

# CYGNUS

No. 2

North Down Science Fiction Group



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PLEASED TO MEET YOU.....

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My name is David Patterson

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A SUPPLEMENT.....

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If there is one thing you are going to complain about before you are into the second page of this ish, it is sure to be the paper on which it is printed.....well you see it's like this...

I bought three reams of paper - quite ordinary printing paper or so I thought; then when I used it, lo and behold I had printed the first see thru' zine!

Now well you might ask. What has this got to do with the hole in the street?

You see the place where I purchased said paper....it ain't there anymore! Now you say, how can that be? How can a thriving stationery store be there one day and not the next? It's east in Belfast which suffers the hole in the street dilemma on a daily basis. I suppose I could have gone into the 'Big Smoke' (pardon the pun!) and asked the owner to change the paper but I can imagine his reply as he stares through tear-filled eyes at the hole in the street - at the three-foot deep soup of charred wood and broken masonry that was once his livelihood. "Yes certainly, Sir - how would you like it? Shredded, toasted, boiled or just plain burnt!"

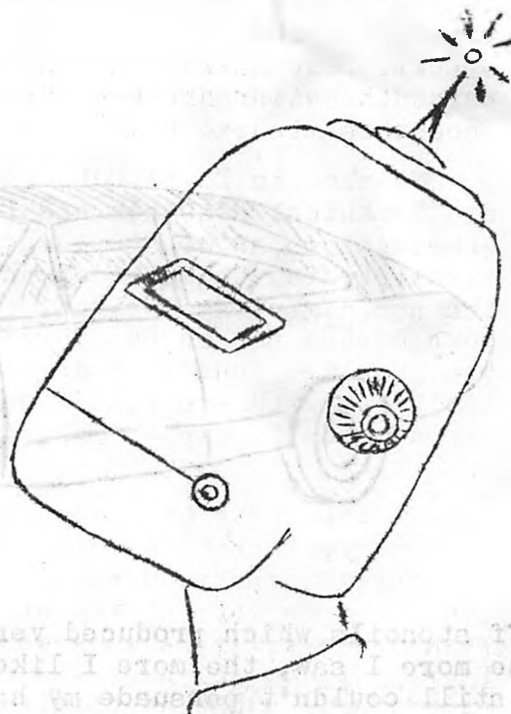
I can't afford to buy anymore paper this side of Santa's annual excursion and having put a bit more effort into this ish to get it out for November, so that I can have some spare time at Xmas, it's going out see thru' or not.

So my friends, don't complain about the paper - no one more than I knows it ain't the right sort, but please....please feel free to complain about everything else that takes your fancy.....All the best.





When I first mentioned to Graham Poole (he doesn't really warrant Grumpy-gub) that because I was giving up several of my more expensive hobbies; kart racing and allied interests in particular, I would be in a position to get CYGNUS off the ground, I can assure you that my visions were anything but grandeur. The biggest problem as far as I was concerned was a financial one. With a mortgage, several life insurance policies, an over-draft with a permanent red shift, running a zine even at irregular intervals seemed an impossibility. (Here I pause momentarily to organise this narrative into context and proper chronological order.)



