth on advertising for its revenue.

Complications in their work. M. Simple was hall give the detached journalist statement to run for Satan's job, the was a belief that nephew, Cecil Harmsworth on advertising for its revenue.

Complications in their work. M. Simple was a belief that nephew, Cecil Harmsworth on advertising for its revenue.

Complications in their work was a belief that nephew, Cecil Harmsworth on advertising for its revenue.

Complete the detached journalist into the was a belief that nephew, Cecil Harmsworth on advertising for its revenue.

Complete the detached journalist into the worth of the was a belief that nephew, Cecil Harmsworth on advertising for its revenue.

Complete the detached journalist into the detached journalist into the worth of the was a b his warnings about Germany could not resist the idea of he was venting anxiety lest adverbefore the First World War, his government by newspaper. In the tising should threaten his position campaigns against Kitchener and end his Enough is Enough out as "sole possessor." the Asquith Government. But burst against the Wilson govern- From then on he had a love-Northcliffe had an exaggerated ment of 1968 finished the King hate relationship with advertising.

> Britain's only mass circulation between Whitehall and Fleet subordinate to advertisers. I see newspaper. The Mail was the Street. It is to suggest that news- no way out of this impasse, other first to sell a million. papers can have more influence than by maintaining a great daily It was a new phenomenon. To by the painstaking presentation many, including at one time Lloyd of facts that would otherwise be George, it seemed that control of suppressed than by trying to such a readership must bring topple ministers and governments power through the moulding of by trumpeting their opinions at We are still thinking.

> What splendid arrogance. Heaven, as Lloyd George himself the Editor of The Sunday Times What superb independence. And was soon to demonstrate. As the will unseat Mr Maudling, despite

net sale and thus keeping the whip hand of the advertiser. The situation is such as should make everyone in a newspaper office think.

Moral dilemmas

GONCOURT: "Les Betises," mix- WAS MILTON our last polymath? PUBLIC AFFAIRS by C P Snow translated the poems Yuli Daniel ture of essay and novel by Jacques —someone who could hold the wrote during his famous Moscow Laurent, pen-name of J. Laurent- totality of current knowledge in Macmillan £3 pp 224 wenty-one poems illustrate beauti- cist and best-seller under the name his time omniscience wasn't on DAVID WILLIAMS Cécil Saint-Laurent ("Caroline any more, and increasingly nar-

Snow's "two cultures" lectures and their reverberations, which occupy the first half of this book (largely of reprinted pieces) perplexities which by now, because of this compartment orders. alisation, crowd upon us: between purpose is to pose the problem and ask the relevant questions answers. This purpose fulfils, and in the resulting debate with Leavis he emerges a

relations between science and sturdiest defender in the Second is the thinking on this at Porton? government. Certainly there is China by Pierre-Jean don't, die from plagues or don't,

arts form this week

THEATRE

new comedy: a study

aggressive brethren or not-these bility of Churchill and Lindemann

should be questions for commit- in combination, stole away from tees of the Royal Society rather the First Division, to become than for the Cabinet. And yet supremo in the comparative Lillipoliticians and administrators are put of Magdalen.
thicker on the ground than ever In conclusion we have Snow's Public Affairs, crystallised the they were. It's still Brezhnev, insistence on the moral unnot Kapitza, who barks the neutrality of science. He admits This business of how scientists psychological state of siege in should get their axes ground has men's minds. Science and tech-

always fascinated Snow, and he nology are closing in on us, bringwrites about it here with the ing gifts so glittering that, like a insight deriving from large per- child with a toy too sophisticated sonal experience. In order to for it, we turn away and start demonstrate the strength as well cuddling our Teddy-bears. All as the weakness of the scientists' the same, as he says earlier, describes the Cox-and-Box careers right in the grain of science of Tizard and Lindemann. In the itself." Here I think Snow Thirties Tizard fought for radar, seems to be whistling to keep nursed it through a sickly in- his courage up. Is he sure about Next Snow discusses the fancy, and saw it grow into our this "moral component"? What

World War, Lindemann believed in the overriding efficacy of mass bombing, and, as soon as Churchill, whose blue-eyed boy Lindemann was, reached power, mass-bombing got its top priority. Tizard, recognising the invinci-

to seeing disquieting signs of a nfluence in the modern world he "there is a moral component

AUTOBIOGRAPHIES | PAUL JENNINGS

Stephen Spender's first new col-

As a whole the book is un-

worthy of a writer who has shown

do to it.

