

T I L L T H E C O W S C O M E H O M E

A fanzine from

Alan and Elke Stewart

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This magazine is free!

G O V E R N M E N T H E A L T H W A R N I N G

Warning! The Surgeon General has determined that fanzine reading may be injurious to health, so don't say you haven't been warned!

TILL THE COWS COME HOME

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No 1

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For some strange reason Elke thought I'd be doing all the writing for our fanzine. Don't know why. It is, after all, our fanzine. So here's Elke's first-ever fanzine contribution.

'THIS BETTER HALF'

Here we are. So I have slowly taken over 'Alan's' fanzine. (By contributing financially to the duplicator and typewriter and helping buy them.) At least that's how he sees it and is considering editing an 'alan's' own fanzine' already. I hadn't dreamt of contributing anything, but was told : "by the way you are doing an article." Me? You know I can't really say much about SF. I only like reading it. That reminds me to give a little plug (I dig it, I really dig it) to Alan's story called: "As much as you can take." It should appear in MADCAP by the end of this year if you're lucky and is one of the best stories I've read. (I'm trying not to be biased.) Why? Well, because it's about SEX!!! I think it is a shame that hardly any SF writer (you can forget about amateurs as well) has contributed anything to this lovely, exciting subject. I'm trying to get Alan to compensate though! I think its best to finish here, as you might be embarrassed if I ramble on about this point and we don't want that, dowe? If you want to read more of my three K's turn to "DEUTSCHLAND, DEUTSCHLAND".

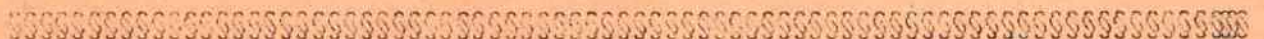


AND NOW FOR OUR NEXT TRICK

We intend to issue our number two in the summer of 1974, so that gives you enough time to get out your fannish thinking caps and your typewriters, while on the other hand it's not so far in the future that you can just forget about it. What I'm getting at is that Elke and I would like to receive your contributions for the next issue - we don't want to have to do it all ourselves next time.

Now, what would we like to receive. Well, I suppose anything really. It might be easier to say what we don't want. No poetry please. I think there are enough fanzines publishing ~~dytattay~~ excellent poetry as it is. And unfortunately we don't know what to do with artwork - no suggestions, please - so we don't require any of that either. I can hear you muttering away there, "He's a bit fussy for a newcomer who doesn't know anybody, isn't he."

Yes, he is! And I have also heard that the response to overseas fanzine is lower than to inland zines. Yeah, all right, but I'm an eternal optimist, so I'm going to live in hopes that I'll receive some contributions. I'd be particularly interested to hear what fanzine readers think of zines from other countries where they also speak what they laughingly refer to as English. I must confess that I feel closer in spirit to what I read in British fanzines than American, Australian or South African ones. Perhaps it's because most fanzine editors don't exactly go out of their way to cater for readers in other countries. So non-British readers, it's up to you to send me something to counter such bias towards Britain and things British that you find in these pages!
Like letters of comment.



WEST IS WEST

The big removal van charged down the hill towards the road-block. Tommy looked up and saw the soldiers on the bridge high above, training their machine-guns on the speeding van. He could feel his face going white and his palms becoming moist. As the road-block came nearer and nearer he wished fervently he could believe in God, but all he could think of was the men and the guns up on the Archway. Please let us get through alive, he whispered, but even as he tried to crouch down lower behind his father in the driving-seat, he heard the familiar rattle as the men above and below opened fire. Tony screamed.

But when he opened his eyes expecting to see the stony gaze of a people's policeman, he saw instead the familiar face of his mother. Her usually cheerful expression, however, had given way to a rather anxious look, which she tried to cover up with light chatter.

"Had another of those bad dreams, eh, son? Never mind, no school today. It's Saturday, moving day, and I've got a real breakfast ready for us today. Ham and eggs and fried bread. Got to keep our strength up now, haven't we?"

"Oh, Mum, don't talk about moving for a while. I've just had this dream. Nightmare would be a better word for it. It was about moving and they were shooting at us."

Tommy's mother sat down on the bed, looking more concerned than ever. "Who were shooting at us, son?"

"The soldiers and the police. At the Archway."

"Eh, you do have funny dreams, don't you. Now why would anybody want to shoot at us then? We'd be the last ones they'd think about. Your father and I have never had anything to do with the police our whole lives and we're both over forty now." She put her hand to her head, pushing back a strand of her long hair that had fallen into her face and trying to push back the unpleasant thought that had occurred to her at the same time. "You haven't been doing anything you shouldn't have, eh, Tom?"

"No, of course I haven't, mother." Tommy always said 'mother' when he was annoyed with her. "They were shooting at us to prevent us from escaping to the west. We were trying to crash the road-block. At the state frontier."

"Now I just haven't the foggiest idea what you're talking about, lad. State frontier, road-blocks in the middle of London. Come and have your breakfast and you'll feel much better."

Mrs. Brown left Tommy to wash and put a few clothes on, and rejoined her husband at the breakfast-table.

"How's young Tom this morning, love? Still having those nightmares, I take it, from the way he was yelling his head off earlier on. I think maybe he should see the doctor."

"Oh, you do, do you, James Brown? I've been saying that all week and you just pooh-poohed it and called me a typical worrying mother. I remember exactly what you said. 'Not happy if you haven't got something to worry about.' But I do worry, Jim. I do. Since he hit his head playing rugby. I don't care what anybody says to the contrary, it's a dangerous game."

"What's a dangerous game, Mum? Football? Not half as dangerous as rugby. You know, what they play in schools in the west. Bet you'd be worried stiff if I played that."

Mr. Brown looked at his son very carefully to see whether he was trying to make a fool of his mother. It wouldn't have been the first time, but then Tom wasn't quite himself these days. Tommy's father decided not to be angry, and instead asked innocently, "What do you mean, Tom, 'at schools in the west'? They play rugby at your school too, don't they?"