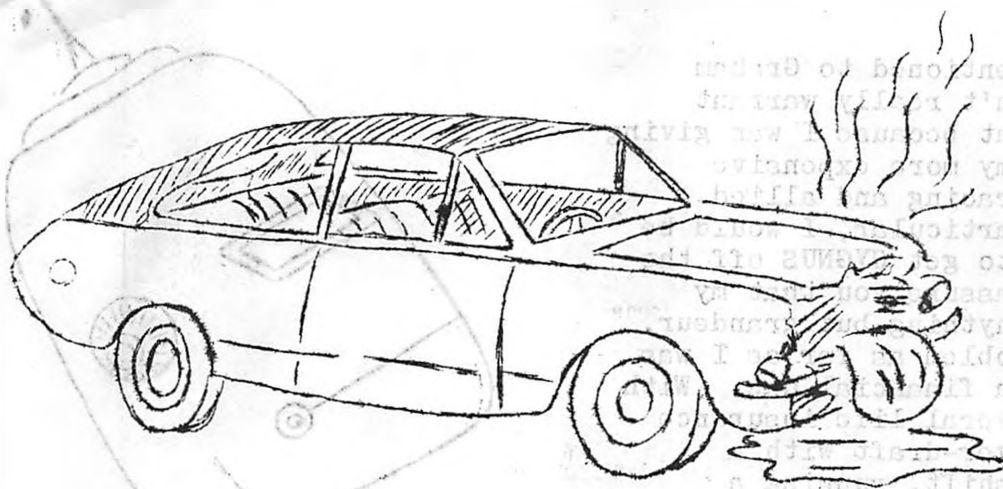
## LEAD IN

Anyway I was keen to get on with it and having typed up the masters (most of which were done under the influence of the Drug Squad's bogies - Beechams, Anadin and Lemsip) I shopped around the Big Smoke (Belfast) and got a few quotes. The first one near bowled me over! For an eight-sheet ish, including two one-sided runs for covers (18 runs @ 75 sheets a run) the cost would be around £60. The lowest quote I got was £30 but even this seemed astronomical. At that rate the cash set aside for next year's engine re-builds and which I would no longer be worrying about, would be soaked up in no time. Then as is normal in my life (one catastrophe after another) I had a catastrophe. On its way to work one morning the Marina decided to make advances to a Renault 5 and the ensuing courtship cost me £113 for bodywork repairs - and that was only to fix the Marina which nearly bled to death in the middle of Comber. The R5 came out of it with a dented hatch-back but thankfully the Insurance will look after that. (Excuse me while I have another Benzedrine to settle my nerves!)

So after my promise to Gra. to start CYGNUS, it looked as if it was up in the air. Then (and they say miracles never happen) I happened to meet a friend from the Rolls-Royce plant in which I worked for eight years and he said they might do the printing cheaper. They did, and the zine (100 print run went out for £15 including postage. Two days after I put out the initial circulation (30 were posted out and the remaining 70 distributed to interested parties, libraries and bookshops) I happened to get a 'phone call from a Programmer who works for me. He had spotted an advert. for printing machines in the Belfast Telegraph and on checking I discovered not only one but three ranging from £40 - £200.

Needless to say the lower price bracket was the obvious choice and I headed off to investigate, and to hopefully make a bid. The chap concerned had two machines when I talked to him on the phone; a rather antiquated Gestetner and a Roneo 350. By the time I got to his house the Gestetner had gone, having been bought for £40, however he invited me in to see the Roneo model. I must admit that it was as 'clean as a new pin' and all hopes of getting it rapidly faded when he started his PMO/AS NEW/ GREAT LITTLE MACHINE/HARDLY USED routine. We got to talking and I showed him a copy of CYG 1, explaining why I wanted the machine and giving my routine of POVERTY/DOING IT FOR A CAUSE/WITHOUT PAYMENT.

For the next hour he put the machine through its paces - running



off stencils which produced very good prints - even on dark blue paper. The more I saw, the more I liked and of course the more I wanted but I still couldn't persuade my hand to reach for the cheque book in my inside pocket. I asked him about the technique for drawing on stencils and he demonstrated the scribing ( he used a six-inch nail). As you can see from the above illo and those on following pages it is an art I have yet to master.

Well to cut a long story short and not wanting to bore you with a long two-hour demo of a Roneo 350 working, I asked him what he was asking for it. It must have been my lucky night for I near collapsed when he said I could have it for £40 and I near ripped my jacket trying to get my cheque book out. He surprised me even further by saying that if it did not do what was required of it, I could return it and get my money back. Half an hour later I was on my way home with the 350 in the boot and the back seat loaded up with ink, stencils and a ream of unused paper.

