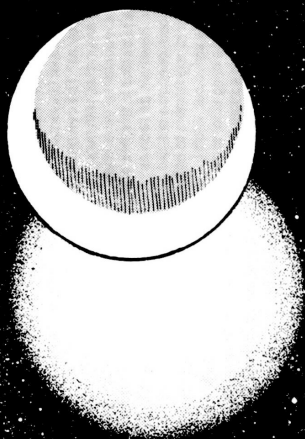
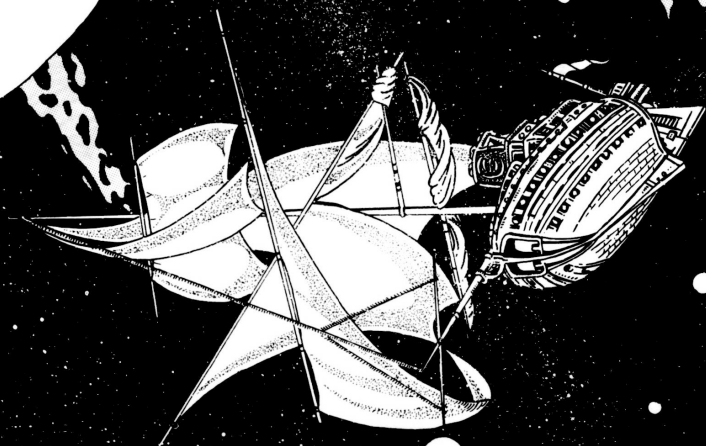


CRYSTAL SHIP 13



Crystal Ship 13
May/June '87



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All artwork this issue is down to the prolific pen of the King of the Kumbrian Kartoonists, Shep Kirkbride.

Pink Snow On Green Lawns

An Editorial : May 1987

Springtime in Milton Keynes is one of the best times in the new city. It's then that the full benefit of the multi-thousand pound investment that the City Development Corporation has made over the years in landscaping, in planting trees, bushes and flowers, becomes apparent. It becomes a real pleasure to amble round the city, to drive along its streets. Everywhere you go, you are greeted by new colour, whether it be the sunny yellows and cheerful purples of the early crocuses, the yellow and white banks of daffodils, the fiery reds of tulips, the pink and white blossoms on the flowering trees, or just the warming bright green of new growth on the broad grass verges and multitudinous trees.

Even out here on the fringe of the city, in the old town of Newport Pagnell, life suddenly doesn't seem so gloomy. As I sit at my desk, I can see into the garden, at the remaining bloom on our young flowering cherry, and on the huge column of pink that is the mature cherry tree across the road. Today is one of those changeable May days, sunshine and heavy showers, one minute bright and shining, the next dark, foreboding. During the dark times, the abiding impression is of a wierd winter scene -- pink snow falling and drifting on green lawns. At the back of the house, the lilac is coming back to life and will be in full bloom before the week is out. The old symbols of Spring as a time of rebirth are certainly being reinforced this year -- we've had to cut the lawns twice already (one of the less welcome aspects of Spring, the arrival of new, time-consuming, chores).

In myself, too, there is a re-surgence of the life-force. Since Christmas, and the asthma attack that I wrote about last editorial, I have felt progressively stronger, and have had no return of either the asthma or hayfever. (It is here that the editor may be imagined frantically thumping his wooden desk, searching for the necessary luck to offset such a tempting attack of hubris.) Apart from a cold a few weeks back, and a tummy bug that laid the pair of us out a month or so ago, I've come through the remainder of the winter in pretty good shape.

I've also come out of it re-equipped for fanzine production, having traded-up from my old Amstrad 6128 to a PC-compatible computer. The home machine is still an Amstrad, but this time one of Mr. Sugar's excellent PC1512 models, giving me the facility to produce material at home, take the disks into work and run them off through the PC on my desk at the OU. By next issue, the whole set-up should be in place whereby I can transfer files from the PCs to

the Macintosh Plus that also sits in my office, use that marvelous machine to 'typeset' the material and make up the final pages, before outputting the final camera copy through a laserprinter. (This issue was totally produced using the Mac on its own, which is considerably less convenient, as I have to find time at work to type the issue into the machine in the first place, and time is still not a commodity I have at all much of at the OU.)

You are holding the first fruits of my productive Spring in your hands now, a fresh new copy of *Crystal Ship*, ink still wet from the repro shop. I hope that it is as welcome as the other products of Spring.

Content-wise, there is very much a mixed cargo, in direct contrast to the last couple of issues. There is a unifying force, though, and that's the fact that all the illustrations were provided by Shep Kirkbride, in as fine a display of sustained creativity as one is likely to see. Poor Shep may now be visited at the Sunnyvale Rest Home for Rundown Artists, where he is recovering from a near-terminal attack of Cartoonist's Cramp, the result of many over-long hours hunched over the drawing board.

Dorothy Davies contributes a piece on an obsession of hers. Obsessions fascinate me: my major one is motor racing, I suppose, as there is no *rational* explanation of why I get so excited at spindly cars whizzing around in circles, but other peoples' obsessions also tickle my funny bone at times. You sometimes see them in Sunday supplements, displaying the results of a lifetime's obsession with Argentinian corned beef cans, Victorian lampshades, Edwardian graffitti, Etruscan lavatory pot shards or some such *outré* interest. Have you got any interesting obsessions? Let's hear about them: don't be shy, we all have these peculiar foibles in varying degrees.

William Bains contributes a piece on a subject dear to my heart, namely scientific academia, the white-coat-and-ivory-tower syndrome that pervades even the OU (where the academics vie with career bureaucrats to see who can think up the most nonsensical way of organising things: the score early in the second decade is a hard-fought draw!). I'll be popping up here and there with odds and sods (just to fill the vacant slots, you understand), on odd subjects, like dust bugs and the kipper tie.

There is also one heck of a letter-column, largely as a result of Dave Collins' s fanart article last issue. When Dave digs himself out of the pile of printout he's had from me, comprising all of the comments received, he'll be getting down to work on the second installment for next issue. That, believe it or not, I fully intend to have out before the end of the year. Yes folks, *three* issues in 1987! Can fandom really stand such an epoch-shaking event? Can British fandom stand both that *and* a Worldcon in the same year? Can my wallet even stand the strain? To all of which, the answer is probably the same.



by John D. Owen

I haven't always been a sufferer from the dreaded hay-fever, that scourge of the human being, which scours out the sinuses each year with scalding torrents of fluids every time the sufferer comes downwind of anything resembling a pollen grain (or, in my case, a dust particle). No, there once was a time when the worst I could look forward to was an occasional summer cold sniffle. That was just as well, as with asthma already, the last thing I wanted was hay-fever as well -- had I been afflicted with both as a child, I doubt I'd have made it to puberty.

No, my hay-fever is of the manmade variety, the offshoot of a failed attempt to rid me of my asthma. It started a year or so after I married and moved to Milton Keynes from Middlesex, a distance of some fifty miles. Naturally enough, given such a move, I changed doctors too, from the wrinkled family practitioner who had treated me since I was nowt but a baby rabbit (my mother's description -- it seems I was an ugly babe), to a new bod, more or less picked at random. New face, new broom seemed to be the motto, so the new doc set to work to try out various patent remedies on me, finally sending me off for a series of allergy tests.

I don't know how many of you have ever undergone allergy testing: to me, it seemed like the closest thing to an ancient Oriental torture that I had yet come across. What the local clinic proceeded to do was to pin me down to a table, with a gag in my mouth to stop me screaming (can I help it if I'm a coward?), while the nurses made a number of small abrasions up and down both arms. (In this I was fortunate: apparently they sometimes do it on the back instead, leaving marks as if from participation in a John Norman flagellation scene.) They then proceeded to anoint these already sore abrasions with noxious fluids, to wit: condensed hair of the dog, ditto of cat, effusions of grass seeds of various types, distillation of common weeds, tincture of beef, lamb, and ghod knows what else, and, as the *piece de resistance*, ointment of crushed bed bug.

No, really, there is this nasty little creature called a housedust mite, which is mainly found in bed (not unlike many a trufan), feeding on the cast-off skin from humans. Yes folks, your bed has probably got a vast unseen population of the little varmints fighting over the best bits of you. Doesn't it make you feel wonderful to be so wanted by Nature that even the veriest deadeast of your skin particles makes a meal for one of God's creatures? Or does it, like me, make your skin crawl, and induce insomnia? No matter, if you've got a favourite soft upholstered chair, then they are probably in there too, chewing away like crazy, so it's no good sitting up nights in the hope they'll all die of starvation -- if they don't get you one way, they'll get you the other.

Back to the test: having spread little drops of these various tinctures upon my screaming body, they stuck plaster over the abrasions and sent me away again for a couple of days. It took a feat of much courage to get me back to the clinic again -- on the part of my wife: it's pretty hard to drive with me trying to leap out of the car, I tell you! Having strapped me down again, the nurses resorted to the ultimate torture -- they tore all the plasters off, without an anaesthetic. After they revived me (usual routine -- bucket of cold water, ammonium salts up the nostrils, mutterings about 'sodium pentothal injections'), they proceeded to measure the size of the swellings at the various points on my arms. Ignoring as irrelevant the fact that the largest swellings all seemed to be associated with the pieces of skin which had had plaster adhesive attached to them, the doctor present came to the conclusion that I was allergic to the aforementioned housedust mite. Personally, I still reckon the size of that swelling was no worse than the ones on all the other abrasions, and that if the one needed treatment then so did all the others. Protests having been brushed aside (I was only the bloody patient, after all: what did I know?), a course of treatment was ordained by the lord high and mighty specialist.

The course consisted of a series of de-allergising injections, pumping into my body increasing amounts of the very thing to which the quacks had decided I was allergic. (It seemed like a 'kill or cure' remedy to me, but who the hell ever listened to a patient? We can only express our opinions by dying, and recent news reports indicate that a few of the guinea pigs that have followed the 'de-allergising' treatment have been doing precisely that: nowadays, doctors are advised to use the treatment only when there is resuscitation equipment available!) So, a few weeks later, my own doctor started injecting me with this jollop. Now, don't ask me how they obtained the poor little mites that went into this brew, 'cos I don't know. All I can say is that they must breed like absolute crazy to be able to stay ahead of the game. I mean, here are these whacko doctors rounding up whole herds of the microscopic little beggars to render them down into a potion to inject into my arm. How on earth do they do it? Is there someone, somewhere, in this green and pleasant land, whose occupation is dust mite breeder? Is there someone else who takes the slaughtered carcasses from the breeder and turns them into an injectable fluid? There aren't 'arf some funny jobs around!



After a few injections, I started to have reactions: I began to feel feverish, my eyes would get sore, and my nose would run. Nothing to worry about according to the quack, merely a passing reaction, all very normal. "We are, after all, injecting into you things that your body doesn't like, aren't we?" She was still saying that a few months later when I started to have fully fledged hay-fever attacks, including sneezing that upset the local geologists' earthquake measurements. I would sometimes sneeze loudly for twenty-four hours at a time, wandering around in a daze, mind totally scrambled by successive explosions just under the brainbox, an almost permanent case of concussion. The asthma? Stayed the same — as long as I took my pills, I didn't have any great problems with it, even with the hayfever.

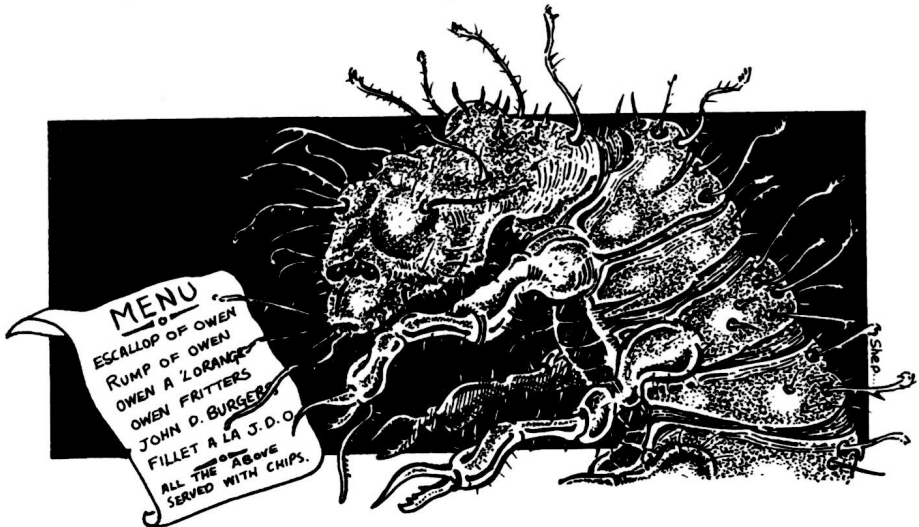
Finally, the doc admitted that something might be wrong, so she slowed the rate at which she was pumping the bugjuice into me: it didn't help, I carried on sneezing. She stopped it altogether: I exploded in her face a month later, just to demonstrate the 'minor reaction' was still around. She changed my drugs: the asthma got worse too. She tried other drugs, with no better result. She sent me back to the chest clinic, to a bemused specialist who admitted "that shouldn't have happened". I gave up and went looking for an acupuncturist.

I found one just in time. After my first treatment, way before the acupuncture could have had any effect, I had a sudden attack of asthma which hospitalised me, occurring , as these things are inclined to, in the early morning. My poor

wife had to cope with me turning blue and uttering ghastly noises. As we had no phone then, she had to hop a ride on a passing milk float to the nearest public telephone and call an ambulance (having tried the doctor first without success). I ended up in hospital for a week, where I proved to the doctors that my medications were making me worse, by the simple expedient of getting them to examine me both before and after taking the junk. I came out with a completely new regime, a distinct dislike of the NHS, and a determination to rid myself of the problem, with the aid of acupuncture.

Recent reports by the BMA to the contrary, I found that acupuncture did help me, over a number of years, and I was able to lead quite a normal life, with only occasional hayfever attacks to worry me, and those I learned to live with. The asthma kept in the background and was a minor problem. That lasted until three years ago, when my acupuncturist had to retire due to ill-health (stop laughing at the back there – have you seen the life-expectancy figures for *normal* doctors?). Since then, some of the symptoms have returned, though mainly on the asthmatic side, culminating in another short spell in hospital just before Christmas 1986. Maybe I shall have to go out and make a concerted effort to find another acupuncturist again, though it is hard to get the kind of personal recommendation that you really need before trying an unknown in the field.

The moral of all of this? That old mother's goodnight call of "Don't let the bedbugs bite" ought to be revised thoroughly. You can stand their bites easily, it's what medical science decides to do with their bodies that you have to worry about. So, beware physicians bearing patent remedies, as you may end up having a whale of a time with the new problems they make for you!