THAT WILL BE DAY, when sister aged four to join tather on that did fall over cliff two years | Jarkson's Flange & Grommet one hundred years after main as unskilled lad sits down after to help his father to prove claim 65th birthday (when as unskilled to 160 acres by living on them for old man he received gold watch five years. characters to look back on

at fifteen) mother and younger pure self of real horse he'd had

and TV chair from foreman and Love-hate relationship between mates in despatch dept.) to write two men, father often pined for fascinating autobiog, without old jolly life as baker, but Miss trees, air, pastoral youth and they- Babb had splendid grandfatherdon't come-like-that-any-more relationship, one hundred miles from nearest school he gave her think western several lessons a week, though world industrialised more than only printed matter available was century, amazing how many man- Kit Carson and copies of Denver with arrival of twenty-year-old aged to live free wandering lives. Post stuck on earth walls, spelling. Bates at St. Pancras from his JOHN SACK talked to Lieutenant which make good autobiogs for bees involved Indian names like native Northants to meet Cape's Calley for a hundred days, aske readers in suburban prison, Opothleyahola, Extraordinary bit reader, "'Mr Edward Garnett,' him 10,000 questions, and especially if they can write with where grandfather took child long someone said and I could have the direct simplicity of Sanora night walk on vast moonlit plain, fainted "-but he didn't and inches of magnetic tape. Cram-Babb in An Owl On Every Post saw black horse cavorting, after. Garnett was "astonished when I ming all this together, shaping (Peter Davies £2.25). When seven wards it went over cliff, terrible let out a list of my gods: Chekhov, it into bouncy direct speech and

chap who started on fourteenth high windswept Colorado plain, previously. A good book, the way birthday in despatch dept. at utterly remote in 1913, pioneering salt, wood, earth, wind are good. H. E. Bates sings a lusher

On hot days cows sought shade under vast old hawthorns, rubtheir backs against them the trunks shone like polished mahogany. The bereft of bird song, whirred with that concentrated chorus of H grasshoppers that seems in the way to deepen Stoughton £2,75

tinuing, slightly maverick roman-

ticism. Less happily, awkward-

ness still remains: the self-con-

scious "I" in the poems, that

figure who intrudes into the

poem, but never quite assimilates

itself. But if it is, after all this

David Burg, Solzhenitsyn's T

Blossoming World NICHOLAS Joseph £2.50) starts she travelled with young (married scream, grandfather said it was Turgenev, Tolstoy, Ibsen, Mau- narrative, Sack has produced a passant, Crane, Conrad, Gorki, Bierce, Flaubert." They had good his attitudes, and his mitigated old hate of critics, philistines, quilt for the killing of Vietnamese they don't know, you see, Bates, they don't know." G. was good operation three years ago. friend in up-and-down writer's

> bits are the best; the marriage, extenuating case. He argues that barn-converting, garden-making, summers and holidays. "The story of how this garden was happening during wars, that h created out of the wilderness of scarcely knew what he was doing, an old farmyard is not unfascinat- that all Vietnamese — men, ing." He's right, it isn't. Book women and children—were really ends with Bates commissioned Vietcong and, anyway, why pick into RAF "to write short stories on Lieutenant Calley rather than and nothing but short stories." the other guys? The politicians. Delicious drawings of babies, the Generals, all of American etc., by John Ward.