So this ish has been done on my newly acquired machine and I hope you will excuse this first attempt at home production. Some illos were pre-printed by multilith and then over-printed with stencil - as yet I haven't got used to drawing without tearing the stencils to bits. There are a few however that may come out.

#### APOLOGIES

My apologies to those whose pens got broken in the post (I did check with the GPO and they said they would be alright....lousey rotten sods!) My apologies to all those who received pens intact but thought it a silly and wasteful exercise....I suppose you can't please everybody! My apologies to you all for those taboo words "Sci-Fi" which I promise never to repeat again - NEVER! My most abject apols. to the writer (and zine pubber!!) to whom I sent CYG 1 and from whom I get the distinct impression that I am trying to intrude into some sort of private club. Zine pubbing is not a private club - is it?

#### THANKS

My thanks to all those who wrote even though CYG 1 may not have come up to standard but with your help it should....after a time.

The drawing for this ish cover is by Paul Huddleston and all other art work by yours truly. So let's move on into CYGNUS 2 and have a bit of a giggle! By the way I've noticed my typewriter keys have all gummed up.....anyone know a cheap cure? All the best!

1st November, 1976

## THE OWL AND THE CENTIPEDE or POTENTIAL PROBLEM ANALYSIS

Once upon a time there was a very special tree in a forest. This tree was special in that it was the abode of the forest's most eminent pillar of wisdom - the Owl. He was a very superior individual and because of his infinite wisdom all the creatures of the forest came to the tree in the hope of obtaining an inspired solution to their problems.

One day the Owl was sitting in his tree gazing around the forest with wide-eyed pontification when he heard the approach of many busy feet. The sound was accompanied by moans of pain and frustration. Looking down in his usual grandios manner he saw the unexpected visitor to his ivory tower. It was one of the lowly creatures of the forest; the type which

crawled about in the undergrowth and as he shuddered at the very idea of his expected audience with this unwelcome visitor, it looked up at him through baleful eyes.

"Yes," said the Owl, condescending to begin the conversation. The Centipede raised itself up; ten legs pawing the air in humiliation. "Please, Mister Owl, can you help me - I've got sore feet." The Owl ruffled his feathers and stared down disdainfully. "Oh!" He leaned forward. "I know - you should fly!" With that he spread his wings and flew off to some loftier perch, leaving the Centipede to consider this strange but no doubt correct solution to his problem.

Sometime later the Owl was sitting on another tree, still contemplating the forest beneath and formulating solutions to every conceivable problem that might be presented to him. Suddenly he again heard the unmistakable tramping of the Centipede, now ululating wretchedly.

"I still have sore feet, Mister Owl," wailed the Centipede, trying vainly to disperse the weight from its numerous extremities. The Owl looked down and shook his head sadly, then looked upwards as if to invoke some heaven sent omen. He looked down again. "But didn't I tell you to fly - you idiot!" The Owl muttered impatiently to himself for several seconds, then promptly took to the air again.

The day wore on and the setting sun's rays penetrating the wood found the Owl perched on a fallen log and still engrossed in his deliberations of his fellow creature's potential problems. Again he heard the approaching Centipede and standing up as high as his legs would permit, he put on his most ostentatious look. The Centipede stopped and stared in lowly resignation at his sapient fellow creature, then raising itself painfully, it pleaded.....

"Mister Owl - will you please help me with my problem?"

The Owl was taken aback. "But my dear chap, I have solved your problem - did I not tell you that you should fly!"

The Centipede winced, then sighed meekly.

"Yes - I know you did, but you did not tell me how!"

"Oh," exclaimed the Owl. "I'm afraid I cannot tell you that! You see I'm the Consultant!"





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## THE LOST TITLE MYSTERY.....

" There's nothing much to go on - no title, no author - no publisher but I do remember a bit of the plot."

Sleuth threw himself in the nearby velvet settee and waited while the great man considered his next words.