"Dad!" Tommy was horror-struck. "You know it's forbidden in the Republic. They only play that capitalist sport in West London and in the NRB. I was really only joking with Mum, you know."

"All right, lad, that's quite enough from you just now. Eat your food and don't say another word till you've finished. If it weren't for the fact that you're not well I'd be very angry indeed. You've played rugby for the last five years, since you were ten! And just in case you hadn't noticed this is not a republic. It's the United Kingdom and has been for over a thousand years. What's come over you, lad?"

Tommy had his mouth full of bacon and simply shrugged his shoulders. It was certainly true what his father had said, he had played rugby for years. What had he been thinking about before, and why had he said that about it being a republic? If he didn't even know himself, how could he possibly expect his parents to understand him.

"I'm sorry, Dad," he said when breakfast was over, "I don't know what came over me there. All those things I said. Now it seems all nonsense, but it seemed to be right when I said it. It must be the dreams, I suppose."

Mr. Brown started to ask what Tommy's dreams had to do with it, but was interrupted by the arrival of the men from the removal firm, who immediately busied themselves with the task of getting all the furniture into their waiting van. The Browns were kept very busy too with all the boxes of smaller articles, some of which could only be packed up at the very last moment, so there was no time to ask any more questions. Until Tommy looked out of the window.

"Hoy, Mum, Dad, it's the same van! It's the same van! I'm not travelling in that van, no, no. I know what you want to do. You want to escape to the west, don't you? And you didn't tell me in case I gave you away to the people's police. How could you think I'd tell on my own parents, how could you. And I'll bet we're not moving to Wood Green at all, more likely going straight to Kensington Airport. You only want the removal van to have something big enough to crash through the Archway Checkpoint. That's it, isn't it?"

"Tommy, Tommy," his mother was in two minds as to whether to call the doctor immediately or wait till they arrived at the new house. Better wait, she decided, then he'll probably be put in a nearby hospital and we can visit easily. She had no doubt that he would be hospitalised, he seemed completely delirious today, much worse than on the preceding days. Why, oh why did they have to make them play these rough games.

Mr. Brown tried hard not to let his wife see how concerned he really was. He knew she would worry even more if she knew. He considered what would be the best way to calm the boy, and came to the conclusion that the wisest course of action would be to get him to talk. Wasn't that what the psychiatrists did, after all?

"Easy now, lad" he said, "no need to get excited. As a matter of fact you're right about Kensington. We are going there. That's where our new house is, remember? Don't tell me that you don't remember looking it over with us now?"

"How could I have been to Kensington, Dad, don't talk such rubbish! I've never been in West London in my life. I wasn't born in the days when you could travel from one sector to another. And when I go from here in Muswell Hill even to East London, our state capital, I have to carry my identity card with me. Why don't you just admit you didn't trust me?"

James Brown gave his wife a hard look. "How about a cuppa then, Meg?"

"Good idea. I'll just put the kettle on. You two can take the weight off your legs while I get everything ready." But she didn't close the door behind her when she went into the kitchen. Her handkerchief was not far away as she got the tea ready.

Meanwhile her husband was beginning to wonder if he had maybe bitten off very much more than he could chew. He surveyed the bare walls of the living-room and wondered if the struggle to get on at work had been worth it after all. He felt somehow responsible for his son's condition. He must have been like this for months and he, James Brown, the boy's own father had simply not noticed. Meg thought it was to do with that knock on the head, but he had never heard of anyone behaving like this after being hit on the head. Better get on with it, he thought, and made himself as comfortable as he could on a box of paperbacks.

"I don't know, lad, I think it must be old age or overwork or something. Everything seems so strange today. All those things you say seem funny today, although they're really perfectly normal. I mean, everybody knows you need an identity card to go to East London, it being such a dangerous place to go and all that."

"Dangerous place? Really, Dad. I think you really have been overworking if you think that's the reason you need a pass to go there." Tommy surveyed his father contemptuously from on top of a pile of rolled-up carpets. "It's a kind of double precaution against any of us citizens of the Republic defecting to West London and then on to the NRB. Quite understandable when you think how many people run away to make big money exploiting poor people in West-Britain."

"Quite," replied his father, who was beginning to wonder if maybe it was him himself who wasn't right in the head. "What do those initials stand for - you know, NRB. I can never seem to remember."

"National Republic of Britain or West Britain as most people say. And when the people over there talk about our Republic they say 'East Britain'. And although we know that the whole of London belongs to us, they claim it belongs to them. So we learnt in our Political Studies class."

"Maybe you're thinking of Berlin, Tom. And East and West Germany. Are you sure you're not getting them mixed up with Britain and London?"

Mr. Brown could see that Tommy was getting a bit confused, although he managed to stutter, "I don't see what Berlin has to do with our divided London. It's the Imperial Capitol of Greater Germany, at least I think it is, isn't it, Dad?"

And with that he tumbled down from the carpet rolls and burst into tears on the floor, nearly tripping his mother as she came in with a tray of cups and saucers. While Mrs. Brown comforted her son, her husband fetched some sleeping tablets from the bathroom, which had been completely

overlooked in the excitement. They both managed to persuade Tommy to take several with his tea and soon he was sleeping quietly.

"Better not wait any longer, Meg. I'll phone the doctor now. The lad needs more care and attention than you and I can give him. He seems to be all mixed up with this stuff he gets in his political class. Seems to think he's in Berlin or something."

"But I thought they weren't allowed to teach them anything about politics in the school. Isn't that against the law?"

Her husband frowned. "Not quite, dear, but I must say I don't know about this class either."

Yes, thought Mrs. Brown as her husband phoned the doctor, you wouldn't know what Tom was doing at school, would you. You just don't take any interest in anything but that damned firm of yours. Not even your own anyway. You're just employed there like all the workers in your precious factory. I only hope young Tom gets something better out of life than we have.

Ten minutes later the doctor had arrived, followed shortly afterwards by an ambulance which whisked Tommy away to Highgate Hospital. And in his deep sleep he dreamed that his parents had been shot dead at the check-point and that he himself was under arrest charged with trying to flee the Republic.