PhD And Where To Put It

By

William Bains

How would you like to do a PhD? This is the deal. You come and work for me in my laboratory for three years, for about two thousand pounds a year. Tax free, of course: you will be way below the taxable limit anyway. There is no syllabus. The "exam" has only one question: you set the question. Then you answer it. If you do not get a decent answer, or if you ask the wrong question, you fail. You can change it half way through, of course, if you dare. The question is to be in two parts. Part one is: think of some original research to do, and do it. Part two is: write it up. Try not to let your answer get beyond eighty thousand words. Then you have an oral exam on your answer, which is in front of a couple of people, one of whom you have never met before (and who has never even heard of you), who have just been given lunch by me and consequently feel that they have to do something to justify it. Like ask you 'why did you do this experiment?' when the answer is that I told you to, or even 'why did you answer this question?', to which the answer is probably the same. This can go on all day, and they can ask for a return match. If you get through all that, you will be given a PhD, which will gain you entrance to the academic job ladder, one of the worst career structures in the UK.

If, during the three years, I decide to emigrate or move into industry, conclude that I cannot stand talking to you, or that I am more interested in some other line of research, consider that you are not progressing fast enough, or are disagreeing with me too often, or I have a nervous breakdown, go mad or die, then you just have to start again with someone else.

Do I have any takers?

I realised what a silly idea this was on the course I had to go shortly after being appointed as a lecturer. Among discussions on how to teach undergraduates the elements of anything, how to prevent them blowing themselves up in laboratory classes, how to encourage them to read things other than *The Beano* and so on, was a session on how to be a good PhD supervisor. We sat around in an informal group and held a structured, open-ended discussion on the subject in which we created a concept map of the area and then examined the way our targets were achieved within methodological constraints... that is, we did like educationalists always do. We talked a lot and came to no conclusion. Fairly early on, our discussion leader asked us what we thought a PhD was for. 'To produce University lecturers,' I replied, the thought coming so naturally that it did not even get a second glance from the censor before passing from subconscious to mouth. Yes, well, that was the *cynical* answer, of course, but perhaps we could be a little more constructive.

And so we went on to discuss contract-contractor models and curriculum definition, or rather they did, for I was in a zen-like state of enlightenment wondering at the marvels my subconscious had produced this time. Of course the object of a PhD was to produce University lecturers. So was the object of most of education. Those who can do, those who cannot make money.

As a result, I missed much of the rest of the discussion. Surreptitious checking at tea-time revealed that I did not miss much.



When I actually asked people the question in paragraph one, I had a round dozen applications, which considering you have to have an upper second class degree (or first) to have any hope of getting funding for a PhD is pretty amazing. I interviewed four: the rest were either unsuitable, unfundable or went to do a PhD elsewhere before I could grab them. They were all desperate enough to give me three years of their life, and were unanimous in their reason for doing so. The pot of pyrites at the end of the research rainbow, their idea of ultimate career fulfilment, was to become University lecturers.

Why? (I am discounting this as being a feeble attempt at flattery, as I made it abundantly plain that anyone wanting to become a University lecturer did not deserve to do a PhD, but they still persisted.) There is a practical reason and a theoretical one. The practical one is that at every stage in the career of children going through 'good' schools, the ultimate measure of achievement takes them a step nearer to University Lecturehood. ('Good' schools are those with lots of bright, middle

class children which produce our leaders – politicians, union leaders, TV propagandists, writers, 'experts' and so on.) At such schools the ultimate aim after 'O' levels is doing 'A' levels. The aim at 'A' levels is to get good enough grades to get into University, or, at a pinch, Polytechnic. At University the students are indoctrinated for three years that the highest goal in life is 'research'. Going into something that is not full of 'research' is second best, hence the dismal economic and social standing of engineering and of teacher training in the UK. To do research you need a PhD. By the time you get

through a PhD you may have been put off University Lecturehood by the complete lack of openings and the derisory pay, but it is unlikely that that will come until you are over thirty years old. Your colleagues who took their degrees into grubby commerce will be earning three times your salary by then (my present salary is almost exactly the average industrial wage), and will have interesting and useful jobs to do as well. But the lure continues. At each step the choice is between the academic path and the 'other', and the 'other' is always less socially acceptable even if its followers, which is nearly everybody, seem to live with it. Hence the slightly unhinged desire of my applicants, the people who had been successful at every stage in this ladder up to that time, to emulate me.

If so much is at stake on the PhD (and in the life sciences it is difficult to get a job in industrial R&D without one, let alone an academic job), why should the course not be organised better? Why do we not attempt to follow the example of the schools in organising the higher reaches of education? This government is bravely trying to remove some of the bias towards pointless scholasticism from the school exams by introducing the GCSE (a rather difficult task, I am afraid, as the teachers do not want it, the parents do not understand it and the educationalists think it is heretical). The idea is that the GCSE curricula should be aimed at showing how much a pupil has achieved during their stay at school, not how well they can be trained to jump through hoops. There are well-defined objectives laid out in the guidelines for syllabuses, which include phrases like 'concrete examples' and 'from first-hand experience'. Now, why should the PhD exams be the same? This takes us to the theoretical reason why, for the practitioners or would-be practitioners of science, a PhD is the gateway to the high-priesthood.

As PhDs are meant to be 'by research' then a simple syllabus of the GCSE type is rather impractical. Instead you would have to lay out a new "syllabus" for each student. For example, you might supply goals and sub-goals to be reached by certain times, what we plan to do about it if either party fails to reach them, and explanations of how this is to be related to the world outside the University. Thus, for example: 'The student will spend at least such and such a length of time in laboratory work with the following sub-goals... and the supervisor will meet with them at least once a week (many do not) to evaluate progress, and will suggest alternative lines of research if goal such-and-such is not met after six months...' That sort of thing. In short, a contract between student and supervisor.

In practice, what happens is almost the exact opposite. the student attaches himself to a Supervisor, who sets him lots of trivial tasks to do for which he is told only trivial reasons. Thus we might tell our PhD student that the best way to clone a particular gene from a frog is to use a Δ cloning vector, but not why we want to do it in the first place. The really important things about Science, such as what it is, why anyone should do it and how to do it well, are usually

not mentioned by either party. The Supervisor may hazard comments about a particular piece of science being 'Elegant', 'Powerful' or 'Neat', but usually does not, falling back on muttering that "it's obvious". As the object is to teach the student what good science is, saying that it is obvious is unhelpful. But it is felt that further explanation is unnecessary. By the end of three years the PhD student usually feels it too, and if asked what they are doing by non-scientist relatives will be able to give glowing and even comprehensible explanations of what a Δ cloning vector is, but will fall back onto mutterings of "it's obvious" if asked why on earth they want to use one at all.

This has a superficial resemblance to an apprenticeship, where an apprentice attaches themselves to a Master craftsman and learns a craft by example. But the analogy is misleading, because all the explanation that is available to the Master is passed on to the apprentice. You hold the saw this way, son, because you'll cut your bloody hand off if you go on like you are doing. A much vaster body of explanation is available to the PhD supervisor, but only the 'craft' aspect is actually handed over. You hold the pipette this way, son, because you'll spill radioactive DNA all over your bloody foot if you go on like that. Why use radioactivity at all? Supervisor scratches head, but will come up with the technical reasons after a moment, providing he does not say 'because it is the best way. Obviously.' But why do the experiment at all? Well, to find out the structure of this gene. Yes, but what for? It's obvious. But it is not at all obvious when you start. For a successful PhD student it is obvious by the time they are finished. How did that transfer of knowledge occur? Not by craft-style example, and even less by explicit instruction. The best analogy for the process is religious instruction, particularly in the mystical religions of India. (The non-mystical religion, village-level hinduism and buddhism, are completely different beasts.) Can you imagine a contract-style prospectus for reaching buddhist enlightenment? 'John Owen, my initiate student, will have achieved cosmic enlightenment of the first degree after one year in the Drone-Boring school of Ch'en Buddhism, and will meet weekly with his master to evaluate his progress towards cosmic subgoals as laid out in paras 17a and 17b.' No, Buddhist initiates just hang about doing weird, strange and, to the outsider, profoundly boring things -- thinking about stupid questions for the 'zen' school, for example -- until they decide that they are enlightened, and then they go off and become masters in their own right.

The more I thought along these lines, the more similar Buddhism and Science seemed to be in this regard. But why? Buddhist tradition is much clearer about its goals and methods (it has over two thousand years head start on science, after all), so I looked at that. In the Mayahayana Buddhist teachings there are many levels at which the reincarnated soul may strive towards Nirvana. He may be a merchant accumulating great wealth, and this is worthy in its lesser way providing he does not screw the peasants and makes defferential noises towards the priests. He may become a devout lay man, a poor seeker after truth outside the priesthood. Best of all, he may become a monk. And this is



how it is perceived: the monks are at the top of the tree. Although they do not actually do anything, of course, and have a bloody awful life compared to their less accomplished brethren in the banks. Nevertheless, they know they are nearer to Nirvana than anyone else. How does one become such a beast?

If you have the natural aptitude (do Buddhists have an eleven plus?) you can become a student under a master for a while, and he tells you to do various spiritual exercises and to try to be generally enlightened. He will not tell you *how* to be enlightened, and indeed will tell you that enlightenment is both dazzlingly obvious and quite inexplicable if you ask him to be more specific. Just practice your zazaen, recite your mantra, meditate on the questions your master sets you or whatever it is that your particular sect requires, and enlightenment will come. As a junior student in the Buddhist tradition you would also be regaled with stories, myths and improving tales about how good buddhists live. Of course, most of them are untrue, and unrealistic, but that is not the point. They bring out a principle. As you progress you are taught that you must adhere to the Great Truths (All the world is illusion, all illusion is pain, the way out of pain is Nirvana and the way to Nirvana is the Eight-fold Way). But these are not to be memorised ('Buddhism part 1: Answer no more than three questions. 1: To what degree do the oxidation states of Group IV metals confirm the concept of Maya?' and so on). They are to be believed. That is the point of the silly questions, the daft contradictions of the 'Zen'

school of buddhism. They are designed not to explain but to jerk the mind into a new way of thinking. In science jargon, they are there to induce a paradigm shift. What is the sound of one hand clapping? The logical answer, as any computer programmer would tell you, is 'syntax error': clapping is something done with two hands, so 'one hand clapping' is linguistically invalid. But that is not the point. Try to think of what the sound of one hand clapping is. Try to stop the Tokyo-Osaka express by sitting still. That one was actually set as an exercise by a Japanese Zen teacher, and one of his pupils misunderstood him completely when he went and placed himself on the lines, and was splattered all over the front of a 'bullet train'. The idea was to show that one hand clapping is just as valid as two hands clapping in a world where all is illusion, and the point of asking the question was therefore not to see if you could deduce the right answer, but to test whether you have attained the outlook wherein the answer is obvious. (This is not infallible, of course -- you can fake it. Bhagawan Sri Rajneesh faked it remarkably well, but by his own admittance it was an awful effort. I can't help suspecting that being genuinely enlightened would have been easier.) One you have achieved the Buddhist outlook, the four Truths become self-evident, obvious, like saying that the sky is blue. One hand clapping becomes quite sensible. And until the Truths are self-evident, no amount of intellectual application can make you a buddhist. It will only make you someone who knows a lot about Buddhism.

Exactly the same sort of training occurs during science education. In the early stages, children are overwhelmed with masses of facts and their experimental 'proof', as exemplified by the lives of the saints, sorry, Nobel Prize winners. Rutherford's proof of the existence of the atomic nucleus? Actually far more complex and far messier than portrayed in chemistry books. Mendel's Genetics? Full of fudged figures and discarded results which did not fit into Brother Mendel's concepts, but that is never mentioned in the text-books. Their aim is to illustrate what a good scientist is like, not to show how he **actually** got his results. The same thing happens in University training -- most of the 'classic' experiments in biochemistry were never as simple or as convincing as they are made out to be in the text-books. The idea is to get the student to adopt a viewpoint, not to inform. And part of that viewpoint is that 'researchers' are the highest form of life, because, after all, science is all about research, isn't it? Obviously. This is why such a lot of people call themselves 'researchers' or 'research assistants' when their only claim to research is to have spent half an hour in the library looking up the population of Bratislava.

As the adepts progress they enter the second stage, when they are attached to a Master and serve an intellectual apprenticeship with him. They are not told of any of the great things of science, such as what constitutes 'Good Science'. Instead they are told to do a large number of very time-consuming laboratory exercises which reveal tiny facts about a bit of nature that no-one has been bothered to look at before, and left to reach enlightenlight on their own. This is the PhD. A scientist is someone who has successfully achieved such

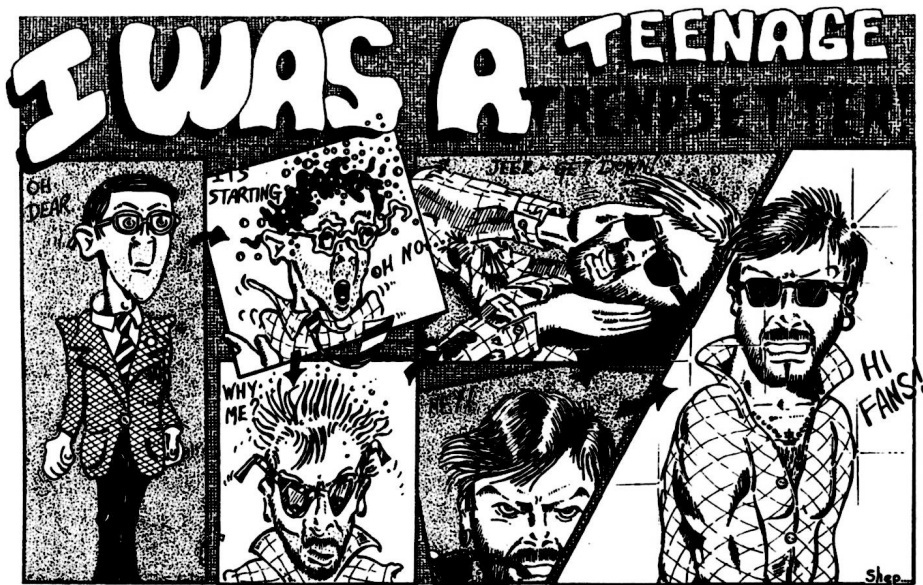
enlightenment, and looks at the world through boffin-tinted spectacles, like the buddhist adept with their karma-coloured shades. This is why it is so hard to define what a scientist is, or indeed what science is. Science is so obvious that it can be equated with everything for a scientist, but is a load of largely meaningless drivel for someone else.

If you look at it this way then it is not surprising that there is no curriculum, no 'contract'. Enlightenment either comes, or it does not. The Thesis is just the external manifestation, like the tonsure or the saffron robes, and the 'Doctor' just the honorific bestowed upon the enlightened. The real achievement is internal. (Actually, the 'Doctor' can also be a consolation prize for those who do their three years and come out no wiser than when they went in. There are a suspicious number of Doctors around who have about as much science in their makeup as Doctor Who. University lecturers are as loath to admit to their mistakes as anyone else.)