" The story, I think," Lord Belmore continued, " begins in the laboratories of some installation with the appearance of a strange crystal. On examination it is found to be not terrestrial origin. It is in fact some form of alien transportation device. Anyway an alien uses this device to transport women, which he has kidnapped, back to his home planet. This alien wears a strange mask, either because he cannot breath Earth's atmosphere, or to hide his hideous face." Lord Belmore paused momentarily.

" Anyway, the hero in the story; a technician at the labs thwarts this alien and the crystal disappears, presumably back to the world from whence it came. That's all I know - now you must find the title and author of the book. I must have the name of the story!"

Sleuth's shoulders sagged and he grimaced at the thought of this Herculean task. How many readers, let alone SF fanatics would be able to recall a story on this meagre snippet of information.

" Oh, there is just one other thing," added Lord Belmore, tossing the shredded SF Monthly in the air in frustration. " I think someone made a film based on it. It was.....THE NIGHT CALLER.....about an alien from Jupiter's Ganymede."

Well folks, can you help SF Sleuth solve this mystery? Any clue, no matter how trivial will be welcome and should be forwarded to S.F. Sleuth at this zine's address, which, if I remember, should turn up on the back page.

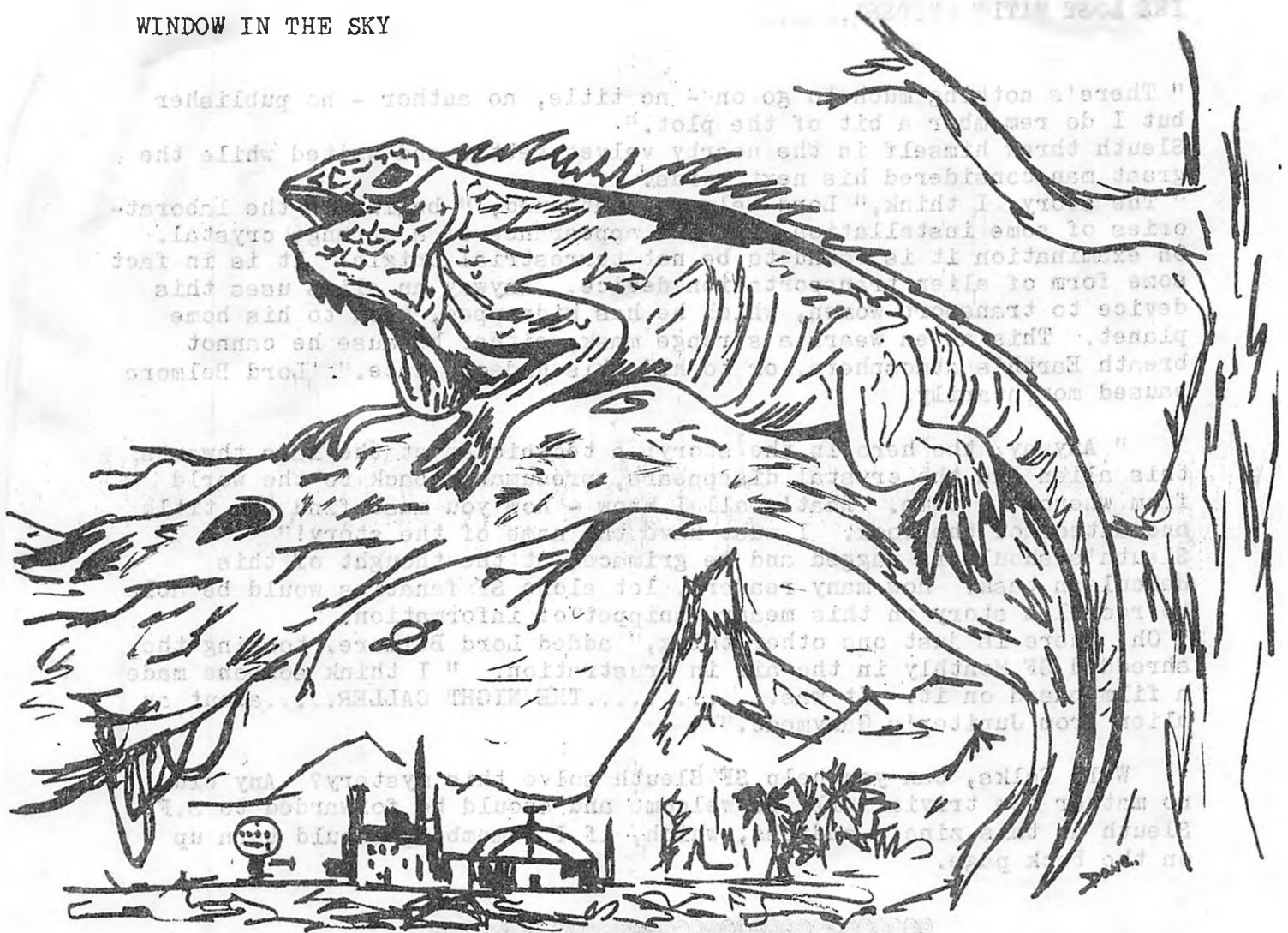
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## GOBLIN'S GROTTTO.....