The officer of the People's Police kept asking him the same questions over and over again. Why wouldn't he believe it was nothing to do with Tommy?

"What is your name?"

"Thomas John Brown."

"Identification number?"

"WA 755684."

"Address?"

"Look," pleaded Tommy, "I've told you all this already. Why don't you check the records at the Watford Registration Office."

"Just answer the questions fully," the policeman said stonily, "address?"

"56 Sefton Road, Borough of Hornsey, District of Watford," sighed the boy wearily.

"And country? What country do you live in? Of what country are you a citizen?"

"I am a citizen of - a loyal citizen of - the British Socialist Republic. All right?"

"Loyal citizens of our Republic don't flee to the imperialist west. We've had your family under surveillance for some time, as a matter of fact. The Party and the Peoples' Police consider it a good idea to make an example to other disloyal elements - yes, unfortunately there are such persons in our midst - of the absolute futility of attempting to violate the state frontier of the British Socialist Republic."

"Aw, come off it, man!" Tommy was too tired of it all to care now. "They tell us in Political Studies that West London stands on the territory of the BSR. If that's so, then why shouldn't I as a citizen of the BSR visit a part of my country?"

As there was no answer to that question Tommy was taken back to the prison hospital and put under sedation. He was glad because he had been hit by the hail of bullets too, although not badly hurt.

Meanwhile in Muswell Hill everything had been packed into the van and Mr. Brown travelled in the cab together with two of the removal men. They knew that the boy and his mother had gone to hospital and didn't quite know what to say, so they said very little and left Tommy's father alone with his thoughts. As the van sped down the A1 towards Highgate Archway he half expected to see the checkpoint that Tommy had told him about, but there was nothing out of the ordinary to be seen on Archway Road of any sort.

Suddenly he felt ashamed at always putting the problem of Tommy in his wife's lap, and asked the driver to stop at the bottom of the hill. He handed over the keys to the new house in Kensington and got out of the van. Slowly he walked up Highgate Hill towards the hospital and wondered what life was all about anyway. He inquired at the desk what ward his son was in and was given directions which sent him wandering all over the hospital complex.

Inside the hospital Tommy stirred and a nurse asked him how he felt.

"Where am I? Where is this?"

"It's a hospital, young man," answered the nurse who wasn't much older than Tommy really, "Highgate Hospital."

"So it was just a bad dream then. We made it. We really made it after all. Highgate Hospital's in West London. I'm in West London!"

Just as he had decided he would never find the right ward, Mr. Brown caught sight of his wife outside in the grounds making her way to the gate. Hurrying out he quickly caught up with her.

"How is he, Meg?" he asked breathlessly.

His wife regarded him with wide eyes and answered slowly, "Oh, he'll be all right. He's sleeping still. He hasn't lost too much blood."

"Blood, he's lost blood?"

"Yes, Jim," Mrs. Brown almost whispered, "they found two bullets in his shoulder. From a Russian rifle."

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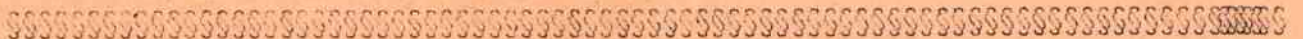
...though, you would perhaps like to know what it feels like living in the Vaterland, so here is the lowdown from someone who has spent 21 of her 25 years here, namely my very beautiful and very sexy wife Elke. If you would also like to read my thoughts on Germany you'll have to take a look at HELL 11.

DEUTSCHLAND, DEUTSCHLAND

Before I start off this article I must mention that I'm very pro-Britain. I suppose you still won't understand me, if you haven't been to Germany (and I don't mean on holiday either). Could it be those gorgeous 200 or so men I met during my glorious au-pair days? The truth I shall never know. Only that I finished those independent action packed days (and nights) by marrying a Scot! Actually, to tell you a secret I haven't regretted it, really.

So back in Germany again in 1971 after 3 years of London! Originally we had planned to go somewhere exotic like Hong-Kong, but fate was against us and Alan was offered a job. (lousy, but we found out too late) in Frankfurt first.

I had no trouble about my job, as I was sort of transferred to the Frankfurt Office of my firm, which proved to be unlucky though. And this is where we start. The to me all important subject of womens emancipation, or in Germany non-emancipation, namely finding a half decent job. The first six months I did some interesting work due to the fact that I was the only German national in this firm, although I owned the respectful title of 'Secretary'. Then my Boss (about 45 and ageing fast) gave me the sack as I refused in my polite and charming way to make coffee. I felt very strongly about this silly duty, as no males would ever dream of as much as poke their noses into the kitchen for even a minute. After all, they had more important things to do (like reading the Times while stupid females like me were trying to soothe annoyed clients of theirs). So I left this hospitable place and tried my luck on the non-restricted grand market in Frankfurt, International Business Centre of Germany. How I got on you can gloat over in my next episode.



EXCUSE ME, SIR, IS THIS YOUR FANZINE? I SHALL HAVE TO ASK YOU TO REMOVE IT AS IT IS CAUSING AN OBSTRUCTION TO THE FOOTPATH

I'd better say who the owners of this valuable piece of real estate are, I suppose. We are Alan and Elke Stewart, married couple of this parish. This is Alan doing this bit here. I was born on the 18th November 1944 in Edinburgh, Scotland, where I lived until I was 19. Then I moved to London, where I met my dear lady wife. She is a native of Hanau am Main, West Germany, birthplace of the Brothers Grima of fairytale fame, who were really grammarians! We were married in Hanau in July 1968 and lived for the following 3 years in London. Since June '71 we've been here in Frankfurt. I am a computer programmer with the Hessen Savings Bank Organisation Computer Centre, and Elke is a secretary/assistant at present looking for a new firm. Between jobs that is. That's us. We'll be at TYNECON 74 in Newcastle over Easter so we'll be getting to know a lot of British SF fans personally I hope.