Thus the GCSE is a doomed exercise. It is trying to apply the logic of craft training, training for a skill, a purpose, to an endeavour which is religious in all but name. All science education, especially the PhD but also the various lesser stages in the initiate's journey, are there to inculcate the scientific viewpoint, the state of mind that says that 'it is obvious' to the zen-like questions of where man came from and what intelligence is. That this is unhelpful to the non-initiate, to whom it is very far from obvious, is beside the point. Logically explaining buddhism or science never convinced anybody, as the reactions to the Chernobyl accident showed. If you do not have the scientific worldview, it will take so long to explain it to you that by the time the faceless, evil scientist has finished you will have gone away from sheer boredom. Exercises like the GCSE and the contract-model of research degree syllabuses are doomed, not because they could not work (although it is dubious that they would, at least in the sense that they would fail to produce scientists who were actually committed to doing science), but because they are heresy. Even if the teachers had not been on strike when the GCSE was supposed to be introduced it would never have caught on in its original form. In a modified version it will appear one day, but I will not have to worry about it because the people coming to the University of Bath will already be headed for the priesthood.

All this from a throwaway remark in our lecturer training course, plus, of course, a few LoCs in *Crystal Ship*. No wonder I missed out on most of the rest of that session. I was quietly achieving cosmic enlightenment in the corner, and the Mayan manifestations of terrestrial teaching were not about to distract me.

The tale has a sad ending. A week before our course was due to end its organiser and main speaker, a dynamic and extremely healthy man called Colin Palmer, died of a heart attack. He was 42. I do not think that his religion encouraged him to believe in an afterlife. He was a chemist.



Er...close, Shep, but actually, the title is much more boring, namely:

Osmosis And The Common Man

I made a startling discovery the other week, something I hadn't suspected about myself, indeed, that I actually thought about in a directly opposed way. It's always a shattering experience when you catch yourself doing something you had always contended was stupid when observed in other people. When it has to do with something you have constantly sneered at for most of your adult life, stoutly maintaining a derisive face against the thing, then to turn around and discover you have been a participant all along is not just a sobering experience: it's downright paralysing!

What is this horrifying habit that I suddenly found myself partaking of without my knowledge? What can it be, that would cause a grown man to reconsider his own much-vaunted sanity, to feel that perhaps his brain is rather less the independent free spirit he'd always made it out to be? What everyday horror had snuck up on me, climbed on my back and hitched a ride without me even realising it? I can hardly bring myself to say the word even now: it sticks in the throat, and has to be dragged screaming from the interstices of my brain, but I must perform that service to humanity, I must warn you all that an insidious enemy lurks out there in the world, ready to drain you of your hard-earned cash, to cause grievous losses to your prized possessions.

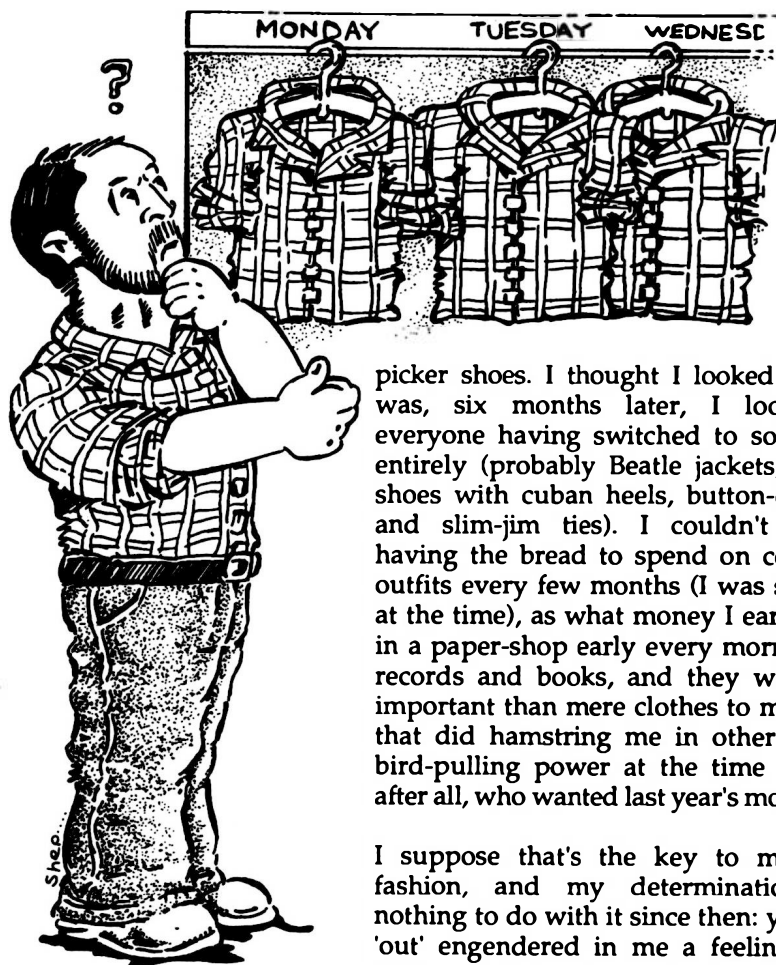
That hidden enemy parades itself across the media stage, and uses it to undermine our resistance, so that suddenly, even the best, the strongest-willed, the most keen-witted and vigilant of us is afflicted, and we suddenly realise that the things we buy, the things we wear, the very sounds we listen to, are all affected by the great evil of our time, namely *FASHION*.

I know, I know, the ladies amongst you will be saying "what's wrong with fashion?" Absolutely nothing, dear ladies, as long as you follow it willingly, with a sense of fun, and the necessary bottomless purse to sustain the habit. It is, after all, a habit, much like smoking, an expenditure on pure hedonism, the adornment of one's body in a manner calculated to say to the world (or at least to your immediate peers) "Look at me, I'm up-to-date, I'm a *now* person, I *know* where its at!" When the habit leads to a turnover in the population's wardrobe once a season, it even makes a crazy kind of economic sense, stimulating the rag trade, keeping people in employment.

The trouble is, I had always objected mightily to fashion on the grounds that it was unnecessary, a useless appurtenance of industry whereby obsolescence was built into a garment, where you just *knew*, even as you were buying an item of apparel, that it had a limited lifespan. It might as well have had one of those 'sell by' stickers that you see on food packages. Of course, this planned obsolescence has other results, too. The material is likely to be fairly tacky, the stitching holding together more by luck than skill, and the basic garment probably would only take a couple of trips through the washing machine before self-destructing. But, it didn't matter, did it? After all, the new season's ranges will be out next month, so that this week's purchase only has to last until then. It was likely to be fairly cheap, anyway, wasn't it? Well, actually, no: it was likely to be more expensive. I mean, you were buying *design*, you were buying sartorial *flair*, and that doesn't come cheap, does it? The fact that most of the garments looked as if they were styled by a dyslexic chimpanzee with eye trouble hardly entered into it. It was the *label* that mattered!

I was last knowingly 'in fashion' in 1962. That was the year I managed to choose my own clothing without parental interference for the first time, at the age of 15-16. (Sounds quaint, doesn't it -- I see kids in shops nowadays demanding particular styles before they are out of nappies!) So, I ended up with an Italian-style suit with a short box jacket and narrow trousers, knitted tie and black suede winkle-





picker shoes. I thought I looked ace. Trouble was, six months later, I looked stupid, everyone having switched to something else entirely (probably Beatle jackets, chisel-point shoes with cuban heels, button-down collars and slim-jim ties). I couldn't follow, not having the bread to spend on complete new outfits every few months (I was still at school at the time), as what money I earned working in a paper-shop early every morning went on records and books, and they were far more important than mere clothes to me. Of course, that did hamstring me in other areas – my bird-pulling power at the time was at zero: after all, who wanted last year's model?

I suppose that's the key to my dislike of fashion, and my determination to have nothing to do with it since then: years of being 'out' engendered in me a feeling that being 'out' was infinitely preferable to being 'in'.

The Mod era in the mid-sixties ingrained that attitude even further: that was the time when fashion wasn't a seasonal change – it was *weekly*, propelled along by TV programmes like *Ready Steady Go!*, where all the 'in' people appeared in their new finery, and the nation's 'faces' anxiously perused the assembled studio audience for clues as to this week's new twist. In many ways, that was the start of the drug culture in Britain, as the pressure got to the Mod 'faces', and they resorted to drugs to relieve it, until it, too, became a 'fashion'. See what being a 'dedicated follower of fashion' does for you?

Ever since then, I've eschewed fashion in clothing, and in as many other things in which I've been able to recognise a 'fashionable' element. I've been determinedly *unfashionable*, in a way that I suppose was almost a fashion in itself. Most people, after all, come to the point where either they can't afford

to follow fashion (due to the little intrusions in life, like mortgages, kids, unemployment, etc.), or find themselves left behind by it, beached in a particular period that they refuse to leave. like a living fashion fossil. I suppose rockers and hipies fall into that category. Alternatively, they become ultra-conservative in their dress, the three-piece suit, white shirt and tie brigade, or the tweedy twin set. I suppose I was headed that way, due to peer pressure with organisations like ICI, where I worked for a while, and later with an engineering firm, where the tie was considered sacred, if not the suit.

Joining the OU released me from that: around here, the scruffiest beggar in sight is likely to be the Dean of a faculty, and dress is merely required for decorum (and warmth), rather than any sign of rank, or conformity. I only own one tie nowadays, a black one, for the obvious reasons. I was happy enough to trundle along in my own sweet way, jeans (or jeans-style trousers), jumpers and anoraks, in summer teeshirts or open-necked shirts of a fairly casual nature, thinking that fashion no longer had any call on me whatsoever. That was, until last week.

It came down to a pair of trousers, and a jumper. The trousers were fairly old, but still serviceable, the jumper Shetland wool and newly washed, though still a few years old. The jumper was skin-tight (having shrunk only very slightly), the trousers rather baggy-arsed and, dare I say it, *flared*. I suddenly realised that I couldn't bear to wear them, that they felt *uncomfortable*, and that all my recent purchases of clothes were much more *modern* in appearance. The newer trousers were narrower, (not quite as narrow as those early Italian suits, perhaps, but getting there); the jumpers were looser, baggier in appearance; the shirts had narrow collars with short labels, some even button-down (again!), their colours and patterns not as plain as they used to be. In a word, I had been buying more *fashionable* clothing, only I hadn't really noticed it: the shops stocked these things, and I had bought them without ever realising that my tastes had been changing subtly at the same time.

Naturally, I was horrified, and began to look at my wardrobe with some loathing, traitorous object that it was. What right had these fellows with their constant revisionist tendencies, these mere fashion sellers, what right had they to interfere with *my* brain, alter *my* tastes? And how had they done it?

I think I can trace my downfall to television. For the greater part of the seventies, my wife and I had gone through life without the benefits of the haunted fishtank spewing its wet and dubious contents out onto our carpet every night. Life was simple then, idyllic even: amusement came from records, or the radio, from books or even (whisper it) *conversation*, and the intrusion of the visual image was minimal. Then, and mainly due to me I have to admit, we bought our first telly. It was a miniscule monochrome device that was really there just for me to watch motor racing, the Beeb having finally come to terms with sports sponsorship and begun televising Grand Prix as they took



place. For a dyed-in-the-nylon motor-racing freak, the prospect of missing out on coverage of every Formula One race in a year was too horrible to contemplate, and naturally the rest of TV crept in on its coat-tails.

Soon came more degradation in the form of a colour set, then, finally, a video recorder. The visual image began to assume the major role in the entertainment of the Owen household, and that insidious influence finally began to get to me, and a little corner of my brain that had been dormant since 1962 awoke, began to notice what the trendies on TV wore (by a process of osmosis, if not consciously), noting it all down, and steering me in similar directions the next time I set foot inside a clothes shop, without me even realising what was going on. The realisation that this was happening has been a great shock to me, I tell you, the sudden dawning of the knowledge that you can be

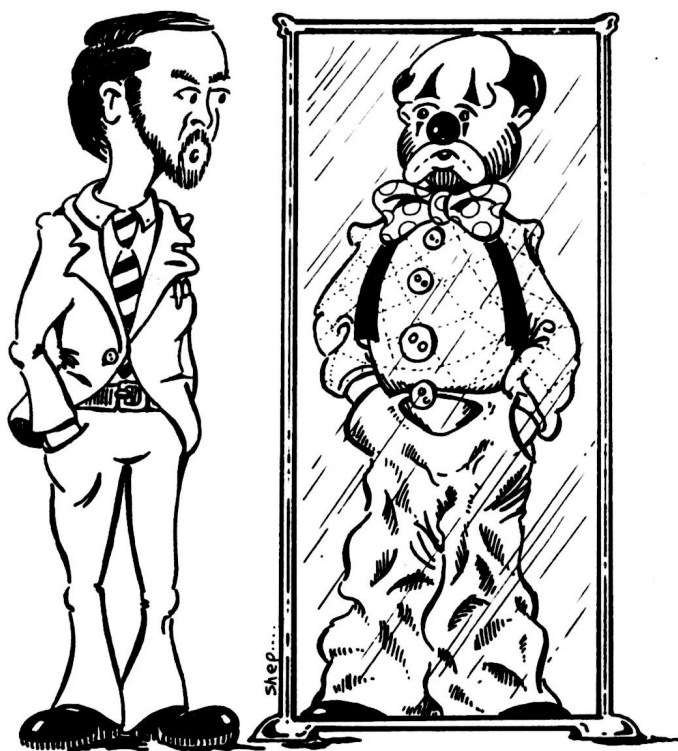
influenced without consciously noticing it. Yet it had happened to good ol' free-spirited me!

Once you've made a connection like that, you can't stop following through to other things. Music, for one: while I've never followed the evanescent hits of the 'Top Forty', I have been influenced by the fashions of the times. I realised this the other day in the car, while listening to a tape of Yes (*Fragile* and *Close To The Edge*), doyen of the 'progressive sounds' of the early seventies. I suddenly realised that I wasn't *enjoying* listening to the tape, that it was too shrill, too naive, too, well, *unfashionable*, for my modified, modernised tastes. When I unloaded that tape from the car, I immediately put it to one side, to be recorded over with something else more in tune with my current taste. Granted that it won't be anything as ephemeral as Boy George (who he?), but it does make me realise how vulnerable my brain is to time, tide and fashion, forces of erosion acting on even the most entrenched tastes.

Fortunately, I can say, hand on heart, that my tastes in books are relatively unchanged: why, I've only ever read maybe three cyberpunk books in the past couple of years, still view 'magic realism' with some distrust, and haven't got the foggiest what the 'in' trend in fiction is at this moment. I haven't even read the Booker prize-winners for the last four years! (I should be so lucky!) There are enough books stacked up at home waiting to be read that I could probably go three years without buying a single one. But then, books are not likely to be affected by the visual imagery of TV and film, are they? (I do have my doubts about doubts about cyberpunk in that respect -- much of it looks like the re-

creation of a John Carpenter script based on an Alfred Bester original.) And like I said, TV is the villain of the piece, the mind-warper, the will-breaker, the hidden persuader. You cannot really pick up fashion tips from hot stuff like William Gibson, let alone good ol' Isaac and Bob, whose tastes are probably way back in the Stone Ages anyway!