A nicely prepared and interesting publication for which I thank Ian Williams & Co. It belies its name by its non-elfin proportions. I loved the account of the Con - especially the goings on at the football match. Tut-tut, I never knew Bob Shaw was a "roughie" - you seem to have taught him a lot of bad habits over there. I shudder to think what he would be like at a United/City derby.

Thanks Ian, I'd like another ish please....





I often dream of strange new worlds  
in the curtain of the night,  
With mysterious dimensions - of  
sound and smell, and sight,  
With golden suns to greet their dawn  
in multi-coloured hue,  
Stars of every sequence - red, orange  
white and blue,

The spin in endless orbit, some  
desolate and cold,  
With ice-bound wastes and ranges their  
secrets to unfold,  
Some have seething atmospheres with  
burning scaring plains,  
But some are mild and temperate - warm  
suns and cooling rains,

Great cities are unfolded there  
in warm and pleasant lands,  
Like giant pearls of wisdom in red  
and ochre sands,  
The strangest forms of life live there  
but like shadows on a wall,  
They walk the streets like silhouettes  
just darkened shapes that's all,

Yes it's nice to wander through the  
stars and galaxies sublime,  
Through relative continuums of  
Einstein's space and time,  
These visions of new worlds come in the  
winking of an eye,  
But no one else can see them through  
my window in the sky.

D. Patterson (Oct 76)....

# PROJECT DEATH

David Patterson.

The PHYSICIST....one of several.... looked up from his scratch pad and for several minutes stared out at the cotton-wool clouds. Outside the sun was glorifying yet another beautiful June day and he sighed dejectedly, recalling his weekend on the Serpentine. Just whose idea was this project? Most likely some idiot who sat at a desk in that street and said WE NEED! For several months he had been working all out on the very special project which was so secret it did not have a name....just a number; six hundred and sixty-six. He pictured the three numerics and the figures danced in front of his eyes. Now what thoughts were conjured up by 666? Something in the Bible about which he could not totally recall worried his memory cells, then he remembered...yes! The Mark of the Beast! He turned away from the window and surveyed the spacious office. Yes, they had given him the VIP treatment, right from the start - he had his own office suite, a secretary and access to a large computer anytime he wished but for all these, the project bothered him. Soon it would be over and he would take a long holiday - perhaps in the Cotswolds, or even down to the Cornish coast. A BAC One-eleven thundering overhead on its way to Gatwick interrupted his thoughts and his eyes again fell to the scratch pad and the arrays of data. Yes....thank God it would soon be finished. He picked up the pad and turning to the terminal at his elbow, keyed in the last batch of equations. Now the computer would do the rest and it would only be a matter of time.....