## MY BIT OF MUSIC

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### Introduction

I think now the time has come to make Alan aware that he is not the only born reviewer but has some competition. And what competition! This is my first go at reviewing music and I do not intend to indulge in arty way out words with a smart sound impact that nobody wants to hear anyway. You can of course read this kind of rubbish in the professional papers, if you wish. No, what I intend to do is share with you my own personal favourites (and believe me I have a thousand and one, all different) and let you know how I feel about them. And I'll also warn you what not to waste money on. Maybe you'll agree - maybe not, but you should definitely enjoy yourself! I am interested how every one of you got on so please let me know. And I do mean write a few short lines about it. Don't beat about the bush trying to find the right words, just put down what you would say. (That's what I do anyway).

### Living in the material world

GEORGE HARRISON

This is one of those records that do not make you jump up and rave when you first hear it. The second time, however, all falls into its place and you can just sit and listen. After that you find yourself humming several tunes. The whole record is terribly melodic and harmonic. You can relax, find a bit of peace and really forget all your troubles. Sounds a bit like some wonderful super medicine? Well, it has this effect on me. I have not been able to resist the urge to play this soother at least once a day when it first was added to our collection. And even now I play it quite often. Reading a review in one of the professional musical newspapers I can only wholeheartedly disagree violently to the accusation that it sounds like flower power. That shows that the reviewer has only done his duty and listened once to be able to write his article. It only seems so when listening superficially. About the words I can only say one thing: if you are an ardent believer then it is all the better - if not, like me then just don't listen to the words. If I have rambled on about this lovely record it might make you curious enough to have a proper listen to it. It is well worth it.

### Goat's Head Soup

STONES

Think of Angle, Heartbreaker and Star Star, which is probably not played on BBC. If you listen to the words you'll know why. But that is not the only reason why it is my favourite track. What I like about the Stones is that they are getting better with every record but remain very much the hard rock Stones with an odd quiet track now and then. Alan is responsible for the last three or so LP's he bought by them but Goat's Head Soup I would have bought myself.



BurnDEEP PURPLE

I was a bit uneasy when I heard that Deep Purple had a new singer as I thought they were perfect or as near perfect as possible. But I was not disappointed at all but immediately very much liked the way the new singer knew how to use his voice like an instrument. You just have to listen to 'Sell Away'. We discovered Deep Purple by chance really. My younger sister and others had them on their list of favourites but we never heard anything by them until they had the glorious idea to issue some of their LP tracks as Singles and they were played on the radio. Then it was a love at first listen with me. Maybe it will be with some of you as well.

Past, Present & FutureAL STEWART (no relation)

This LP is not such a good one to be introduced to the lovely Al Stewart as I think he had a stronger impact come through on his other records. The lyrics are so moving and I do mean they move something about - you don't quite know what, I never know what the fuss was about poetry, because I never liked meaningless words, (to me meaningless anyway) but I would say that Al Stewart has poetry in him and it is the poetry of today and describes everyday things in such an impressive and true way that one just has to listen to the words and the record becomes alive. If you want to know what I am going on about do listen to 'Orange' his previous record while you follow the words on the back cover and if you don't see what I mean I don't know.....

COCKNEY REBEL

If you like "Sebastian" and want to buy the LP, listen to it first. You might change your mind. It seems that the group is still experimenting in every direction and they haven't yet found a style, let alone their style. 'Sebastian' is definitely the best they've done so far and maybe the last. Best just to wait and see.

RingoRINGO STARR

"I'm the greatest and you better believe it". I don't know about the greatest but he is certainly one of the very good. I have always liked Ringo and his voice before he was discovered 'in his own sing'. This LP is in entertaining Beatle style and a pleasant way to relax. For those who like Country and Western and have not yet heard Ringo's "Beaucoups of Blues" I would most strongly recommend them to listen to it now. I think his voice is very much made for Country and Western.

A Parcel of RoguesSTEELEYE SPAN

If you know the beautiful sound Steeleye Span produce I only have to say that they have improved on their last LP that is 'Below the Salt'. If that is at all possible. If you have not heard of them you haven't lived yet! They delight with old English folk music some of which is the real thing and other songs written by them. They do it so well, that it is impossible to tell what is what. This latest record is probably better suited to introduce non folkloric-fans or those who have not yet discovered their love for it. The backing is more pop sounding than their earlier records. Especially the track 'Allison Gross' lets you sing along straight away. It still is my special favourite.

I'm a writer not a fighterGILBERT O'SULLIVAN

I immediately fancied Gilbert - I mean his music (among other things)- when I first saw him on Telly. His voice is pleasant but a bit saucy no matter how docile the song is. Maybe that is his recipe for success. Who knows, perhaps, maybe? I think this LP is a very good one to get because it has a lot of goodies and it might be a bit difficult to keep up with this sort of stuff and not be boring. If you're under 40 you might share my view on this.

URIAH HEEPAny of their records

You might know one or two LP's by Uriah Heep and you might not know any. It is a bit difficult to try and describe just this or that record without knowing the others. When I first fell in love with Uriah Heep (you will say not again! She is always falling in love) I saw them on the box doing 'Easy Living'. I was so startled that I sat up straight and watched them in fascination while I was really taking in the rhythm with my whole body. (Alan laughs about this phrase of mine but that is the only way to describe it). I had heard the song a few times but never properly. I immediately had to have the single, then followed 'Look at yourself' and a few days later Alan bought me 'The Magician's birthday' for my birthday. I was expecting something like 'Easy Living' and very disappointed indeed. They could have nearly been another group. Alan liked the LP however, and told me what I wanted was their earlier stuff. So I did buy the other records one by one and was very delighted with ... "Very 'eavy... Very 'umble" as this was more the easy living style. After a while, however, I discovered the other records and it is remarkable how every record is entirely different but as funny as it sounds still their style and I do like every LP the same. If I had to pick my favourite now I just would not know which one to choose. So I can't tell you which one is the one for you. Only recommend that you do listen to all if possible.