What to do about it all, that's the real question. The answer is simple: nothing! Short of radically altering my habits to become a naturist (which tends to get you talked about in the local supermarket, and presents severe problems nine months of the year in Britain), I have to clothe myself, so I have to buy what's in the shops, and that's all there is to it. But the way I believe I am beginning to tackle it myself, is by starting to think in terms of *style* rather than *fashion*. You may buy things that are in fashion, but you don't wear them *fashionably*, you adapt them to your own *style*, thereby individualising the marketed item, and making it somewhat less ephemeral. It may not be the perfect solution, but at least it is one a self-respecting person can live with, and that's about the closest I can get to a lasting solution.





REFLECTIONS IN GREEN

by

Dorothy Davies

*In 1939 Lady Raglan said
He's not a spirit, call him instead
a green man*

*Our interest aroused by travel book
We visit churches just to look
at the green man*

*Celtic spirit of the trees
Carved in stone, or part of a frieze
the green man*

*Looks down at Christian congregation
Often with fearsome determination
the green man*

*Remains in your possession
But remains my obsession --
the green man*

All my own work, one of a series of poems I wrote under the title *Hiraeth* - Welsh for 'nostalgia'. It encapsulates my feelings for the green man, but for further detail.....

Photography is a much practiced hobby, but for those who seek to take it one stage further than the Mum-in-front-of-hotel/ Dad-in-front-of-flower-bed type of snap-shot, there has to be a new interest, a new enthusiasm. Mine started during the period when I photographed the town

where I live, Faringdon. My town has changed considerably over the years, and continues to change. Even in the short time I have had my photographic record completed, there have been changes!

One of the essential places to photograph was the church, albeit the most unchanging part of town. There, Vic and I found a worn but interesting stone face. This led us to visit other churches, looking for stone faces. This inevitably led to gargoyles, which I discovered later were put there to frighten away evil spirits.

Consulting the Blue Guide prior to a holiday in Wales, Vic came across a reference to a carving of a green man. It sounded like something worth investigating, and adding to the by-then-fast-growing collection of faces, so we went, looked, and I certainly was hooked.



I have an interest in things of the past, but not in the strict archaeological sense. (I am often found wandering around museums muttering imprecations on grave robbers within earshot of any curator!!) I prefer to use my imagination to consider such thoughts as the meaning of the wonderful Uffington White Horse, which I visit regularly, and which still refuses to yield up his secret after many thousand years. He remains forever enigmatic, galloping across the windswept Downs. We have some fine racing stables around here, especially at Lambourne, and they too send fine horses racing across the windswept Downs, keeping the White Horse company. I also visit Wayland Smithy, one of the mysterious long barrows, Avebury, with its incredible circle and avenue of standing stones, and look at Silbury Hill, and wonder.

The green man belongs to that age, to that strange and mysterious time when religions such as we have never dreamt of ruled the lives of the people of England, Wales and Scotland. (No one has yet offered me a location for a green man in Ireland.)

I began my research into the green man with the British Library, who directed me in the wrong direction, toward the wild man legend. This fearsome creature from Europe goes around tearing up trees and using them as clubs. He was not the creature I was searching for. But books led to more books, and out of a mass of information from many different sources, tree books, historical books, mythological encyclopaedias, I put together my theory for the



existence of the green man. It begins in the distant past with tree worship.

Tree worship goes back into the very depths of time. Sacred trees have been found carved on cylinders dating from the Chaldean and Assyrian empires. The Greeks had trees for each of their Gods, and indeed it is believed that the pillars of the Greek temples were modelled on the tree trunks of the sacred groves. India, Africa, wherever there is an ancient civilisation, there is a tradition of tree worship.

It probably came to Britain with the Celts, who, with their priests, the Druids, set aside sacred groves for their ceremonies. This carried on long

enough to become part of the way of life, and was therefore naturally included in the new buildings, the churches, when Christianity began to make its way across Britain. Every church which has pillars supporting the roof is a reminder of that sacred grove. Many pillars have elaborate leaf carvings around the tops, the capitals, which add to the illusion.

My own parish church of All Saints here in Faringdon has beautiful leaf capitals. They were photographed and included in a book on English Parish Churches by Edwin Smith, a highly reputable authority of church architecture. I wonder if he found the most telling carving of all, the serpent carved at the base of one of the 'trees', effectively turning it into the Tree of Knowledge.

It has been said that the farmer in the Middle Ages was a pagan in the field, and a Christian in church. Very often these two beliefs became mixed, and here in Faringdon the two came together in a very vivid way indeed. Not only is every single pillar carved with leaves, not only at the top but at the base as well, but there are sixteen poppyheads, each a leaf face (described later), one with a protruding tongue. Above the soaring arches are faces peering down at the visitor. Under normal circumstances, they would have been high in the trees.....

Taking all these things into consideration, I believe the green man to be the embodiment of the Celtic tree spirit. He is most commonly found peering out of the leaf capitals, where you would expect him to be. But we have also found him hiding among carvings on the corbels, on roof bosses, high on beams, at the ends of arches, concealed among heavy carving on Norman doors.

There are three clearly defined types of 'green men' found in churches, and the first is referred to in church histories at Jack in the Greens, or grotesques, or creatures.

The Jack in the Green is, in fact, a different tradition. This carving, often of a handsome face peering out of foliage, or with leaf beard and hair, is the representation of the Jack in the Green who took part in traditional May Day celebrations. He was often a sweep, encased in a wicker basket covered in foliage, and was often dunked in the local pond or river at the end of the day, to ensure summer rain for the crops.

The second type is the leaf face already referred to. This is a face carved onto a leaf, or made out of a leaf. I have a lovely example of a leaf face in my letter rack. He glares at me as I work.

Finally, we have the true green man. The difference is a simple one: the green man is actually *breathing* foliage, the others are not. The green man with the protruding tongue is a representation of hanging someone from the sacred tree. Green men are found with the foliage issuing from not only the mouth, but the nostrils, or ears, or even the eyes as well. Sometimes the symbol mutates to an animal, usually a cat, but still with the foliage from the mouth.

I have found, and photographed, savage looking men, sad ones, tormented ones, benign or simply bored ones. If there were journeymen stone masons travelling around the country carving out these fascinating creatures, then they made an effort to make every one different. They vary tremendously from church to church.

The attraction for me is in this coming together of pagan and Christian beliefs. In Charney Bassett in Oxfordshire, you pass under a porch with a frieze of twelve cat masks to enter the House of God. In Woolstone church, also in Oxfordshire, a green man with foliage creeping from his eyes peers down from the beam across the sanctuary, where he can watch the congregation approach the altar. In Bishops Lydeard and Crowcombe in Somerset we found them on bench



ends, where the people sit to hear the Word of God. Sometimes they are high on the ceiling, peering down at the faithful.

I wanted more. I began to build an index of places where the green man could be found, and I wanted the index to be much larger. So I wrote to every single County magazine, and to Country Life. The response was fascinating. One letter suggested I look at a book by Kathleen Basford, called *The Green Man*. This threw me into an immediate panic, as I anticipated someone else having done all the work I had done, but got theirs into print! I was intensely relieved in a way to find that Mrs. Basford's book Christianised the whole thing, and our ideas met precisely nowhere. However, the book was useful: I added eighty locations to my index.

Another letter resulted in a visit by a gentleman who for close on eight years had studied the yew tree. We agreed immediately on one thing: an awful lot of nonsense gets written about yew trees, and pagan symbols generally. This arises from the inability of the clergy, mainly in years past, to accept the pagan. It always has to be Christianised. One such piece of nonsense is the theory that yew trees were planted in churchyards to provide wood for the English longbow, and that by planting them in churchyards it prevented cattle eating them.

Most yews are over a thousand years old... Yews were highly revered in ancient times, and were planted on or near sacred sites. Very occasionally you might come across the magical trinity: the holy site, the yew and the well. One such site is Patricio, in Powys, where the hillside church breathes history. There is a well close by, and the yew there also grows the holly and the ivy. How mystical can you get?

My index currently stands at two hundred and eighty locations, and still more come in. County magazines are very likely to be left in waiting rooms, and even after three years I get letters with more information to add to the store.

The original book I planned was not well received by publishers, and then I heard that Kathleen Basford's book was to be re-issued. I therefore changed the emphasis of my book from green men to trees in general. It will appear under the title *Living Legends* some time in 1987, as part of a general educational reading scheme. The green men are still there, though, an integral part of that book.

Where has the obsession led me? To become a member of the Church Monument Society, to become an addicted 'church crawler' (to quote Sir John Betjeman), to become nearly bankrupt from all the film I get through, but much enriched with a new interest, and new friends. Surprising what one small green thing can do, isn't it?

Why then is it an obsession? I don't honestly know, despite much mind and soul searching on the subject. It genuinely started as a curiosity, and somehow ate its way into my mind. I enjoy searching for them, I enjoy the feeling that I know something many others don't, even people who regularly worship in the churches where we discover them! I enjoy the knowledge that at least one publisher who is deep into ancient rituals and religions will probably approach us for photographs one day (I have the letter to prove it).

When you walk a path to a church doorway, and step on the well worn stones, you are walking a path trod by countless thousands of feet, happy, sad, tired, indifferent, burdened with flowers, with worries, with coffins, over hundreds of years. When I look at the solid stone walls I am looking at something which has been looked at for a very long time. But the monuments, the windows, the pews, etc., are all comparatively recent additions to our churches, they have come into existence long after the church itself was constructed. There isn't the same sense of Ancient Past about them.

But when I walk the stone flagged aisles, and stare up at a green man, he has been there since the church was built, in some cases nine hundred years ago. Then I am looking at Ancient Past, and I wonder -- just how many of those feet who wore away those stone steps came to worship the God of the Church of England, as inherited from Rome, and how many came to do silent worship to the God of the Trees?

It is in thoughts like these I think I find the roots of my obsession.



Ripples

Another lettercolumn underway, this one my eleventh, and also probably the biggest, thanks to a huge mailbag on Dave Collins's column. More of that anon. I'm trying out a new method of presenting the comments this time, just as an experiment. I've seen it done successfully elsewhere, and rather liked the coherence it gave to the loccol. So, here goes!

On Continuance:

My editorial produced a number of comments, though none more intriguing than the following:

Sue Thomason: Personally, I am delighted that you've decided to carry on producing CS, and doing your own thing with it rather than somebody else's. CS is definitely one of the zines that I really look forward to reading. I know that not every article, and not every issue, will really be to my taste, but I have *never* finished an issue of CS thinking 'Why on earth did he/she bother to write, print and distribute this?' (which is what I end up feeling after reading many current fanzines). I remember reading an article in some zine or other which represented fanzines as a kind of fannish 'currency', and although one thing I'm not is an economist, this seems to me to have been the case. People produce fanzines, not because they have something they really want to say, but to have something to trade with. Fanzines thus become 'wealth', status markers. About 18 months ago, *everyone* was putting out zines. Quality goes down, inspiration goes down, demand goes down, there is now a dearth of fanzines.

Thinking about it, the process seems homeostatic, like a tight ecological web.

Ideas are the staple diet of fans. Fanzines carry ideas, like lemmings carry meat. Fans 'eat' fanzines by digesting the ideas in them and return transformed ideas (responses) to the system by producing more fanzines. If there is a craving for ideas, then more fanzines are produced *but still only the same amount of ideas*. Fanzines become less nourishing, more content-free. Fans frantically eat and produce more and more fanzines of less and less interest. Finally the whole system undergoes a temporary collapse, as fans fall back on other means of ingesting ideas (like meeting and talking). Fanzine production goes way down. Lots of fans die (in system terms) by gaffiating. When fans are recovered enough to stick their heads out of their holes in the ground again (the analogy seems to have mutated, the fans are now the lemmings), the few fanzines around are eagerly digested, lots of ideas flow again, etc., etc.

The lull in fanzine production (at least in the UK) also seems to reflect the general 'mood of the people' in some way. I know a *lot* of fans who, one way or another, have had a particularly hard time over the last eighteen months or so. I know a *lot* of fans who've had major health problems, work problems (unemployment and/or reduced income), radical changes in family circumstances or primary relationships; all the things that the books call 'life crises'. When the general economic/social climate is bright and sunny, it's easier to throw off these problems by taking in energy from the outside. But many people I've met over the last eighteen months have been broadcasting the general feeling that there's not much sunshine to spare. I see signs that the freeze is starting to break; I hope so.

So do I, Sue, there's a definite paucity of British fanzines arriving at my door, and those that are often seem lifeless, pale shadows of their former selves (or their predecessors) Could it be that this current generation has finally run out of things to say, or is it just the vitality of fannish fanzines that has run its course?

Morrising On:

Good ol' William Morris is still causing comment, as the following extracts show:

Dave Langford: ...I did carry out my awesome promise and read/reread a fair bit of William Morris. Some interesting glimpses of a water-coloured Merrie Englande simal-crum there... plus some alarming bits of bathos as the High Style obviously gave Morris the mental equivalent of writer's cramp. "All is well, Sir Mark, said the youngling, and I am like to be glad to see thee back safe and sound, when who knows what folly thou wilt have been mixed up with..." (*The Sundering Flood*: Am I alone in thinking the final combination of idiom and word-order to be fatal to the mood?) To my horror I found that on the whole I agree with Bernard Leak -- a man of extremes, who ticked me off something rotten because I merely dismembered Stephen Donaldson's books and danced exultantly on the smoking wreckage, rather than doing a proper hatchet job.... As for dear old Lin Carter, his Adult Fantasy line was pretty good at digging out old goodies: one must give him his due, and forgive the naff introductions with their lists of Really Great Fantasy, invariably including "my own unfinished *Khymyrium*". I remain a little bit unconvinced of his ability to spot new talent, though. Does anyone remember Sanders Anne Laubenthal's *Excalibur*, which uproots the Arthurian mythos and tries to transplant it to Mobile, Alabama, with Carter cheering the author on? Unfortunately, I do....

Lin Carter also came in for some stick from Buck Coulson

Buck Coulson: Despite your letter writers I think Lin Carter was just as much a turkey as an editor as he was a writer. For one thing his definition of "fantasy" was so narrow as to be one-track... or maybe two-track. All too many of his "fantasy classics" sounded alike, though of course by the time

he was editing, there weren't that many "undiscovered classics" left, and a good many were left for very good reasons.

Steve Sneyd: Glad to hear I wasn't the only punter who has had trouble finishing a Morris novel... I particularly loved the locs that extrapolated vast cloudtopped towers of exegesis on his style/ideas, etc., on the basis of reading about as much of him as Wilson did of Marx. Reminds me of the Evelyn Waugh classic: "In my young days it was never done to give a bad review to a book you had not read, but these days even that simple rule is ignored".

