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The Bottle Imp

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Watching Us, Watching You

NOTICE: THIS ARTICLE HAS BEEN REDACTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE DEFENCE OF THE REALM (SCOTLAND) ACT

This issue, *The Bottle Imp* gets political. We've got our ear to the ground, but you never know who's listening ...

Politics, skulduggery and spies, enemies both foreign and domestic! Scotland's writers

, on all fronts.

sparking away at the Mandelbaum Gate? And

, John Cairncross at

and Alfred Horn at

.

Now, of course, when we are awash with words – when missives and images can flash around the globe in an instant,

Balado Bridge – and

. But the events of December 25, 1950 – and the report Robert B. Houston, of the US Diplomatic Corps, of a meeting which took place in Arbroath in January or February 1951 –

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. This is how such things were done, in a slower and colder age.

At what point does rational caution descend into paranoia?

"Operation Black Star" – and its purported relationship with the "Black Diamonds" beneath Aberfoyle.

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Hannay spoke of "the coming

of the Black Stone", but the dates surely place this, at least, outwith the bounds of possibility.

the Island of Sheep, with the *aide-de-camp* to Admiral Lord Mountbatten.

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. The State itself – "foremost of the beasts of the Earth for Pride" – cannot be immune, and the sleep of reason produces monsters.

But let's turn to our own affairs: here, James Robertson lifts **The Blanket of the Dark**;

Penny Fielding gets on the tail of **Scotland and the Spy Story**;

and Scott Hames files a report on **Kelman, Suspicion, and the Fantasy of Homeland Security**.

? Delving further, Ken MacLeod provides indications analysis

As if You Lived in the Near Future of an Undecided Nation;

Scott Lyall interrogates **Hugh MacDiarmid and the British State**;

and Donald Smith presents the evidence for and against **The English Spy and Other Factions**.

!

Meanwhile, Alison Grant riddles out the confluences of **Inbhir/Inver**,

and the Scottish Poetry Library sweeps its refurbished premises for bugs in **Space for Sound**.

We also run the risk of attracting scrutiny by examining **Scots Language in Diana Gabaldon's Outlander** – a programme which alarmed Whitehall in the run-up to last September's referendum. Let's hope we don't trigger a full-scale panic by placing it alongside a piece called **Read All About It! Book Week Scotland**, and in close proximity to the **Best Scottish Books of 2015**.

. Who else?

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