L. T. C. Rolt's very articulate

away from nature now that we but the real interest in Body think of steam as pastoral, that Count is the way in which it rings would have shaken Wordsworth. false. The Lieutenant Calley He grew up in Hay-on-Wye and whom Mr Sack assembles from Cotswolds, life has been full of numinous magical landscapes i (Traherne, Kilvert, Vaughan were real person. He is a familiar local spirits) in which old crafts- character from American middlemen transfer undiluted country brow culture, the ordinary fellow wisdom, craft mastery, patience who's gone perplexingly wrong, w. H. SMITH AWARD: "New and respect for materials to and blurts it all out with lugu- Lives, New Landscapes" discusses palaeotechnic systems, e.g., steam brious s ploughing. Landscape with "I was a run-of-the-mill average Machines (Longman £3.25, pp guy: I still am." or "Personally, 230) tells of Rolt's apprenticeship I didn't kill any Vietnamese tha with agricultural engineers (don't day: I mean personally, I reprepanic when stuck inside boiler), sented the United States of then railway works in Stoke-on- America. My country." Trent, later still co-ownership of Did Lieutenant Calley really Phoenix Green Garage, HQ of naturally, say this kind of thing? Vintage Sports Car Club. Rolt, Did he really go to see "Hair an engineer who hates mass pro- and be unshocked by the nudit duction, exactly re-creates gnarled but appalled by an actor wrapping Wiltshire ploughmen on bare himself in an American flag and uplands, magic of steam (later married home: is acutely aware also precisely the things that a of dichotomy between "black" -writes about it in prose filed, shaped, chiselled, carefully per-

But really the non-writers'-club is, of course, making his ow society—that's where the real

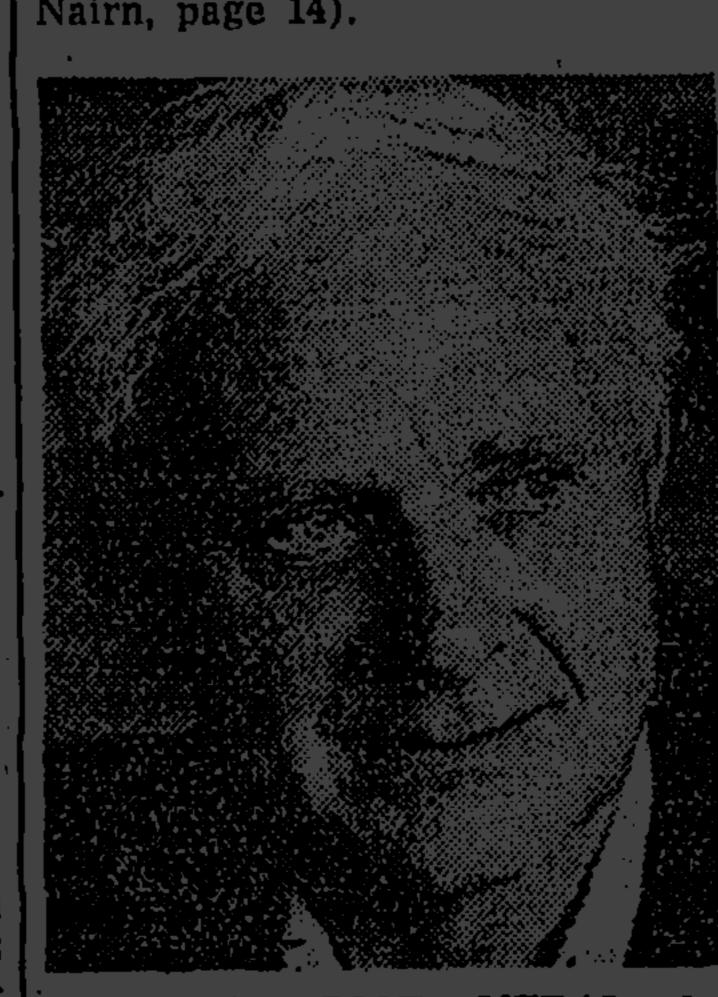
reminder that we've got so far All this is true, and important,