Loud & ProudNIZARETH

If you like 'This flight tonight' then you will love the LP. The songs are all in that style and every track is good. It grows on me more and more and I think this group deserves to get high. If on the other hand you have not heard of 'this flight tonight' as Alan tells me just because they are a 'Scottish' group does not necessarily mean their anywhere in the Charts in Britain- then it's about time you did.

Now there, if you have been able to bear with me so far I should award you a special medal. I didn't know I could go on about anything for so long (except, of course sex but that is yet another story) I thought that it was a privilege of Alan. You never can tell, can you.

Please do write and give me your views about any record you like or dislike even if you disagree violently with me - I will be charmed to not have the lot to do myself.

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I LOVE YOU EARTHMAN

Chelka stood in the bare room and watched the green light on the wall. She thought of Harry and the child that she was carrying. His child. The Earthman's child. Oh, those wonderful Earthmen. Chelka loved them all but most of all Harry the captain. She thought of their coming to Orian two years before and their sudden departure today. Wonderful - and strange, but then Chelka didn't pretend to understand the ways of these gods from the distant stars.

They had come from the sky with their wonderful machines and taught the simple people of Orian. Taught them to till the soil and shown them the wheel and how it could be used. In return for these gifts the people had given the Earthmen their women. Chelka and her sisters had loved the men from Earth passionately - until today.

Even as she thought of him Chelka felt the tug of the Earthman. The pull of these strange men was so strong. Strong enough to enable her to transport herself into the machine in which they had come from their world. When she had appeared before him Harry had not received her with the joy Chelka had expected, but instead had brought her personally to this strange room.

She longed to bring Harry to her now but knew that that would be wrong. A man should call his woman to him, not the other way round. So it was written in the ancient wisdoms of Orian. Only at the moment of death would a woman bring her man to her to witness her return to the darkness. Oh Harry, thought Chelka, I love you Earthman.

Meanwhile on the bridge Harry pressed a button and heaved a sigh of relief. And now, he thought, back home to the wife and kids. In the bare room below the light had changed to red as the airlock of the great starship slowly opened.

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In the spring of 1973 I sent out 25 copies of my very first fanzine, FAR - FRANKFURT AMATEUR MAGAZINE REVIEW. In return I received fanzines from Linda Bushyager, Lisa Conesa, Ethel Lindsay, Audrey Walton, and Hector Raul Pessina. I also received letters of comment from five of the 25, plus a postcard from Jim Linwood, to whom I didn't send a copy as I didn't know his address. The five letters and the postcard are reprinted on the following pages, together with my comments. To all those who wrote and to all who sent me their fanzines, thank you.

Now I've got a bit of space left here so I'll tell you about a very peculiar thing that happened to me some time ago. I found in our letterbox an envelope containing the 'Allgemeines Paanisches Dienstagsblatt' sent by one Helmut Bidmon, 2000 Hamburg 50, Prahistr. 5. As to the name, 'allgemein' means 'general', 'Dienstags' is 'Tuesday' and 'Blatt' means 'leaf' or 'page'. What the other word means, God only knows.