The Broome LoC about Morris' wife hiding her class origins was genuinely enlightening, a reflection of the sinister pressures within the PRB (I've always thought the archetypal PRB action was Rossetti burying his poems with his first wife as a tribute, then going later to dig them up again when he needed money), probably truer to the real medieval brotherhoods in their actions and hypocrisies than they were in their propaganda. The point someone makes is also interesting about different people each having heard of a different facet of Morris... I discovered a similar phenomenon with Tim Bobbin (Collier)... I knew him as 'the Northern Hogarth', an incredible satirical artist. Met someone who knew him as a humorous dialect poet, and a third who knew only that he was a drunken scandalous schoolmaster in Milnrow (a reputation for wild life was much exaggerated, mainly by himself, from what has been printed about his life).

Andy Sawyer: Following up the lettercol: there's an excellent recent book by Jan Marsh on *The Pre-Raphaelite Sisters*: I think that's the title (you can tell I'm a librarian), concerning the wives/lovers/models of the Pre-Raphaelites -- Jane Morris, etc -- treating them, for the first time, as people in their own right, and an interesting bunch they were too.

I'm glad Bernard Leak wrote in with that comment on Morris's supposed influence on Eddison's style: very much a matter of shared sources (both translated Norse

sagas) rather than direct influence, I would say. I too see Eddison as more flexible and powerful a writer even though I'm a great admirer of Morris as a person.

Colliding With Collins:

And now to Dave Collins's column: it certainly touched a nerve or two out there (which was rather what I hoped would happen), and provoked more than a few comments. Dave is still recovering from the shock of all that feedback!

Dave Langford: The D.Collins artwork review is a good idea which I haven't seen done for a bit (I have a dim memory of Taral once doing something similar, and Freff - no, I don't know whether there's a Trend of artists without surnames -- had a swingeing column in SFR way back, pointing out that the people who did the current prozine covers were as the beasts that perish).

Freff -- now that's a name to conjure with. Is he the same guy who presented the American bits on BBC's Micro Live programme?

Harry Bell: It must be Spring, or something, but this is the first LoC I've actually

sent to anyone in, oh, I dunno, seems like years. Probably is years, actually. I almost feel like doing a fanzine again.

((Quick, someone rush round and encourage Harry some more!!!))

More likely than Spring, I guess it was Dave Collins' column on fanzine art that stirred the fannish embers. I'm tempted to take issue with him on his definition of 'artist' ("an artist is someone who....can capture the true likeness of a scene, object or person...") which seems to go against the tide of 20th Century art almost in its entirety, but I shall resist further comment. No doubt others have cudgels in hand already and I see no need to add to his discomfort (if any).

I do think this attempt to put people into boxes marked "artist" and "cartoonist" is an uneasy one, however. Were Gilray and Cruikshank artists or cartoonists? Which is Norman Thelwell, who may be better known for his cartoons but also sells watercolour landscapes? Why are Mel Calman's cartoons regularly accepted for the RA Summer Exhibition? Was Aiston a cartoonist or an artist? (Neither: he was my uncle and drove a bread van.)

I admire Dave's setting out to say what he thinks, however, and I'm interested to see where he goes from here (if anywhere - your 'schedule' may be his undoing). This sort of column is not something I'd care to tackle myself, although it is something I'd look forward to reading. Unfortunately, I'm not over-familiar with all the artists (sic) chosen this time, having spent the last couple of years gafiating, so I shall have to content myself by saying that on the admittedly small evidence available to me, Dave's comments on Roz Calverley and Steve Fox appear to have been transposed.

Iain Byers: Good to see Dave Collins writing about fanart, and I agree with a lot of what he said, but I don't think he is right in dismissing cartoons as somehow not being art, but given his narrow definition of an artist as someone who "...can capture the true likeness of a scene, object or person...



that transcends the original subject", it's hardly surprising. Apart from the fact that 'transcending' the subject seems to contradict the idea of the art being a 'true likeness', it's a definition which excludes all art prior to the use of perspective, most of the art movements of the past hundred years and more, and all abstract art. And many artists have simplified and exaggerated the subject, but that doesn't make them cartoonists. And if the cartoonist does simplify and exaggerate, why does he then suggest that the deformed appearance of a drawing be a reason for criticism? Or doesn't a missing finger constitute a deformity?

Cartoons are the preferred form of artwork for fanzines, partly because of their 'humorous' aspect, which fits the 'fannish' approach, partly because of their simplicity, which is best suited to the simple reproduction methods of most fanzines, and partly to for the 'speed' with which they can be produced to satisfy the demands of a number of fanzines in excess of the number of fan-artists; but there's no reason to suppose that cartoons are not art, or that they can't be evaluated upon the skill of the artist. I have to admit that I have something of my own drum to beat, in this respect, since I'm no cartoonist, and I don't like trying to be -- I find cartooning as difficult as any other art and personally less satisfying -- and I feel cut out by the preponderance of cartoons in fanzines and the greater appreciation it receives -- I often wonder why I bother taking weeks on a complex drawing -- so Dave's definition of fanart tends to leave myself, and Martin Helsdon say, in limbo. I mean, I like cartoons, Harry Bell, Jim Barker, Pete Lyon, and Brad Foster, but the trouble with fanart is that it's all loaded in the cartoonist's favour, and the draughtsmanship, even the idea content, counts for much less than it should. What it comes down to is that fanart is tainted by the essence of fandom, as something ephemeral and ultimately pretty worthless. It's no coincidence that the cartoons that appear in the daily press are of a lower quality than most 'cartoon' fanart, but if the fanartists are jerked about and taken for granted, then they have only themselves to blame. After all, who but a jerk

would agree to supply fillos when the very name tells you it's just to fill space, when it will be forgotten the moment the page is turned, probably won't receive comment, and when the faned will treat it as some kind of payment for sending you a copy of the zine?

I guess I've said more than I intended, but less, much less, than I would like to, so I'll end up by saying it was good to see a Martin Helsdon drawing again. It's a damned sight better than most of the crap masquerading as art in fanzines.

Pete Crump: I am intrigued by Dave Collins' article on fanart, being more than a little interested in that neglected area of fanac myself. However, I am *not* qualified to comment (having had no artistic training), but will do so anyway to avoid the charge of 'copping out'. I agree with Dave on the lack of interest fans show in artwork; it *is* disheartening to have your work ignored. Even to have someone slag it off is preferable to the silence we're used to from readers and faneds alike. Having said that, it is often difficult to find a serious piece of work among the plethora of frivolous and trivial illos, designed merely to illustrate or provoke a smile, that adorn the pages of nearly every fanzine (but which are, nevertheless, a vital component of the fannish milieu). Fans like Shep and Harry Bell are very accomplished artists, but I think Dave is confusing what is a sound drawing technique with artistic merit. The examples he uses in his article are terrific drawings, and do everything they set out to do, but (dare I say it?) are of limited artistic worth (except, maybe, Jackie Smith's, but they are too reduced and I'm not familiar enough with her work to comment), and we should not be surprised that fans are disinclined to make comment beyond "liked the illo on page x". Dave himself is guilty of this. In his article, he says "she has a good idea" about a Roz Calverley cover, and his criticism of the piece as art is limited to this one statement. Yet he spends a paragraph criticising her technique, ending with "it also has a standing figure with an oddly bent leg". In this case he is probably right to do so, but I

wonder if this is a balanced view. (To use analogy, how many loccers comment on the writing style of an article and ignore the subject matter?) The artist Matisse was once painting a girl seated at a piano, when a woman stopped to admire his work in progress. Looking at his canvas, she said "The arm on that girl is far too long". Matisse turned to her and, indicating the offending canvas, replied "Madam, that is not a girl – that is a *picture*". I hope in future columns that Dave will criticise from an artistic viewpoint as well as a purely technical one.

I would define 'serious work' as a piece that provokes serious thought or emotion, or makes us look at something in a new and interesting way (rather like the better fanzine articles do). It is particularly difficult to produce serious SF/fantasy artwork without falling into the trap of simply reproducing the traditional F&SF elements in yet another configuration. Martin Helsdon's piece in the current CS is an example: the humanoid alien sitting in a desolate alien landscape, a castle towers above. But, so what? Yes, it's well-drawn (though Dave Collins might find it necessary to point out the slightly skewed face) but hardly more than pleasant decoration. I would prefer a thought-provoking, though badly-drawn, piece of serious work to any amount of superbly crafted fillos. How many locs would faneds receive if all the articles they ever printed were the literary equivalents of throwaway cartoons? Yes, artists do need to be recognised -- but only if they produce work worthy of comment. I'm not suggesting fanartists should attempt to produce the visual equivalent of *Finnegan's Wake* (but it's preferable to the *Perry Rhodans* we seem to be stuck with), but rather to look more closely at what they are producing, to use the traditional elements available in new ways. Therefore, the appeal should not be that old chestnut "let's have more recognition from the fans", but rather "let's have more serious work from the fanartists".

Unfortunately this is all too difficult. When I was active as a fanartist (I use the term loosely), the few requests I had were for fillos or for frivolous covers to the editor's

specification. Apart from the severe limitations imposed by the fannish medium (no colour, no pencil, and – with some processes – no fine detail or large areas of black), the editors themselves seem hostile, or at least indifferent, to serious work (in my limited experience, *Crystal Ship* is one of the few notable exceptions: the William Morris issue was *lovely* – keep it up, John). Shep, to take an example, has a truly wonderful, flowing style, and eye for line and shade, and a solid technique. For my money he is easily the best of the prolific British fanartists, but all we are allowed to see from him is variations on a sleazy mandroid, and the occasional fantasy lietmotif, which by now he should be able to produce with his eyes shut. We can not expect stunning originality at that rate of production. Other artists, too, have their favourite theme (like ATom's endless scenes of interplanetary whimsy, or Steve Fox's aliens with huge glassy eyes) that they can compose variations on in a flash to satisfy demanding editors who always want more of the same. What we need now is for editors to encourage artist like Shep and Dave Collins to show us what they really can do when they are allowed to slow down and turn out a serious Work of Art.

In addition to this, of course, the editors need to sit up and take notice of what the artist has done and acknowledge the serious intent of the work. The prevailing editorial attitude towards art seems to be "Oh, that's a nice half-page illo, that would fit well on page 13 under the article on abortion". But if the editors demand artwork, then it should not have to play second fiddle to the zine's other contents. However, it is rare for the editor to acknowledge the existence of artwork in his fanzine beyond mentioning the artist and page number. This attitude naturally rubs off on the reader. Fans glance at artwork, respond (hopefully), then move on. It is not enough to expect artwork to speak for itself – it so rarely can, because the language used is often unfamiliar to the viewer (even though the vocabulary of SF art sometimes seems so pitifully restricted). It is the editor's duty to point up the serious work in his zine – to give the reader a

working grammar, if you like – to say that this or that piece is important and will repay careful attention – otherwise the fans simply won't look twice, and the fanartists simply won't bother.

Shep Kirkbride: Not being able to contain myself any longer, I have to say here and now that Dave Collins' article on fanart was the most enjoyable part of the fanzine for me... but naturally, I'm biased, being one of the creatures discussed therein. Which makes any comment I should make rather suspect, I think.

Nevertheless I shall continue: Dave has to be patted on the back for daring to tackle the often controversial subject of fanart. Especially as he himself has the mark of the beast upon him. As the first of a promised series he got off to a good start by giving a fairly good cross-section of fanart being used today. I have to be honest and say that I cannot remember seeing any of Jackie Smith's art in any fanzines before this, but going by the two pieces in the article I shall be looking for more. I like to incorporate nature in my artwork whenever possible and I find Jackie's use of trees in her artwork very effective. Mmm, definitely worthy of further investigation.

((I agree, and would gladly use the lady in CS, if I only knew where to find her! Can anyone help with an address?))

Dave was, I feel, a bit unfair to Steve Fox. He has a very distinctive style, and undoubtedly has talent. *Crystal Ship* itself has given a home to some of Steve's finer pieces. In fact, the illo used in Dave's article is a fine example of Steve's obvious talent.

I could have quite happily 'eyeballed' a few more illos by Harry Bell, as his particular brand of artwork and humour has been sadly lacking over the past few years. When I first got into fandom some flumpety-odd years ago, Harry impressed me as the fanartist, along with Jim Barker, but he does not seem to have been too active of late: maybe a few sharp digs in the ribs from a



few fan-editors would make him come up with some goodies. I'm sure it would be worth it.

Trying to differentiate between who are 'artists' and who are 'cartoonists' is an argument I do not want to get into. I'm sure that is a remark that is going to give Dave a few headaches. I personally believe that we all come under the title of 'artist' from the first cave drawing ancestor right through to every style and variation of today, be it professional or amateur. 'Artist' is just a word for a particular exercise or talent. Surely 'cartoonist' is just a sub-title. I don't know. I'm sure we will hear more on the subject. Best of luck Dave.

As for future articles I would like to think that such fanartists as Pete Lyon, Rotsler, Jim Barker and many others will be included, and surely Terry Jeeves deserves an article to himself!

To sum up, I'm pleased you gave Dave a free hand and hope you continue to do so. I'm sure it will prove a most worthwhile and even controversial series of articles. Speaking for myself, I would like to see the difference of styles discussed and the different mediums each of the artists uses...

Steve Sneyd: The fanart section was very interesting (just wish you'd reproded the Jackie Smith one of a miniature village in the wood at full page size, as I'd have liked to be able to take in the detail properly).... Clearly limited to artists who work in the fannish zines, ie those who appear in SF

and fantasy related zines, with fiction and poetry zines not included, which explains why no mention of people like A.C. Evans, Matt Brooker, L.P. Calvert, Tony Burrell, etc., but I was surprised to see Helsdon omitted... or is CS the only fanzine he touches? And no mention of Jeeves? Has he stopped doing artwork? In the days when I still used to see a reasonable number of fannish fanzines his work seemed to be everywhere, a bit samey sometimes perhaps, but certainly worth mentioning.

Sue Thomason: I'm very unhappy with the idea of 'artists' as representational and 'cartoonists' as inferior. Is Lowry a cartoonist? Hogarth? Picasso? That chap whose name I remember as Lichtenstein (but that can't be right?) who paints enormous 'cartoon' panels ('I pressed the fire control and rockets blazed across the sky')? I remembered the drawing in *Wallbanger*, and looked at it again before writing about it now. My main reaction to it was (and is) that the perspective makes me queasy, my non-rational perception is convinced there's something wrong with it, particularly with the window on the left-hand side. I thought the man was yawning, not screaming, and because the drawing was sandwiched between two rather cheerful pieces (the lettercolumn and an article on silly patents) I assumed it was basically cheerful too, a sort of 'morning after the convention' picture. Perhaps it would help if 'serious', non-fillo artwork were treated like articles in having their title and producer's name prominently displayed on the same page. Looking again at the picture, it seems to me that the man's head and shoulders are much too large for his arms and legs. The legs in particular look peculiar. And he only has 3 fingers on his left hand. That's why I don't look at pictures closely: it makes me super-critical.