sectional Calley, created for some and "green" England, does all TV serial, would do and say. And man can do about such dichotomy precisely what a good American defence lawyer would emphasise behave predictably, I suppose. The Cornelius Hawkridge story gling and so on that cost the within World" (1951). Americans nearly £1 million





week aged 52. £1,000. '(See Ian



The 1971 Silver PEN awards went l



marriage and the intervention of a stranger. Romeo and Juliet (Young Vio Purnell as the lovers. Peter James directs. Just Keep Listening (Oval House, Kennington, Fri., Sat., Sun.). First appearance is London of the excellent Pool Lunch Hour Theatre from Edinburgh. They present a

MUSIC

The Elizabethan on Stage (St. John's, Smith Square, Tues.). Musicke, Heather Stoney and

(about boxing), and Cut by

Michael Almaz (about Holly-

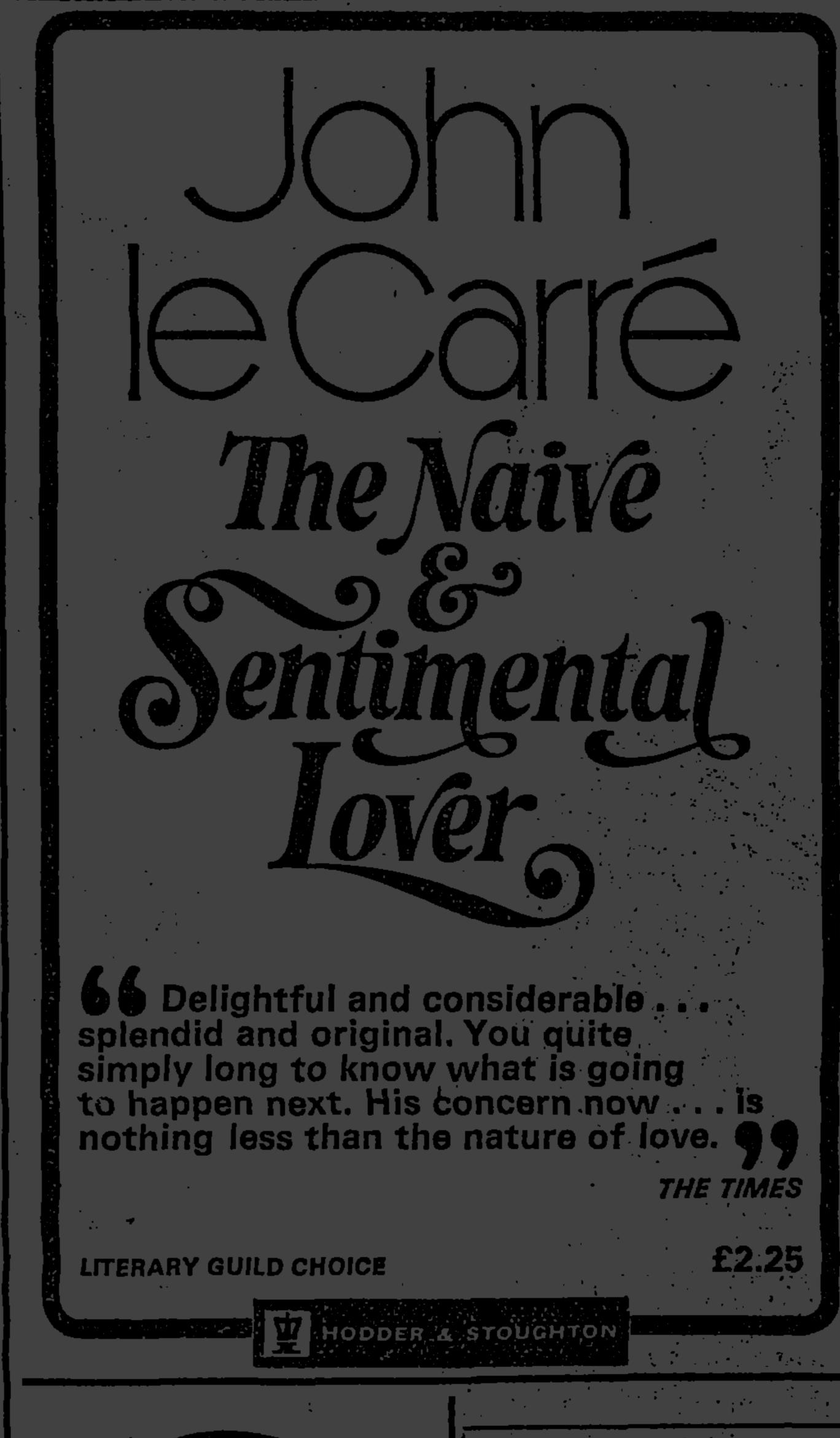
Gerald Scarfe (The Work-Original drawings some recent lithographs. Hogarth (The Tate, Thurs.). More than 100 paintings and 100 engravings and drawings present one of the most comprehensive surveys of this great painter. Augustus John (Lefevre-