On the page are 4 sentences, one of which has been ticked. It reads: "You have received this sheet because you are a member of a Parry Rhodan Club". But I'm not. Very strange.

~~~~~

PETE WESTON, 31 Pinewall Avenue, Kings Norton, Birmingham 30, England

Are you joking or did you really write a review of SPECULATION in your fanzine? If you did it seems a bit odd (to say the least) that you didn't enclose the relevant pages. In fact, without pages 2-5 - i.e. 33% of the issue - there didn't seem much point in sending your fnz to me.

Definitely one of the strangest things to happen to me, fannishly, this year! Anyway, if you have reviewed SPEC-31 I would like to see the results!

// Glad to have been able to contribute to your fannish year, Pete. I wasn't joking, actually. FAR was duplicated using the office copier which was always going 'kaputt'. The result was that I wasn't able to copy all the pages, and as I didn't want to wait too long in getting the zine out, I just sent those pages I had already copied.

As a matter of fact I hadn't written the review of SPECULATION by then so it was never done. I promise to write you a loc on number 33 if it ever appears! He and my promises! //

But I do agree with your ENERGIEMEN review: so many others seemed to think that issue was so good... it amazed me!

PETE PRESFORD, 10 Dalkeith Road, Sth Reddish, Stockport SK5 7EY, England

Thanks for the 'pink pages'. First of all I would suggest you keep this type of cover. It has a distinct feeling to it. Hhham, what do I mean? I reckon one of my biggest bugs is looking for addresses in fanzines. If I need an address I have to hunt through piles of zines. OK, perhaps I should be a little bit more tidy, but then I am an SF-fan! Review-zines look like any other zine, but this is where the bulk of addresses lie. How much

easier it will be to find a review-zine in that tottering pile by the glint of that subtle pink cover.

// Sorry, Pete; but as you can see the zine isn't a review-zine anymore, nor does it have pink covers! No addresses either. Actually the review-zine was not really supposed to be simply providing a list of addresses, you know.

To all those who received FAR but don't get the bit about the 'pink pages', let me just explain that I sent out the first 10 or so copies with shocking pink covers. But it was rather fiddly so I dropped the idea.

By the way, Pete, why did you send me MADCAP in the first place? //

Why did I send you MADCAP? Yep, why did I send you MADCAP! Well Alan that is a little good question, now how can I answer it.

There I was sat all alone one night staggering through a pile of zines, letters etc. looking for subjects for M's first mailing list, Childo Colloy was dealing with most of those abroad but I had noticed that the bulk of them lay in Aussie and the USA. "Right", thinks little me, "I will send a few to our friends in the Common Market". I had picked out nine and was looking for one more to make it a round ten, when I saw this name flashing out at me.....Alan Stewart..... now my mind works in strange ways - as you may have guessed. Mike Bloomfield and Al Stewart have always been two of my favourite song writers/singers/guitarists. I had a friend by the name of Mike Bloomfield writing for MAF-FUNCTION, now here was Al Stewart. How could I help but send you a copy. Nuff said.....

// Yeah, Al Stewart. Elke and I have his albums 'Love Chronicles', 'Zero She Flies', 'Orange' and 'Past, Present and Future'. Great stuff. Just as well 'the name's the same', eh. //

So Elke has let you buy a Dupo eh. Well it is always a good thing to get the wife's permission on buying something like a Dupo. It would prove somewhat awkward sneaking it in the back door under a copy of a fanzine.

Me, well I am ok. I keep it in the shed at the back. Who typed that word two lines up, awkward, hmmm has a nice sound to it, think I will leave it in.

// As we live in a third-floor flat, it would prove very difficult indeed to sneak it in the back door! And shouldn't you have got Peter Roberts' permission before using the word 'awkward'? //

Ah, back again. Just been popping the kettle on. Today being Sunday does not mean it is a day of rest for me. Worked up to about 3.30 wiring flush lighting in somebody's lounge controlled by a four gang switch through a 500 watt dimmer.

// You know what, Pete, our main light in the hall doesn't work. Do you think if you happen to be passing Frankfurt..... //

I would like to write a lot more letters than I do at present, but time does not allow this to happen. So I just write articles, poetry, and that type of thing when time does allow.

In respect to FAR I must say that it is a good thing if you can bring it off! You seem to have much the same idea as I do with MADCAP, i.e. not just reviewing one type of zine but going through a whole field of fanzines, and no matter what you review, be it rock music, SF, poetry, fannish zines - in relation to SF - it is still a fanzine. And like myself I hope you do not get bogged down with too much to do.

// Yes, well, it has taken us rather a long time to put this zine together. We're now trying to cover a much wider field than in FAR, but for this first issue we've had to write nearly everything ourselves. We've not exactly been snowed under with contributions, but perhaps this will change for number two. How has the response to MADCAP been, Pete? //

The first issue of MADCAP - to put number one out that is - brought a lack of response from fans for articles.

But since then I have fished on the border of fanandom and found there is no fifty mile limit, and my nets brought me in such a goodly catch that MADCAP 3 had to be pruned. Which of course gives me a good start on No. 4.

Glad to see you review on FAT ANGEL, a zine I have not heard of. I bought the 'Manassas' album for my Xmas present, and believe me, Alan, all four sides of this album are worth listening to.

// I haven't yet bought the 'Manassas' double-album, but the 'Albion Doowah' album by Cat Mother and the Allnight Newsboys, which was also given a good review in the rockzine FAT ANGEL, now resides in our record collection. And a very good record it is too! What's more it only cost me DM 6,-- in a sale - the normal price of LP's here is DM 22,-- //

"Pete", from Anita in the kitchen. "Tea's ready when you are".

Now Alan what can a growing lad say to that. Chicken, with small lamb chops. Covered in a curry rice mixture with sweet corn on the side. Ho damn you, I do not suffer from bad stomach. Will not very much.

// Glad to hear you're keeping Pete well fed, Anita. Now I know to come at mealtimes, next time I just pop round to Greater Manchester! //

The last words. Keep FAR going Alan, there is a gap in review-zines for what I think you intend to do, I did like your talk-through style of the zines on pages 7/8/8 1/2 - 8 1/2, I thought I did tricks like that in MALFUNCTION - the style was quite pleasant. All the best with FAR.

// What do you mean - 'quite' pleasant? Hope you find our new zine to your liking too, Pete. //

PETER ROBERTS, Flat 4, 6 Westbourne Park Villas, London W2, England

South African? No, I assure you I have no connections with such a place and it intrigues me to think where you might have got that idea. "Mr. Roberts is from Sith Africa" suggests that you have a specific written passage in mind, but I can't identify it, though Nick Shears refers to his country as Sarf Efrica - a fair imitation of its peculiar accent. Ah well, at least it's better than being called English, eh? As a Cornishman - and Nubyon Kernow member - I probably have more trouble that way than a Scot or a Welshman - the precise definitions caused some argument when I applied for a passport, though I eventually settled for 'British' as a compromise description.

// Really, Pete, I'm surprised that a graduate in English and American Studies doesn't recognise a quotation from 'The Triumph of the Immortal Aardvark'! You see, my 'Little Oxford Dictionary' tells me that an aardvark, which you and your correspondents are always going on about in EGG for some reason, is a "S.-Afr. quadruped between armadillos and ant-eaters" so I foolishly jumped to the conclusion that you came from the land of the aardvarks.

// I suppose Mobyon Kernow is the Cornish Nationalist Party or is it a literary association? I know that 'Kernwys' is Cornish for 'Cornish', and that the last native speaker died in 1777, but apart from that my Cornish is rather limited. Now when it comes to Scottish Gaelic I can tell you, "Gad bu dona an saor bu mhalta a shilsaug - mar a thubhairt a bhuan an uair a chaochail e." Shall I translate for the ignorant Sassanachs, eh? "Although the carpenter was bad yet his shavings were good - as his wife said when he died". It says here. Now what did she mean, I wonder?

Actually, I have them all properly educated about Scots not being English, the Germans I mean. They still don't understand just what the difference is, but they know that I think there is one! //

Thanks, anyway, for the gratifying review of CHECKPOINT. It now does contain some tv news, as you suggest - by comparison with the German FANEWS - it should; previous issues have also included oddments of film, tv, and radio information of interest to sf fans and LOCUS, incidentally, usually includes a good deal of news in this area. But I take your point. The answer, I think, lies in my own relative lack of interest in the mechanical media - I don't even possess a radio, let alone a tv - and thus I must depend on other people digging up relevant information from 'The Radio Times' and suchlike and passing it on to CHECKPOINT. Remember too, that unlike FANEWS and its mass of staff and helpers, I'm working on my tod.

As to FAR in general, I must say I enjoyed it, short as it was. I think you'll have problems, however, since you're not the first person to attempt a publication of 'in-depth' fanzine reviews. CHECKPOINT started out that way, but I abandoned the first series after some seven issues, restarting it a year later as a newszine. The problems were numerous: firstly, I undertook to review every fanzine received and devoted a half to a full foolscap page to each one. In a very short time, therefore, the whole thing clogged up and I gave in eventually when the stack of waiting fanzines totalled one hundred. Secondly, the exercise became tedious - little feedback resulted from the early CHECKPOINT except an ever-increasing volume of fanzines and, in any case, the reviews became tiresome to write in such quantity. Finally the circulation was poor - too few people were interested, especially - and not unnaturally - when the reviews became dated and publication erratic. Sorry to sound depressing - 'tis a sad tale but true, however. The short reviews in the current CHECKPOINT are far more practical.