Terry Broome: I'm very sorry Dave feels unable to show his more personal art: it took me years to show my poems to anyone..., and I know of a few people who daren't show anyone their work for fear of being ignored or ridiculed. They feel frustrated because of this. Fanzine editors appreciate

good artwork. Most of the readers also appreciate it, but what to say: "I enjoyed the illo on p.19,57,26,13,14 & pages 1-6"? Doesn't say a lot, but it says enough as far as many artists are concerned (same applies to writers), but I'd be dissatisfied with simply that, and I expect many readers feel it's better to say nothing at all than a couple of glib words without any meat on them. Dave shows most of his as an *act of faith* – he *assumes* people enjoy his work. This is born out of his popularity – with all the requests for artwork that he gets. But I bet it took time to establish this popularity: you can do this pretty safely in an APA, and things he did for *The Organisation* had me smiling and laughing. But also *appreciating* his work. Perhaps Dave should try an APA to show his more personal art – asking for critical feedback to begin with, and from there go onto fanzines – once his ability for serious art has been proved and tested, and he's gained a reputation for that, too. He may get little feedback in way of locs on his artwork, but the *demand* for it should reassure him that it is appreciated and admired.

I think Ros Calverley is better at drawing scenes, or in detail (for example, a hand) than a whole person *at the moment* – a little development is necessary to perfect her people, but she shows great promise there. Unfortunately, she's overworked and so has little time to devote as much time as she'd like to her art, so there's little opportunity to develop much in the way of a grand illustration. I expect she is dissatisfied with a lot of her work for this reason. Then again, maybe I'm totally wrong. I wonder what Ros actually does think about her own art? She may not be Escher or anyone else as good as he is, but I am usually satisfied with her art, and frequently amazed by its beauty. For someone who, relatively, hasn't been drawing for long, and in her spare hours (when she is probably more tired than most of us after a day at work – nursing isn't appreciated enough for what it takes out of the nurses, I feel). ATom has had years to perfect his style and possibly wasn't so tired when so doing. (But tell me if I'm wrong!)

Steve Fox: I rarely find his work over-

detailed (there is one exception) – *richly* detailed, I think. Unfortunately, editors do insist on reducing the size of his art, and for such detail, this really isn't on (*Neology* is a prime example of this practice). Simple line drawings, or cartoons, are more readily reducable, and don't usually suffer from being reduced, in fact, sometimes they benefit from this. When using art, *reduction* should always be taken into consideration. With uncommissioned art, as Steve Fox's work is (I mean, an editor asks him for any old piece, without telling him it's going to be reduced to 1/4 its size), he gives the editor a detailed drawing and its ruined by being made too small to see anything clearly... Altogether a very enjoyable, thought-provoking article

Ken Lake: Tell Dave Collins that in books the copyright sign is followed by the date of that copyright (it has to be, to mean anything); why, then, do the artists he mentions not date their own products themselves? But his point about misuse of artwork (neglect, loss, cropping, etc.) is valid, while his complaint of lack of readership feedback is not (I write professionally, and consider myself lucky if I get *one* letter from a reader about even the most controversial article, while the receipt by the editor of five letters leads to my virtual deification – "it never happened before!").

Actually, I'm pretty biase about about fanart. I grew up with *Astounding* and all them in the forties, and found nine-tenths of the art either infuriating (revealing the plot) or corny (the same old hackneyed spaceships and domes and bems and babes); Edd Cartier came as such a breath of fresh air that I used to trace his pictures and store them (we didn't have access to photocopiers in them days, kid). I find most work by fanartists to be so derivative I didn't realise for a long time that it was 'new work' at all – I thought editors merely stole old pics from the 'real' SF mags and reprinted them, perhaps adapted to fit in titles or to provide gaglines. I kid you not – I really did think that; the more so because the zines I saw with non-traditional artstyles were so appallingly juvenile and amateurish that

they were instantly recognisable as 'new' and instantly ignorable as crud.

Since then I have come to welcome ATom's idiosyncratic and amusing work, and I'm sure if I put my mind to it I could identify some more who appeal, but fighting one's way through the mass of copyist undergrowth makes it hardly worth the effort. Terry Jeeves has a nice turn of the pen when he is not being deliberately copyist (and there's nothing wrong with such studied reiteration for its own sake – it's when it masquerades as inventive that it annoys), and I wouldn't like any other keen artist (especially the lovely Roz Calverley) to think I was being unkind, but surely you all see what I mean?

Brad W. Foster: While I agree with Dave that the majority of fanartists could be considered as cartoonists, I disagree with his incredibly narrow-range definition of 'artist'. In the broadest sense, 'artist' aplies to anyone who performs in the 'arts' – painting, acting, singing, whatever. Nowadays it seems more generally narrowed down to the visual artist more than the performing in most folks' minds. Bit it is still the catch-all word for a whole range. A cartoonist is an artist; a painter is an artist; an illustrator is an artist. Dave's definition would be just a very narrow band in the spectrum – the 'realist' artist.

For my own part, I got in a discussion with a woman a few years back about whether I was an 'artist' or an 'illustrator'. To her mind, the two were totally different -- if you did an illustration or cartoon, you most certainly weren't a *real* artist. I not only don't accept that idea, but don't see why anyone has to do only one style, so I've had the title of 'Artistrator' placed on my business cards – tried to work in a way to get 'cartoonist' in there as well, but it got too bulky.

I'll agree with Dave again on how nice it would be to have dates to go with the art in tracking an artist's work through the haphazard, delay-ridden world of fanzine publishing. A sidebar comment, though, is about how Americans go to the 'extreme' of putting copyright signs on even the smallest



illustrations. Do not know how it is in England, but over here, once you allow a piece of artwork to be printed *without* a copyright notice, that work is for all intents and purposes public domain, and anyone who felt like it could use it again and again however they wished. So it has become automatic with me and most other artists who wish to retain control of their own work to start their names with a little c inside of a circle.

On the way fanartists are treated, I do see the occasional LoC commenting on the artwork in zines, so I don't feel I exist in a vacuum. It is tough to say much more than "I liked it" or "I didn't like it" in regards to art. Dave says most fans can quite happily fill a LoC on the rights and wrongs of a written piece, but I don't see many of those myself. "Got their pronouns all confused, bad sentence structure in paragraph two", etc. LoCs based on writing tend to either agree, disagree, or go off on some other tangent of an idea that the writing got the reader to thinking on. They don't comment very often on the actual writing itself. Likewise, I doubt anyone would do so with art – less, even, since art is so involved with individual style and interpretation that it is even more difficult to say something is wrong or right – and usually if something is done wrong, most responses would be of the "I didn't like it" type, since it is often difficult to say *why* you don't like a particular piece. So, I think, considering the nature of the beast, fanartists get feedback – the question could also be how much of it gets into print for the

artist to see? There might be a *lot* of folks who at least do the short comments about a drawing making them smile, as Dave asked, but when a faned gets ready to put together a letter-column, such general-nice comments are usually the first to be edited out if space is a consideration, and quite rightly.

Of course, Dave's follow-up paragraph reveals a bit more why he feels this way about feedback, and a basic difference between he and I, and the reason why I don't see the problem he does. He speaks of doing a drawing that no-one asked for, "it was just something I had inside me that I wanted to get down on paper". Okay, 90% of what I do is that way, I draw because I enjoy it, there are images I want to put down. But then he states being upset because he got no feedback on it, and says he is going to keep personal drawings to himself. My response is, if you do it for yourself in the first place, what does it matter if no one else responded? How can that make it any less personal or meaningful for you? It's like I tell a lot of beginning artists who either approach me at conventions, or send me their work to comment on. If someone has something critical to say, *listen* to it. Then look at the work in question as openminded as you can with that criticism in mind, and see if you agree or disagree. If they have a valid point you can agree with – great, it might help you learn and improve. If you *don't* agree, then don't worry about it. The drawing is the same, and everyone will have different opinions. I've had enough artwork out there that was absolutely *saved* by one viewer, and *praised* by another – both on the *same* thing – to not let response, or lack of, bother me on things that I did, in the first place, for myself. I do all the weird little drawings, and such, not for fanzines, but for me. I just happen to have been lucky enough to have found a whole world of publishing that will actually *print* my strange little critters! If I get a positive response, that's great, it's wonderful, I love it! If I get a bad response, I see if they have a valid point and go from that. If I get *no* response, the art is still there, it's still mine, and I like it.

I hope people who comment on Dave's

choices of this first list of artists (especially people who are writing from outside the UK) will bear in mind that he is obviously basing his choices and opinions on what he has seen in fanzines mainly from England. I had several choice nuggets to spread on Dave's selections until I realised that. He says enough to make it pretty damn clear, but it didn't drive home until I got to my own paragraph and he commented on how I'd left the spot illos to spread my wings on a cover. I figure I've done work on some 75 or so covers on various fanzines the past four or five years, and of those only five have come from Australia, and only two from England – and both of those only just showed up in the last couple of months. So, working from the mainly English reference point, I can understand why several artists I was surprised *not* to see here didn't make it, and I'm sure when Dave does get a chance to see more of their work he'll love it, too!

I would say, responding as the artist to one of his comments on my work, about my little fillos being "often pleasant but often samey spot illos", that I was surprised to see him make such a point, as it's something that I've consciously worked at. To me 'samey' is the work of Bill Rotsler and ATom. (I dislike 90% of the Rotslers I see mainly because it's the same thing over and over, and boring. I *like* 90% of the ATom art I see even though it is the same pointy-faced little guys over and over, but he does it with *style*, whereas Rotsler don't.) But the reason I said way back that I do this stuff for fun, not for feedback, is that I always try to come up with a different shape, a different form, a different character, every time. I think it was reading the comments on ATom that he had (all of which I agree with, I mean no disrespect at all to the man, he is wonder-ful), but here he singles out the *NUTZ* cover and comments on how nice it was, when it was a radical departure from the sameness of ATom's work: then to have that followed up by his throw-away line on my own 'samey' work – that probably set me off on this little tirade. ((See, I read his criticism, applied it to my work, and didn't find it valid. Now I'll go cry in the corner for a while be-cause nobody loves or understands me.))

I'm back. Dave's quick dismissal of Steve Fox with a few words again shows simply he's had little exposure to some of these folks' work. Steve is a master with pen and ink, and done ill-service by the poor-to-mediocre printing methods of most fanzines. But, although I can't swear to that, seeing a lot of Steve's work in *good* reproduction, it seems that he too is working for himself here – why else do all that work if three-quarters of the time people won't see it? As for the "overloaded with too much detail", when is enough too much? Steve is at the top of my own list of personal favourites in fandom, along with Joan Hanke Woods, who didn't even make it to this first list, but only, I'm assuming, from a lack of exposure of her wonderful work (dark and overly detailed though it may be— look out, Dave!) to UK fandom.

Being from the other side of the big wet one, I enjoyed the article because it gave me the chance to see the work of several artists I'd not been aware of, and who I hope to see more from. I was particularly struck by the design sense of the two Jackie Smith samples here. Shep's work I know and love, and feel it is only right that he started the whole thing off.

Buck Coulson: Art...I might mention that *Yandro* ran spot illos rather than asking for a specific piece to be illustrated, *never* set a deadline, and generally did not ask for contributions at all. They arrived and were used ASAP, were credited on the contents page and everyone up to and including Dan Adkins, George Barr, Jim Cawthorn, George Scithers (yes, he started in fandom as an artist), Barbi Johnson and Roy Krenkel, seemed quite satisfied. Of course, a long-time monthly publication helped, and it got feedback from the editors, and sometimes from the readers. Originals were returned to the artists if requested. A few went to the Fan Art Show in its early days, and if sold, the artist was paid for them. (Oh yes, we used a lot of ATom, too, and Bill Harry.) Generally I'll go along with Collins on his art comments, except that I dislike Brad Foster's stuff. It may be great style, but it doesn't do a thing for me.

Ted Hughes: Now the piece by Dave Collins.... a man on top of his subject – but not in a field I feel competent to comment on. Now, if he'd expounded on the merits of Schneeman versus Schoenherr I'd have been right there with him. If Schneeman is too ancient for you, substitute Emsh versus Freas. No doubt you get my drift. I love SF illustrations and illustrators. And, compared with their predecessors, the current crop of artists drawing for the prozines are sadly lacking in imagination, although in some cases their technique is superior. My preference is for old-style illustrations. Wessos' crashing spaceships, and Cartier's aliens, send a shiver up my spine, that the modern 'facial expressions' specialists haven't a hope of generating. Nevertheless, I enjoyed Dave Collins' piece, and thought it could have been longer, and, perhaps, more controversial. The best illustration wasn't in his article at all. It was on the cover. A very nicely balanced design, very effective lettering. Does Brad Foster work with a pen or a brush? That's the sort of information I would have liked to get from Dave's article. For instance, John Schoenherr (one of my favourites) works, I read, with a dry brush on rough paper, adding the fine detail by pen. Kelly Freas uses so many techniques, it took a whole book by him to explain them. Leo Morey should have been an engineer, but became an illustrator for *Amazing* instead. Hans Bok was once taught by Maxfield Parrish, whose work Bok's in no way resembles! And so on. Maybe Dave could dig up more background information for some future article on fan artists. Your 'editorial' gently hints at something of that nature.

Eric Bentcliffe: Thoroughly enjoyed Dave Collins' article on fanart, an excellent celebration of the many fine talents around. Incidentally, ATom oft includes the odd aside embedded in his creation for us old-time fans...his "Space Squirrel" that Dave mentions being a reminder of the late lamented Ron Elik, FANAC fan of the fifties who was also known as Squirrel. Not many people know that.....

David Redd: Many thanks for CS12 – another excellent and very welcome issue. I regret the passing of your backward glances at SF classics (weren't there that many true classics worth writing about?), but the new column on fanzine art looks an even better idea. It calls attention to worthy talent, points out good items some of us missed, reminds us of good work we might not have appreciated fully at first sight. For example, those brilliant Jackie Smiths seem a lot better than on their first appearance – maybe smaller reproduction on better paper has revealed their true quality.

Some of Dave Collins's opinions may be debatable but at least he can prove to people that their work *doesn't* disappear without being appreciated. He is not the only one to have sent a part of himself into print and had it seemingly ignored; this happens to short story writers as well (e.g. me). As for keeping the personal items to himself these days, I find that on balance if a work succeeds it should be given the chance to find an audience. I mean, look at Shep's little filler on p.8. It may have started as a rock-music joke but it actually looks nice as a picture. It has given pleasure and communicated something even if nobody comments on it...

((Re Dave's question on SF Classics: the series is not necessarily ended – it's just I haven't had the time or inclination to write 'em. Anybody else who cares to 'ave a bash is welcome. Yes, this is a heavy hint!))

Sheryl Birkhead: Thank you for running "Back To The Drawing Board" -- I'm curious to know how much time the various fan-artists put into their work (both on an individual piece basis and in toto). How many are/will be 'real' artists in mundania? Where are the artists of yesteryear (like Tim Kirk, Fabian...)? Is Dave going to do potpourris or individual showcases? Just curious.