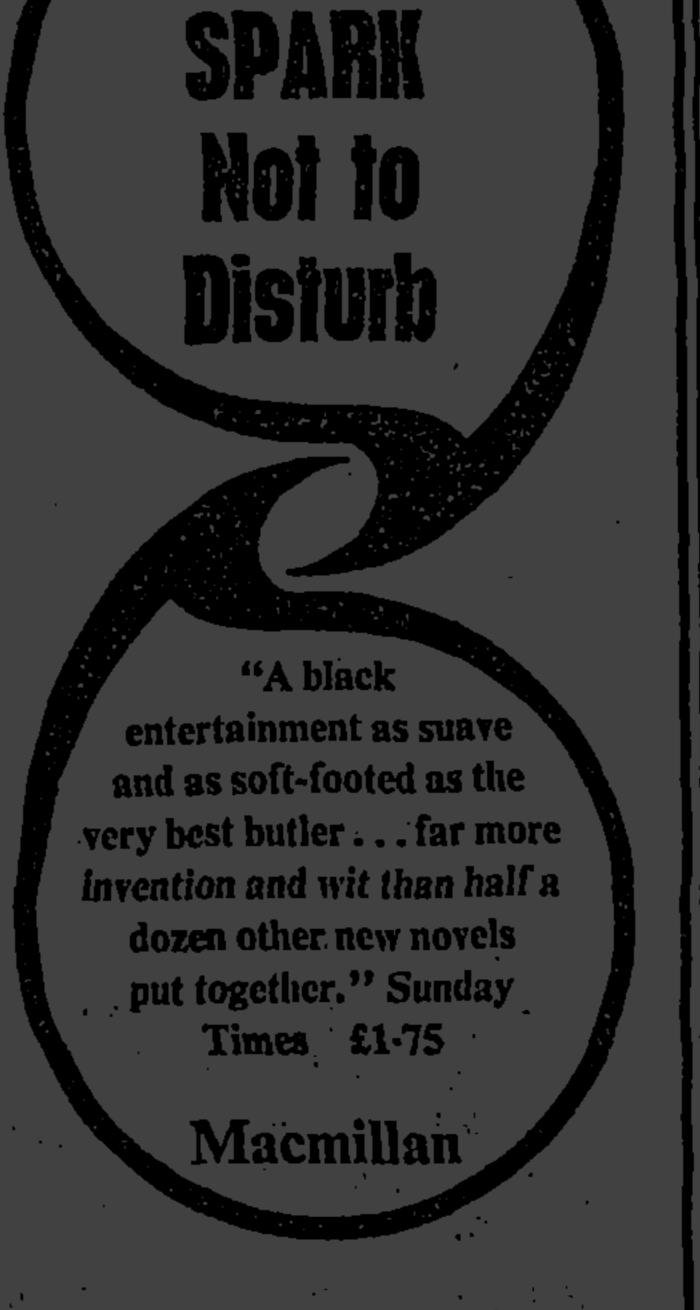
ie collection of Tristan de Mavis, was a friend and model of John. There are thirty-six drawings in the show.