If you're selective in your choice of fanzines, the whole thing becomes much easier, of course - except that it may annoy the fanzine who get missed out. I'd suggest reviewing a selection of fanzine in some detail and listing, or briefly noting, all others received. But quarterly? That's a long time, gov'nor - unless you're thinking of producing huge and heavy issues. Have you seen Bill Bowers' THE WORLDS, by the way, and of course, the original HAVERINGS from Ethel Lindsay? Both are devoted to fanzine reviewing and should be of interest.

// When I first received your letter, Pete, I completely disagreed with what you said about the whole thing becoming too much for one, but now I bow to the wisdom of experience. All the things you say are true. And how! Noticeably I only heard from people I said nice things about! But others sent their fanzines, including Ethel Lindsay who reviewed FAR in HAVERINGS 55 by saying, "He doesn't say what a Scot is doing in Germany but reviews fanzines in a readable manner". Thus have I entered the annals of fandom! Ethel, as a fellow-Scot, should know that I am here for the money. //

I presume FIJAB/OT meant "fandom is just a bloody waste of time".

// Yup. //

Anyway I found the comments on the fanzines interesting, though, not surprisingly, I disagree with them. One point of actual technique - I think the fact that ENERGUMEN was totally different from MADCAP should, perhaps, have been made more obvious; the best way, in fact, is to review the former in a separate grouping - put all the 'Hugo' nominees and potential nominees in a bunch - MERG + SFC, SPEC, ALGOL, OW, GRANF, etc.

// Now here is where I disagree with you. ENERGUMEN may have been a very polished production, whereas MADCAP is still in its infancy - 3 issues so far - but basically both are 'gunzines'. American gunzines tend to be much better in outward appearance and with better contributions than their UK counterparts but I find a differentiation on these grounds alone somewhat artificial. It's up to the British editors to try harder. Most do. Look how American ZIMRI looks these days! But I myself go for the British juvenile sense of humor, witness my column in HELL! //

The GANNETSCRAPBOOK is really a local apa, a collection of short personal-zines without any general editing; the quality therefore varies, of course. But it's one of those fan-ish publications which are far more intelligible and far more entertaining if you know the people involved or at least have some idea of - in this instance - the Gannet group. I enjoyed the SCRAPBOOK very much, but would hesitate to recommend it to an outsider.

// So I am an outsider, eh! I don't say any more bad things about the crowd from the 'Gannet' pub, as Elke and I will be at the Tynucon up in Gannetland or has it been renamed Ganntia? //

PAUL SKELTON, 185 Pondbury Towers, Lancashire Hill, Stockport SK5 7RH, England

I have not so far acknowledged receipt of your 'almost fanzine'. Have you seen MALFUNCTION 3? Personally I think it's better than MADCAP, although previous MALF's were pretty cruddy. Regarding your HELL 7 review, I must apologise for that 'Rememberance'. I am a lousy speller. If I see it in writing I presume the writer is correct. Un-for-tu-nately Lisa is even worse than I am. Just about the worst, in fact.

// So it was just a typing mistake, eh, Paul. And I thought it was a bit of poetic licence on the part of Miss Conusa. How unromantic.//

Gurfandom is bursting out all over. At the Eastercon I somehow managed to buy some zines written entirely in German. This, despite being especially careful not to buy any foreign-language zines. I'll send 'em you sometime, on the off-chance you ain't seen 'em.

// Please do. I can fully understand how you were able to unwittingly buy German fanzines, as they tend to have names like SCIENCE FICTION TIMES, STORY CENTER, MUNICH ROUND-UP and FAREMS or names taken from Latin. Never mind, this is one German fanzine written in English.//

Cassandra, incidentally, is currently groaning away in the bedroom. She is poorly-sick, so I shall have to cease and desist with this letter-writing. She is also pregnant - due 19/12/73 - which has little to do with anything.

// By the time you read this, she'll probably have given birth to a little Skulton or Skultoness. I see from Cas's column in Hell 9 that in the

latter case she will receive either the names Bethany Jane or Darcy Jane! God help her! And this from parents called Carol and Paul! I look forward to meeting the lovely Lady Cassandra at the next Eastercon, so you better be there, Bethany Jane and all, not to mention Deborah and the others. On the other hand, perhaps not. Cas will probably punch me for publicly insulting her choice of names! //

JIM LINWOOD, 125 Twickenham Road, Islington, Middx., England

Thanks for the egoboo in your reviewzine, FAR, which was enjoyed.

// The egoboo on the zine, Jim?//

Sorry I can't supply you with any material - I'm now reviewing zines for Fred Hummings' mag, VIEWPOINT. Write more about yourself in FAR 2.

// Now that's the sort of thing every faned likes to hear - "write more about yourself". By the way, who is the Marion Linwood whose letter is published in ZIMRI 5? Is she your wife, sister, or just someone who happens to share your surname and address?//

GRAY BOAK, 6 Hawks Road, Kingston upon Thames, KT1 3EG, England

Thanks for the magazine. I shall remain forever curious as to the contents of pages 2-5, however. I approve of magazines that review fanzines, but I wonder if you realise what a monkey you've placed on your back? I await developments....

// I've now taken the monkey back to the fan zoo where it belongs, and joined forces with my wife - which is always a good thing to do - to produce this personalzine/genzine. The shape it takes in the future depends to a large extent on the response of the readers. I don't entertain any too great hopes of being able to get people to contribute articles, stories, etc. to an overseas fanzine, but this may change if we can twist a few arms at Tynescon! //

The problem of setting out to do 'constructive criticism' is that it requires knowledge of the field - the prime reason for my MAD feud! You let yourself down badly when talking about CHECKPOINT. I'm sure Peter has already informed you about his nationality, but he may not have informed you that EGG was voted best British fanzine last year.

// No, he didn't. He's far too modest. Re CHECKPOINT - when I said in FAR that I thought Peter's writing ability was above that required for a newszine and that it seemed a pity he confined himself to bringing out that kind of zine, I was thinking about the long gaps between EGGs. I can see that I didn't properly express myself in this respect, and I imagine that's what you're getting at here, Gray. //

If you didn't like ENERGUMEN, can I buy it from you? I really should have subscribed to it, but somehow never got round to it. Born lazy. I'm not alone in considering 'NERG as the best fanzine around, and Rosemary Uilyot as the most entertaining writer in fandom. Both she and Susan were nominated for the fan-writing 'Hugo' last year, and deservedly so. I'm surprised at your opinions - though perhaps they do reinforce my feeling that fannishness

is something that takes time to grow onto you. But then you go and praise CYNIC! Jim also does reviews for Fred Hemmings' VIEWPOINT, by the way.

// I sent you my ENERGUMEN 14 free of charge, Gray, but I still haven't heard whether you've received it! And just because someone is nominated for an award doesn't mean I have to agree with that nomination. What I criticised in FAR was simply their writing in ENERGUMEN 14. Of course it was only my opinion. The Glicksohns will be getting a copy of this zine so they can tear me to pieces. If by 'fannishness' you mean acceptance of any old crap as good writing, then I hope I never find any of the stuff growing onto me! And by the way, there's no such word as 'onto'.

Hey, Gray, you remember I asked you why people don't write more in fanzines about their other interests outside science fiction, like why you don't write something about model aircraft. //

Why don't I write about model aircraft? Because the people CYNIC is for - my friends in fandom - wouldn't be greatly interested. Because I'd have to start at the beginning, and that wouldn't interest me. Communication between fellow-enthusiasts is much better - and briefer - than attempting to tell a non-enthusiast the finer details of an interest. Hence fanspeak, of course. I could say to a fellow-modeller: "I'm having problems with the 02/73/74 mottle on my Hasegawa 262" and he'd appreciate the situation immediately.

// I totally disagree with you on this point, Gray. I find the use of what you call 'fanspeak' objectionable because it is the jargon of an elitist group. When the new SF-fan or any friend of a fanzine publisher gets hold of an amateur magazine from the science fiction world, he is at first at a complete loss as to what the hell is being written about! I try to avoid it like the plague, although I have succumbed to the temptation to use the word 'fanzine' as it's shorter and snappier than 'amateur magazine' though it doesn't say much to an outsider. I'm all for making it as easy as possible for people who don't know fanzines to get to know them.

If someone such as yourself were to write an interesting article on the Hasegawa and its mottle, it would be read by non-enthusiasts simply because they are non-enthusiasts and wonder what on earth a Hasegawa is. I sent my uncle in Edinburgh a model kit for a Yamaha motor cycle for Xmas and it was made by Hasegawa! //

Basically, as I see it, there are four kinds of fanzine: amateur fiction, serious criticism, fannish and those that will print anything - generalising madly. Pro-fiction is bad enough without having to read amateur stuff so I avoid the first. They do have their place, however. The second I like to read, but couldn't do myself. The third gives me most pleasure, both in reading and in writing. The last is the refuge for those without the talent for the first three, for those without direction, for the naive and the ignorant. Not that you won't find ignorant, naive, directionless lack-talents in other categories - particularly the first - but this kind of fanzine does seem to be a hot-house for them.

// Strong words //

To use a metaphor: pinnacles of achievement are attained by building on a narrow base. It doesn't have to be the same base as mine - better not, in fact, the less competition the better. A good fanzine must be well-edited, which implies exclusion, which implies a set of directions.

Hmm. I seem to have wandered far from my point. Basically: I talk modelling to modellers, fandom to fans, and a rather special sub-set of fans, at that. However, the finest, I feel: the ones that make fandom more than a correspondence club for SF readers.