Mic Rogers: Dave Collins' article. Oh! Hooray! Hooray! Hooray!! CallooCallay!!! At last -- at last -- someone to speak up for

the fanartists! Someone who is eminently suitable, too. I agree agree agree with 99% of what he says. (What I can't agree with is what I've not seen samples of where specifically mentioned.) I'm glad someone has differentiated between the cartoon type of illo and the others. I've long felt they were lumped together too much – sort of, if you're a fanartist you do funny-looking figures!

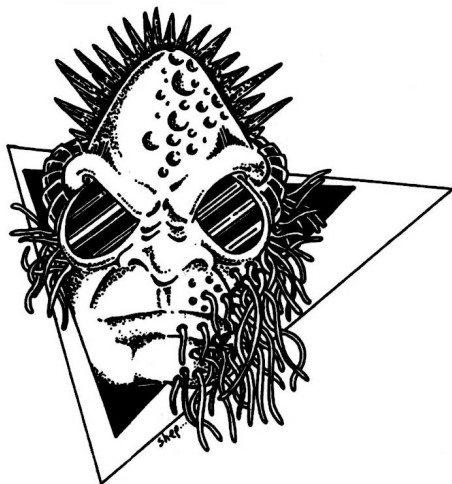
I wish faneds would quote such comments on fanart as they receive for two, no, three reasons: 1/ so the fanartist gets the feedback s/he needs; 2/ so that the loccer gets an egoboo and is encouraged to do more of the same; 3/ so that others loccers/ readers can see what was found attractive (or otherwise) and will feel encouraged to make their own response. JDO can tell you that I have commented on most, if not all, of the artwork in CS ever since I first received it. I have no way of knowing if this feedback has been passed on to the fanartists concerned or not – they've never seen the light of print in CS. Why not? Even if John does not agree with what I've said – he prints locs on written views that aren't all sweetness and light. Was John not satisfied with the standard of my writing? In what way? Did he fear that my comments were rubbish as he didn't understand them? I doubt that very much. Nor is John the only faned to err in this manner: he is one of a majority. It's only because I'm a very determined (or stubborn) person that I've kept on with the comments however disparaging the disinterest. What 'right' have I to comment, you might ask (apart from the 'right' of any loccer to comment on anything in a zine)? Well, I do frequent illoes for TWP and I've done some covers for *Sic Biscuit...* and *Nutz and Shallow End* plus some fillos. But as Dave says, sometimes you send off art-work and it passes into limbo – you never hear another thing about it. And how often do faneds give any indication of the sorts of illos they'd like to receive?

When I first came into fandom, about ten years ago, I asked what sort of work was required and in what medium it should be done. I even – fool that I was – asked the BSFA!!! The full reply I got from them was "It should be carbon based for copying". I even

went so far as to send them an illo for their Paperback Page -- only to find it was used without a byline, and someone had added a monster to it! That ended my association with the BSFA and I wish it ill every time I think about it. Another faned (who shall be nameless to spare her blushes) had the arrogant gall to physically *cut* my artwork about and print the resultant mess! What *writers* would be prepared to put up with such treatment? If not, why not? Then just apply your reasons to artwork.

I like the way Dave has approached a difficult subject and the way he has written it, and I'm looking forward eagerly to his next article.

It's letters like that which puts faneds into intensive care. Ouch!!! I admit it all, I have been every bit as bad at keeping fanartists aware of the feedback as all the other erring faneds, and I am very 'umble about it. But, I have mended my ways, as the fanartists who contributed to CS12 will testify (won't you ,guys?), thanks to the new technology I'm using. Basically, what I do nowadays is type the locs into a loccol file as they arrive, then I quickly whip through making up new files for the contri-



butors, whether writer or artist, which I send to them as often as I can. There is no wasted effort, as the loccol file then goes on to form the basis of the actual *Ripples* column, with the aid of the Mac's magic ability to swap things around easily. So, all comments are getting to the contributors, even if they don't make it into the final lettercolumn, for reasons of space, balance, interest, whatever.

Will you call off the hitmen now, please Mic, they're scaring the wife?

Which reminds me, there was comment on the art in CS12, naturally.

Art For Art's Sake:

Steve Sneyd: Enjoyed the cover... the handmovement means it should be Memphis Slim but I don't remember him having shades like that when I saw him at the Colston Hall, Bristol, so many yonks ago (and, if memory doesn't trick me, the Stones were downbill then... and how the blues fans did laugh when a few groupies started screaming during their warm-up turn).

Dave Collins: Brad Foster's cover: I liked the logo with its sparkle and the fact that the creature had five hands. But -- I know it is a stereotype but the idea and layout cries out for a more active figure. There should be an insane look in its eyes. Hands should be flying in the air. The limited movements of the figure don't match the crazy actions of the keyboard and notes.

Shep has turned out his usual high standard of well-drawn, very enjoyable illos, but don't think that I'm going to tell you so that you can pass my comments on to him, or even print them: you must be mad.

Sheryl Birkhead supplied some delightful critters for the loccol. She obviously has a talent for this kind of thing, and I hope to see lots more of her stuff. I like her clean

humorous style, and I would like to see what she would make of other subjects.

I thought Martin Helsdon's naked fairy would cause a ripple or two when I published it. It did!

Sue Thomason: The full-page illo on p.26 is disturbing, and obviously meant to be so. I see a tidal estuary-marsh with castles in the air and clouds becoming mountains. Sitting on a rock in the foreground is a 'fairy' with dragonfly wings, a Penthouse Pet's body, and a distorted Asiatic face (perhaps she's a Hiroshima fairy who lives in a mushroom cloud; whatever, she obviously shaves her arm-pits). Her jawline and teeth make her look carnivorous. I find her frightening and repellant. According to my early teaching, this kind of 'storytelling' about a picture would be considered a poor response if it were a piece of classical music. I was taught that pure appreciation is the highest, loving the thing for itself, not for the (doubtless inferior) stories I can tell about it. Nevertheless, I do tell stories to music, and choreograph to music as well, so on we go..

Years of debate about the way female images are used to 'sell' things have made me very ambivalent about looking at this sort of body. Is the 'fairy' being used to put sex into the picture? Her long hair is draped away from her body, framing and displaying it; her right arm is cocked in an uncomfortable position to make her right breast look bigger. Perhaps I am supposed to see the picture as a 'snapshot', taken in an unguarded instant, rather than as a 'painting' of a posed subject. This picture says to me that the fantasy image of sex is female, and that you can pleasurably consummate your dreams only while you regard your dream woman as an anonymous body. Look at her face, her persona, and you'll get a nasty shock. I cover up the fairy's breasts with one finger, and try imagining him as a man. The image is much less threatening, perhaps because the figure looks much more alien to me as a man, perhaps because as a woman my ambivalence about sex is projected onto the Other (the man).

Pamela Boal: 'Back to the Drawing Board' bodes well to becoming the first of a classic collection. I do so agree with Dave in so far as the modern definition of cartoon and art goes. As a piece of art I'm afraid Martin Helsdon's piece on p.26 does not work. The female is anatomically correct if we are making the unlikely assumption that a winged woman would have an earth human body. The marshy foreground and clouded castle, while derivative, are pleasingly executed. The problem is just what is the fly woman doing in the picture? Contemplating the castle? Resting? Thinking? None of the foregoing; indeed she has no purpose except to sit and pose (rather uncomfortably by the looks of it) for the artist. Maybe Martin is saying females all the worlds over like to have their pictures taken against a romantic backdrop.

Shep Kirkbride: Martin Helsdon deserves a mention, by the way, for his full page fairy/castle illustration. Now Martin's is a technique I would really like to hear described. C'mon Martin, give. The detail is tremendous and one day I really am going to get around to spending a lot of time like that on an illustration. But in the meantime, I'm just going to sit back and let Martin slave over a hot pen, and enjoy his hard work.

As you can see from this issue, I didn't let Shep sit back for long!

Rocking Along:

The music pieces drew some comment, even if they were somewhat overshadowed by the Collins' epic.

Dorothy Davies: I know exactly what you mean about the guitar riff grabbing you. I live with a man who is fascinated with the blues. I can just about tell the difference between Slim Harpo, JB Lenoir, Lightning Slim, Lightning Hopkins and the like. I can appreciate Muddy Waters (who can't?) but for me it is the people who were influenced

by these old blues guys that are the ones I like. Ry Cooder, for example, and John Mayall, even if I hear the echoes of the old men in their work. Vic is an original, primitive music, primitive art. I prefer the newer stuff, packed with thumping guitars and drums.

Shep Kirkbride: We've discussed our differences in rock music before, but one thing we do have in common is our love for that pure, undiluted, ecstatic form of music, Rock. With emphasis on the guitar riffs, and wails and pounding beat. Ghod, I can feel it going through me now. The day after I received my copy of CS I had to blast 'Boston' out of the car stereo on my way to work, and at such times, a personal cassette player, or any system involving headphones, is totally out. The world needs to know that you have taste. Yes, it is definitely a case of 'sod the neighbours'. Apart from the Stranglers and the likes of Elvis Costello though, I never could understand the Punk era. Oh, I can understand the young latching on to the anarchy that punkdom so obviously stood for, but from a purely musical viewpoint it was all hype.

I don't know if you saw *The Last Resort* on Channel 4 a few weeks ago, but Malcolm McLaren, originator of the Sex Pistols, admitted that Vicious and the rest were musically talentless, but it seemed like a good laugh! So as far as including Punk in any respectable article on Rock music, or any other musical form, to me is a non-starter. No doubt there will be those who will disagree. But I know what I like. A personal opinion, I hasten to add.

Andy Sawyer: I liked the music edition of CS: it's a bit difficult to comment without writing another essay similar to yours or Chucks -- both views/experiences being similar to mine, except that I don't pretend to such an encyclopedic range of tastes as Chuck. Only two points then -- although musically I come from where you came from (first band I ever saw were Sounds Incorporated at the Devizes Corn Exchange), Punk rekindled my inspiration rather than dampened it. Hearing 'God

Save The Queen' by the Sex Pistols was pretty influential -- even hearing of its *existence* was enough (it was the first record I bought unheard since a string of Dusty Springfield singles). True, I confess to a certain cynicism when I come across people getting nostalgic for the good ol' days of 1977 -- it's interesting that very few people/bands have *lasted* since the punk era, and I'm not talking about dear old rock'n'roll burnout, but just lack of talent/staying power. I loved the Clash's *London Calling* album but they've not made it (lack of political stability or something). On the *other* hand -- some of the really great moments are inimitable anyway, and it's a bit hard to come hard on, say, Wreckless Eric and that whole bunch of Stiffs because they are not established superstars.

But Chuck knows more about ephemeral trash (the glory of wreck'n'roll) than I do, and I'd only bring him up on one point -- it's not my memory that early skinheads *weren't* racist: true, they went for ska, but putting the boot into Asians was always a sport. At the risk of espousing a racist stereotype myself, I'd recall something I read the other day about the skinheads leaving the West Indians alone because they fought back -- certainly as far as I can remember the skins were always racist as a group although this racism might have included large sections of 'honorary whites'.

Eric Bentcliffe: ...Your mention of those haunts of my youth, le palais de danse (variously spelled in the flickering neon of the times) evokes nights of fun and frolic, but then I predate you by a year or so. I haunted them in my 'misspent youth' for two main reasons: I enjoyed dancing (both strict tempo ballroom *and* jive, and was reasonably good at it), and they were a good place to socialise... and, sometimes even, enjoy the music. There were some pretty terrible bands around back then (none quite as inept and discordant as now, but then they had to play live all the time and could get booed offstage if they hit too many bum notes...now no one seems to know which are the bum notes and which are the good ones!!!)but there were also some quite good

ones around in the Manchester area. We had the odd Saturday-night fight when some idiot had too much to drink and started a ruckus but that was a period when most of the male population had been (or still were) in the forces and had seen more serious and nasty affrays, and weren't too keen on solving every argument by force. Better times? I don't know, but I'm glad I had my youth *then* rather than now. My period was (musically) that of Big Band Swing, the high-flying trumpet riffing over a complimentary comment by an elegant sax section, being carried along by a good rhythm section. I wasn't averse to the trad-boom that followed, either, or to the early rock'n'roll, but once it said farewell to any element of melody I bid it adieu... in that I ceased to seek it out in any deliberate way. I still hear elements of good musicianship and attempts to *do* something musically interesting from out of the pop scene of today, but far too much is utter dross.

John Miller: Really enjoyed your article on rock, especially the recollections of the sixties. Would personally liked to have read about your memories of those days in more detail and at longer length, which you could maybe treat us to some other time...

My own memories of the sixties are pretty (mostly) dismal as my parents, both skoolteachers, tried to keep rock musik away from me, the UK version of Bible-Belt Honkys' reaction to nigger jungle music. I wasn't allowed a record player 'til I was 14, although I had been allowed to borrow the 'family radio' -- although I do remember raids on my room to see if I was listening to Radio Caroline or Radio London. Shortly after the start of Radio One (Radio Nothing) I once whapped the family radio down on the kitchen floor (whap!) and kicked it across said floor before going into a rant about the BBC's monopoly of the airwaves. There had been occasional moments, however, like in late '65, when I was eleven, and hearing Dylan's 'Like a Rolling Stone' on Radio London, alone and unaccompanied in my room, dark early, light outside, about eight in the evening with this amazing Dylan single belting out of the radio, so mesme-

rising and intense. Dusty Springfield's 'I Only Want To Be With You' had a similar sensuality. Some folks disapproved of Dusty's Motown-influenced boss beat sound, after she'd left behind the somewhat sweet (though not altogether unpleasant) folkyness of the Springfields. I feel the same way about rock as you do, although I don't like all of the things you like (eg. John Martyn, Van Morrison) and as such CS12 might have found itself in the position of a music zine, with so and so not liking such and such, but I liked most of this issue. Rock is the Red Planet Peril!

...Chuck Connor's article... talks of Punk being absorbed by the industry and moving in the direction of soft rock, and seems pessimistic about there being another wave of fresh and energetic rock sounds. He mentions 'Garage Trash Revisited' but I wonder if he realises that 'Garage Trash' is also 60s Punk and that '77 etc. Punk had its roots in that. Take (or reject), as an example of 60s Punk, 'Don't Do It Some More' by the Cindermen. It's quite a frightener... "*gonna take you to the river/ gonna hit you once or twice/ and when you try to pick your big carcass up...*" etc., ending with a disturbing female shriek. Records like this mapped the psychotic streak that lurked beneath the facades of Beatlemania and Flower Power. In 1969 the lead singer of the Cindermen, Dick 'Cinnamon' Cinder, got taken to the Sheriff's office of Galveston, Texas, after a rooftop performance, and charged with 'unusual behaviour', then released with a warning... 'Don't Do It Some More' is quite an astonishing record, released in '69 when all the 'Sham 69' that Chuck talks of was going on.