The DESIGNER....one of a few....wiped the perspiration from his brow. Today he was suffering from a bad cold and yesterday it had been the security people. They were a suspicious lot; always sneaking behind one's back watching for the slightest deviation. His eyes swept the drawing board and a faint smile lifted the corners of his mouth. He was quite proud of his creation which he was certain had been inspired. It had taken many hours of careful thought and meticulous planning, but when he thought about it in the light of its purpose, it wasn't exactly revolutionary. It was similar to others in all but one respect - the tall dorsal fin. It would be like a huge shark, he reflected. He shook his head and looked around the office.



## PROJECT DEATH.....

Just like the rest of the idiots in this place. He did not favour the sardine-like environment he had been forced into and neither was he over enthusiastic about the rest of his colleagues in the large over bright drawing office. His eyes moved back to the board and he stared lovingly at the sweeping lines.....yes - it was a beauty. Even on paper it seemed alive - vibrant. As and from tomorrow, when his work would be completed, it would be up to the sheetmetalworkers; the fitters and the air-frame mechanics. He did some mental arithmetic, then lifting his slide rule, checked the answer. Yes! That was it.....and it had not been difficult after all. He wrote down the tolerance in a small carefully hand-drawn square, then setting down the rule and his pencil, stared out of the window - out into the gathering dusk of a wet October evening. After a moment he lighted a cigarette. Yes..it would be nice to see his brainchild slung underneath its mother's wings.

The ENGINEER....one of many....drew hard on his fortieth cigarette of the day and watched the crewman of the crane through narrowed, frightened eyes. It was a very delicate mechanism that was being edged towards the matt-black MRCF and at all costs it was not to be carelessly handled. Finally, after the slow crawl, the long torpedo-like device was nestling under the belly of the aircraft, like a calf nursing at the paps of a mother whale. He watched his men closely as they went about the thing, checking and double-checking the attachments, then when the foreman confirmed that everything was in order he signed the worksheet. The crane-driver and the squad moved off; their part of the job complete, but the engineer remained behind. He sat for a long time looking at the dull black silhouette with the long appendage slung under its belly, wondering why and for what purpose it had been manufactured in such haste. He took a long draw from the cigarette, then smiled at the long black shadow hanging from the slender pylons.

The Boffins had called the 'ultimate' but he was not so sure. They had said that about others before this, and they would say it about others in the not-too-distant future. Checking his wristwatch he considered regretfully that it would not be long before his 'baby', sheltered under the protective wings of its mother would be going out into the coldness of the outside world. A siren started up and in the dull light he saw several people approach - two of whom stood out from the others in their orange cover-alls. It was time he made his exit.



The FLIGHT CONTROLLER.....one of four..... checked the radar screen above his head and verified that the surrounding airspace was free of traffic. He expanded the field of vision and the coast of France appeared on the edge of the screen; a ghost line, but easily defined against the black background. At the end of the runway the plane waited like some giant amorphous bird, its turbines muted but waiting only the flick of a switch to flare them into life. Fifteen seconds..... He locked in the flight co-ordinates to the aircraft's in-board computer and confirmed



that his systems were in full control. Full control....the idea of having the plane under his control, even for a short period elevated his ego and he was eager for the flight to be underway.

Ten seconds..... He envied the two men who would eventually take control; ultimate control of the fastest, most powerful aircraft in the world and the idea of their flight into danger made him shudder. They were on a mission of tremendous magnitude and there was a strange sort of passion in the message they were about to deliver to the other side of the world.

Five seconds..... He spoke quickly into his microphone and waited the nasal reply. "Systems AOK," came the staccato answer. The seconds ticked on and a bead of sweat moistened the Controller's upper lip.

"You are free to fly, Night Owl - commence burn." In the distance a roar from twin Proteus boosters confirmed that the plane was trembling - shaking like a mad thing on its spindly undercarriage.

"You are free to fly, Night Owl - and good luck!"

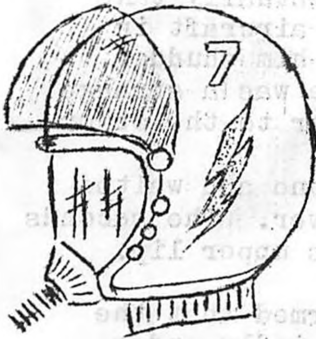
Then the roar of a hundred hurricanes was approaching as the plane accelerated down the runway.