Gallery, Thurs.). Mainly from

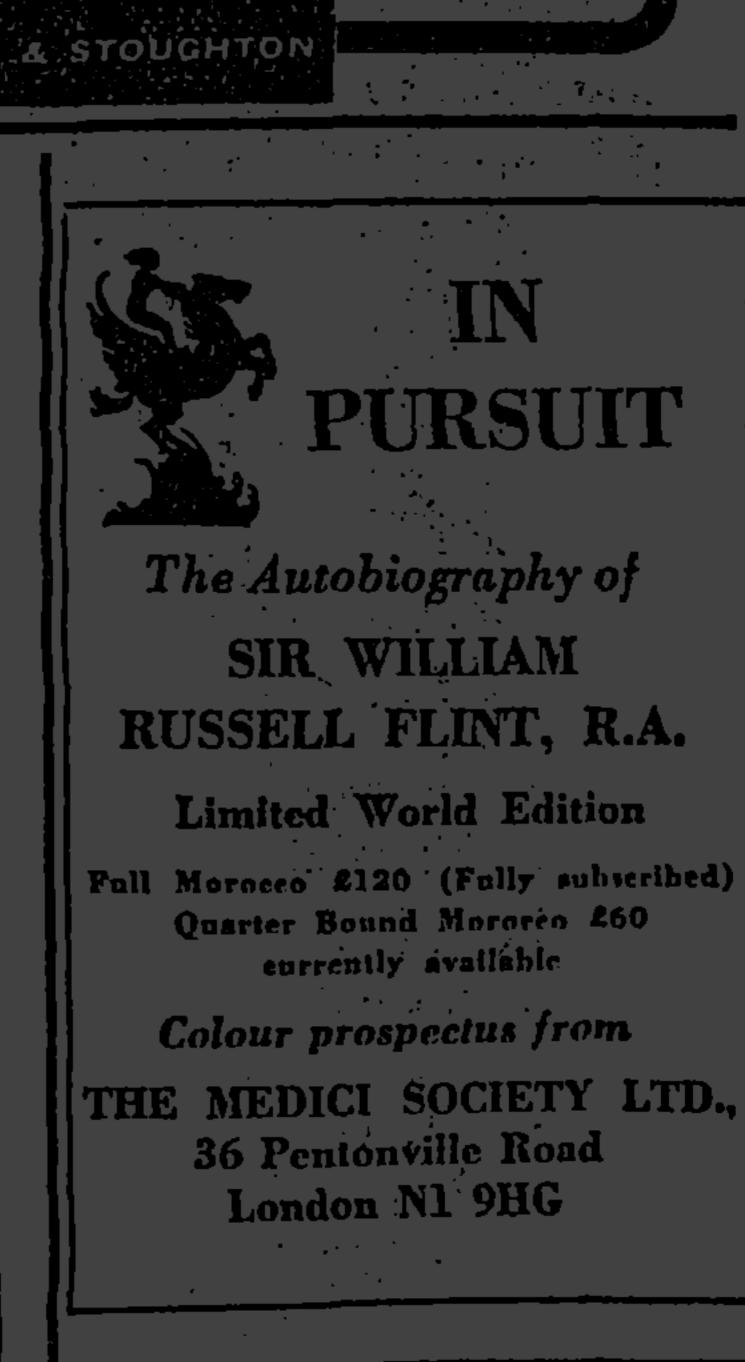
two broadcasts culled from Charles Hindley's collection of ictorian broadsides, pub shed a hundred years ago. White Knights (Radio 4, Wed 3.0). Dramatisation for "Afternoon Theatre" of the Dostoevsky story, with Ian Richardson

The Dobeross Silver Band (Radio 4, Thurs, 8.0). Henry are obtainable from booksellers, who will