~~~~~

Well, I hope you enjoyed the letters and didn't find all the references to FAR too confusing. I look forward to hearing from Gray, Jim, Paul and the three Petos - sounds like a new rock group - again and from all the rest of you too.

Traditionally in fanzines letters are 'letters of comment' - locs - but please don't feel restricted to commenting on the magazine. Elke and I would be happy to receive suggestions - no, not that sort! - and ideas, as well as, of course, actual contributions. But no artwork, please, we don't know how to get that on to the stencils yet!

~~~~~

A MIND-STRETCHING FORCE?

In his famous-or infamous- book FUTURE SHOCK Alvin Toffler makes the assertion that "science fiction has immense value as a mind-stretching force". He also considers that SF writers "can lead young minds through an imaginative exploration of the jungle of political, social, psychological and ethical issues that will confront these children as adults".

Hmm. Is that so? That SF writers could do this I do not quarrel with, but do they actually do it? I submit that it's only in very exceptional cases that SF even attempts to deal with political and social issues, and psychological science fiction is something I don't seem to have seen too much of in my 20 years of SF reading.

Oh, the ethical issues are there in SF nowadays, stories about the now fashionable environment which are singularly unconstructive about the problems confronting us. The authors take the view, "What can we do? We're living in the wonderfully democratic USA where everybody's free to do as they please - at least as far as ruining the environment's concerned".

That special original anthologies of 'dangerous' SF such as the DANGEROUS VISIONS trilogy and BAD MOON RISING have to be published to give controversial science fiction an airing at all - and is it really all that controversial after all? - demonstrates how 'safe' ordinary SF is. The bulk of SF consists of escapist thrillers and semi-thrillers anyway.

Perhaps Toffler has hit the nail right on the head though in saying that 'young minds' can be helped by science fiction. Sure, but isn't it about time that adults were given a helping hand too?