Sue Thomason: Music – this is where I start to feel very ignorant, and very weird. The first tune I can remember getting really excited about, and really liking, was the Chinese Dance from the *Nutcracker Suite*. At the stage when all my friends were discovering Rock music, I was discovering Bach. Instead of the classic revelation of Going To One's First Rock Concert, I sang in a performance of Handel's *Messiah* (all of it), and walked home afterwards feeling ab-

solutely *blasted*, like now I understand why in Heaven they sing all the time. But I'm as ignorant about classical music as I am about the rest.

Music, for me, tends to be an active not a passive concern. I'm quite likely to be singing to myself as I cycle to work, or playing the recorder for an hour in the evening to relax. I find *listening* to music a very demanding activity, totally engaging both my analytical patterning sense, and my non-rational perception too. Thus music is something I do, or something I watch somebody else do. On the whole, I'd rather hang over somebody bashing out mediocre honky-tonk (or thumping their way through Bach's Great 48) on a beat-up old piano than listen to a record. Any record... I still don't really understand Contemporary Popular Music at all. I find it interesting being 15 or 20 years behind the times – logic dictates that an awful lot of Popular Music is like newspapers – only interesting when it's today's.

I suspect that the Really Good Stuff will still be available in twenty years time – it's still easy enough to get hold of Beatles music, for example – so I'll carry on letting all the rest of you filter out the Good from the rest before I get to it...

David Palter: It may be slightly ironic that CS discusses rock, punk and jazz, but not folk music, a subspecies which at its best is as richly rewarding as any other variety, and which includes within it the very interesting 'filk' genre, which is SF related folk music. Actually I am not all that sure how well known filk is in England. It is certainly a well known part of fandom in North America. It might be said to be the musical equivalent of fanzine publishing, and like fanzines, it can be much better than anyone could reasonably expect of an amateur art form.

There's always someone who takes a perfectly innocent subject, and turns it into something that one never quite knows whether to take seriously or not. Like this fellow Redd:

David Redd: Speaking as one of the older generation, although not old enough for

Glenn Miller, I confess that during the Seventies my interest in rock faded. Maybe I should confess also that I thought of it as pop music, with rock merely one sub-division. I had a certain continuing weakness for Marc Bolan's infantile charm, but people like Yes did nothing for me and the Sex Pistols did less. Curiously, the earliest Eighties re-sparked my interest with a couple of years of more human music (if you searched for it). You will guess that the highlights included 'Atmosphere' and 'Love will tear us apart', but the actual spark came from the original Human League with their album *Travelogue*, and specifically the track 'WXJL Tonight', which converted me in about thirty seconds from heathen to believer, born again. Unfortunately the League soon reduced to two members, neither of them able to play an instrument. So naturally they hired two dancing girls who couldn't sing or play either, and then they could hardly avoid reaching Number 1 in the charts, could they? I sort of admired their panache. As for the actual *music* I liked around then, well, there were the Comsat Angels....Toyah sometimes....the Frantic Elevators.... Positive Noise.... You remember Positive Noise before Ross Middleton quit them? "Ghosts" and "End Of A Dream"? Those days were fun.

It didn't last. After about 1982 music seemed rather less adventurous than the Rolf Harris Show and the magic faded out of it again. These days I'm too busy to seek out and hear the small proportion of sounds which might appeal to me. What I do indulge in, being someone imprinted with the Indian-influenced pop of the middle Sixties, is a weakness for the musical bits of BBC-tv's *Asian Magazine*. Really.

I've got to admit that not everything is fascinating in the Asian (read 'Indian sub-continent') musical scene, but it's a lot more fascinating than I can get from the radio. A guy called Shiv Kumar Sharma plays instrumentals on a kind of flat harp played with bent chopsticks. Lovely. (It's called a *santoor*.) Ghulam Ali sings *ghazals*, moving ballads evolved out of old Persian or Mogul love lyrics. Lata Mangeshkar sings film songs, lyric sheet in front of her in perfor-

mance just as it is in the film studios where she has recorded umpteen thousand soundtrack songs. (Umpteen thousand songs from this woman alone may even be an underestimate! Bombay has a bigger and faster production line in musicals than Hollywood ever had.) So: although I don't understand the lyrics I can still enjoy the songs. I'm used to this situation with Welsh songs, and indeed there are curious parallels in the production values, such as the way Asian session musicians become as familiar as the star (the flute player combing hair over his bald patch.... the tabla player giving a lady vocalist knowing smirks....) Oh, and the background sets. Here the Asians really score, working miracles with painted cardboard. Some marvelous designs there.

So why do I like it, this music which is, basically, alien? (In the case of say a semi-classical *thrumri*, a bit *too* alien.) I think my mindset must have got frozen in the sixties and stayed there. Asian music, meanwhile, has been evolving at its own pace and a high proportion has not yet evolved past the sixties, like me. So I like it, although nothing Asian is going to do a 'WXJL Tonight' on me and perhaps change my life. Singers such as Shahnaz Rahmatullah and Runa Laila have given me a few moments of something extra in the week, an antidote to a radio background which no longer speaks to me (applause her for the Smiths and certain lyrics in 'Panic'). Other Asian singers have given me less, admittedly. Mehnaz delivered one number very pleasantly and prettily, but it sounded suspiciously familiar. Turned out to be 'Take Me Home Country Roads' cunningly disguised. Another time, a girl called Tahira Saiyyed (whom I'd seen previously in traditional Indian-princess costume) came on suddenly Westernised in something like a Greek Eurovision entry. Unfortunately the song sounded Eurovision as well. Luckily I have more good experiences than bad with this music, so far.

You gather, John, that I am not with you in the two-albums-a-week league. Why not, I wonder? Music of this kind is still a major factor in my life, if not as vital as it once was. What went wrong? I was brought up on 'We Can Work It Out', 'Dead End Street', "Sub-

stitute', *Bringing It All Back Home* and *Abbey Road*... A different world, yes. I moved one way and civilisation moved the other. I suppose I should be listening to jazz if I believe Martyn Taylor -- and yes, there are forms of Asian music which are very similar -- but somehow it doesn't work for me. The language is wrong. What I really want is a music which speaks the right language, as I found briefly in the late eighties. I'm still waiting to hear it again.

On The Jazz:

Martyn Taylor's jazz piece also drew some comment, from the more understanding, to the involved, and them as get down and boogie!

Andy Sawyer: Martyn's point about improvisation is interesting and possibly explains my own slight ambivalence to jazz (the 'standards' I don't like much, and the original tunes I don't know well enough to judge how good the improvisation is). It's all a matter of 'musical tradition', I suppose, and I *know* without being able to analyse it what good rock is, but I'm less sure about jazz. You have to be more of a musician to understand jazz, perhaps. Yet, when I hear jazz *live*, I really appreciate it and I have no doubt at all that I like it.

Ken Lake: Martyn really has a point about 'live' jazz -- but how many people, how often, can get to see even Acker in person, let alone can recall the (doubtless age-magnified) pleasure of seeing the Duke in full spurt? I 'enjoy' much 'trad' music, I can appreciate a small part of it musically, but my greatest pleasures have, regrettably, to come from recordings because Bix died in 1931, and by 1940 nearly all the best jazzmen of the New Orleans to Chicago period were dead or unemployable -- listen to what happens on the Panassie sessions, when Mezzrow tried to put together a group that grew up with 'real' jazz and played it as purely as anyone else: some of them hammed and rified so appallingly that others

simply ran out of the room in the middle of a recording in sheer disgust!

So, bring on your time machine: for me, fifty hours with a good tape recorder, spent sitting around in the twin cities of early jazz, would repay a lifetime of wishing -- and I'd be just as happy with my tapes as I would be sitting making them live, believe me!

Eric Bentcliffe: Naturally, I enjoyed Martyn Taylor's piece on jazz -- naturally, without agreeing with all he says. His tastes in jazz are not quite mine but viva diversity! Jazz was much discussed by Harry Turner, Dave Wood and myself at the Leeds con a couple of weekends back, naturally -- once more -- without reaching any concerted position. The reminiscing though was fun. I always find myself at a disadvantage when discussing jazz since I've never been a collector of records (though I do possess a few hoary 78's somewhere with *real* boogie-woogie thereon) -- I've always been a devotee of the reel-to-reel taper and made my own collection from radio -- hence I don't have the encyclopaedic knowledge of personnel so necessary to pontificate widely. I knows what I like and if it inspires me to go play the piano, it's good music!

Swearing By It:

Swearing seems to be a subject that you either can ignore totally (as I can), or which really gets on someone's nerves.

Steve Sneyd: Re Rogers' LoC, I think "bullswool and balderdash" would be a bit hard to say with a straight face... She's also taking the name of the god in vain (and upsetting neopagans?), since Balder was the Norse equivalent of Christ. Which reminds me of a couple of local swearphrases round here, both unfortunately dying out (probably too tame for today's tastes), which I read somewhere are of immense antiquity; "By Heck", brought by the Roman soldiers as "By Hercules"; and "blooming hummer", "ummr" being the Norse hell, a pit of snakes,

so the blooming bit gives it a real surreal quality. "Blood and sand" used to be popular with one boss I had years ago, and his other one, "shit and corruption" (a true tautology) has stuck with me...

Ken Lake: To return briefly to the argument over swearing, which I'm agin: if one types out any sentence containing swear-words, and merely substitutes a ----- for every swearword, it affects the meaning of the sentence *not one iota*, merely leaving the prurient reader to guess which unpleasant word the original writer used. Try that with meaningful words and you'll see the difference. Why not do this in future, especially with Skel? After all, we mostly know most of the words, we find them unpleasant and offensive, the article would lose nothing worthwhile from their excision, and the use of the ----- would indicate Skel's juvenile hangup without inflicting it on us. And no, I do not think we need the initial letter to help us guess the words, thanks – that's just coyly twee and silly.

What's that law about every action having an equal and opposite reaction? David Bateman supplies the latter.

David Bateman: I was a bit offended by Mic Roger's complaints about swearing and I strongly defend my right to swear when and how I feel fit, be it in speech or writing.

Isn't it funny how some people never get annoyed or angry: they get *bored* instead. "Oh fiddle, little Nigel just said fuck again. Nigel, do stop being so *boring*."

I remember after my Evolution and Behaviour exam paper had been marked, my tutor criticized my use of the word 'screw' instead of the conventional word 'copulate'. I explained that I am a slow writer and frequently use short words and abbreviations to save time in exams. He told me that the term was unscientific. On the contrary, my use of the term was wholly unambiguous. He also said that he himself didn't mind it at all, of course, but that the other examiner

was a woman. At the time I didn't know what to say. How fucking gallant of him, is what I'd say now, for him to wish to protect – at my expense – this poor delicate woman from my crude exam language, while she – being doubtless well-accustomed to reading of the copulations of innumerable species – probably had no wish for his protection anyway.

What I'm (gradually) getting at is this: if Mic Rogers finds swearing offensive in itself, why not simply say so? Because to object to swear-words on the grounds that they are "unimaginative, boring, over-used (&) OLD" is ridiculous: you might just as well campaign against all words ending with the suffix 'ly'. See what I mean?

But even in the face of straight-forward objections, I defend my right to swear. "Hell's Teeth!" is nice, but when I scald my hand, I find that a good "Fuck!" hissed through clenched teeth is infinitely more cathartic.

And if you try to stop me? Yarbles, is what I say to you. Bolshy great yarblockos to thee and thine. So there!

That should keep the pot boiling nicely! In the meantime, there are one or two other arguments looking for space to expand in!

Lighting A Fuse:

Judy Buffery: The Locol was good as usual, except for Robert Coulson, who seems to be showing considerable racial prejudice himself regarding the British fans. What a load of ignorant rubbish! But then, what else can you expect from an ignorant Yank!

Ethel Lindsay: The bit in the lettercolumn that jerked my attention was Mark Greener's remark "Like nurses, you can become hardened". I do take issue with that. The word "hardened" is quite wrong. Now if he had used the word "objective" I would not quibble. After 40 years in the nursing profession, I would never agree that I was "hardened" -- that sounds mighty like

callous. I would agree I became objective enough not to allow my emotions to spill over and upset my patients.

Terry Jeeves: I must wholeheartedly agree with Chester Cuthbert's comments that automa-tion should not mean factories must remain idle from using same so that people may work. We should produce for use, not for profit... Admittedly, achieving such a goal in a profit-motivated society seems almost impossible — perhaps one of Mack Reynold's systems of Universal common stock held by all? The overproduction syndrome is all around us, with huge butter, meat, wheat mountains, wine lakes and, of course, the subsidies to this that and the other producer. However, as soon as subsidies are reduced, or quotas cut, out come the French (or other) farmers to holler about having their life styles cut. Wish I knew a solution: but one thing is for sure, it's ridiculous in an automated society geared to let machines do heavy and/or repetitive brainwashing work, for workers to *demand* 40 hour weeks at work. We need a living wage (hand out?) for shorter hours *coupled* with education for using the newfound leisure.

Chester Cuthbert: An interesting issue, particularly the comments on William Morris. Many of my favourite authors are socialists, as I am always on the side of the underdog and idealistic, and I am sometimes accused of being communistic because of my economic views. I should perhaps have made it clear in my letter which you published in #12, that I cannot think of any system better than the capitalistic to cope with the problems of scarcity. But, as I tried to show in my letter, our problem now is not scarcity, but abundance. Obviously, any economic system designed to cope with scarcity is totally wrong for the wholly different problem of abundance.

David Bateman: I wish I knew if Dorothy Davies is being sarcastic or not. She seems to be saying that the editor is to be treated as God Almighty, and that published articles must never be criticized because, if ever

they seem imperfect, it is only because the Ed moves in mysterious ways, and they are in fact the best of all possible fanzines. ("Quite so, quite so," I hear you murmur.)

But taking a real example, if I were to blaspheme by saying that I found the "now excuse me while I ---" style endings of Martyn Taylor's jazz article and your rock article uncomfortably similar, and if I were to very, very, very tentatively suggest that you ought to possibly have perhaps changed *your* ending, slightly, you wouldn't *really* strike me down with a thunderbolt, would you?

Yeowwwccchhhhh!!!!!!!

Still, as long as I don't get struck off the mailing list, banished into the wilderness, or (a fate worse than death) made to walk the dreaded Crystal Plank...

A Crystal Plank! Now why didn't I think of that! The perfect way to dispose of the more unsavoury fen! That does not include the following, naturally.

WAHFS: Harry Andruschak, John Berry, Sydney Bounds, John Breakwell, Mike Cobley, Brian Creese, Chris Elliott, Dominic Franklyn, John Haines, Mary Gentle, Mike Gould, Mary Long, Matt Mackuln, Eric Mayer, James Parker, Peter Prestford, Hilary Robinson, Vicki Rosenzweig, Janet Stevenson, Charles Stross, Alan Sullivan, Sue Walker. Final comment goes to David Bateman: "I had a good feeling the moment I saw Brad Foster's multi-limbed musical paint-tray. I must get one of those to finish off my decorating".

And that's it for CS13, folks. I've just got room to fit in the essential details, to whit:

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