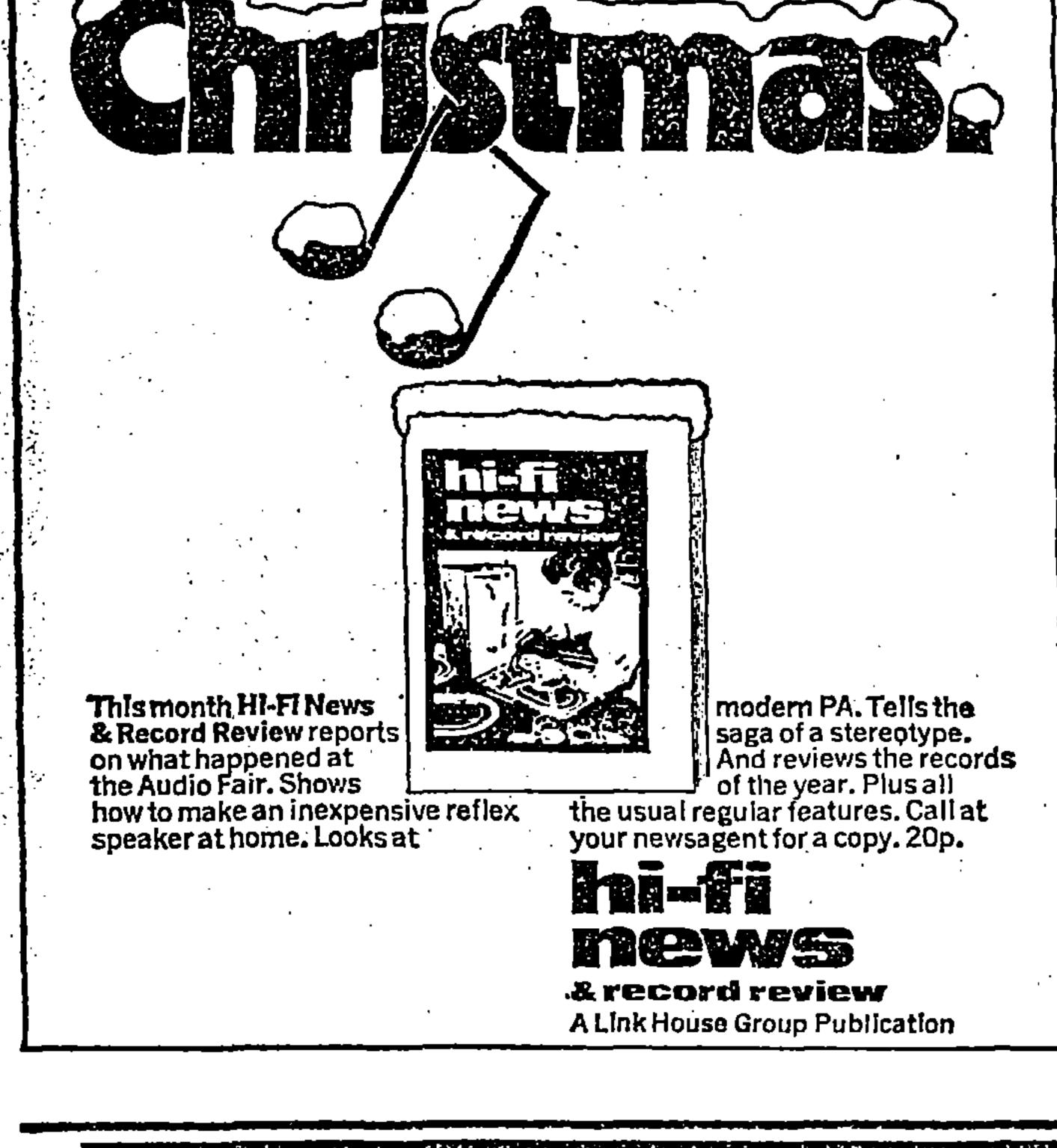




The books reviewed or advertised in · publishers' announcements in







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fected in another apprenticeship.