Then it was away....climbing into the night, its boosters flaring back in twin plumes of white-hot fire. The Controller wiped the perspiration from his lip and suddenly felt deflated....still it was not over yet!.....

The CITIZEN.....one of a crowd.....

pulled his coat about him as he came out of the pub. It was bitterly cold and there was a sure sign of snow in the air. Overhead a gap in the clouds permitted a glimpse of a bright constellation and immediately he recognised Orion. Now what was that one in the top right corner. Beetlejuice - yes, that's what the man on the TV called it. He reached in his pocket and pulling out a well-worn briar stood looking up at the stars until the pipe was going to his satisfaction, then he turned and headed down the narrow country road, his mind now attracted to the warm fire and the heated slippers at home. In the distance a muted roar sounded as a big jet prepared to take off and he paused in mid-stride, his eyes straining towards the airfield nearby. Where would it be going. Up to Scotland on a training flight? Perhaps it was one of the big aircraft of Coastal Command, perhaps going up to Iceland and the fishing grounds. The Navy was up there at the moment keeping the Icelandic gunboats at bay. Maybe it was heading across the world, even behind the Iron Curtain, it was in the news also. Then it was roaring over his head; a black dart-shaped shadow zooming up into the stars. The ground trembled under his feet and the noise of the great engines made him put his hands up to protect his ears. Strewth, there would be some complaints from the regulars tonight, he reflected, watching the long white tails of fire disappear into the night. Then against the stellar backdrop he noticed the bulge underneath the fuselage. It must be one of those long-range fuel tanks, he thought, the type that can be discarded when the fuel in them is used up. His thoughts turned to the man in the tomb-like confines of the cockpit. He would be in a little world of his own now, a world of winking lights and abrupt but precise commands. Poor blighter - out in a night like this.....





The PILOT.....one of two.....glanced away from the altimeter and stared out into the inky blackness - out into a cold unfriendly night. This was not the sort of night to be out, he reflected gloomily, turning his eyes to his co-pilot whose in turn were glued to his instrument panel. They had been in control of the Interceptor's flight since the French coast and were now on their run-in to the target: sixteen minutes away. The flight was going according to plan. Now just sit back and relax and let this bird go like the wind to its destiny. He thought about the night before and the stewardess from Pan-Am - white thighs and firm, beautiful breasts. He thought about the medal won during the Squadron's racquets final and the party after it which had cost him a packet. He closed his eyes, squeezing his eyelids until they began to smart.

This trip had been on the cards for weeks but yet only last night had the word come through that they had been chosen to press home the attack. Yes, it had been carefully planned and the cumbersome miniature space rocket tacked onto their belly proved it. Fourteen minutes to go and now they were over the Russian border. Even as the thoughts centred in his mind they were many miles into enemy territory....past the point of no return! He opened his eyes and as the multi-coloured lights danced before them, he blinked rapidly to clear his vision. She had been a beautiful virgin. What was her name? Lovely mouth too.....mouth too. Twelve minutes! Soft all over and smelling of Imperial Leather. A mouth eager to learn,,,,,,to learn. Ten minutes! A strange awareness came over him; a feeling of being entombed in the sickly warmth of his metal and perspex coffin.....coffin. Five minutes! The plane jerked in response to its missile approach warning system and he found himself fighting for control....for control. Easy now.... The plane returned eagerly to its approach run. That was close! He turned and saw that his colleague's eyes were closed. Was he praying... sleeping a long unawakening sleep..... Heatfinders...one...two...three. Three minutes! There's another.....and another.....we're too fast for them. Two minutes.....wake up, Frank.....check missile. ONE MINUTE! God Almighty....the place is all lit up.....Frank! WAKE UP, FRANK! We've arrived.....Jesus Christ.....let there be no pain.....let it be quick with no pain.....no pain.....no pain.

The VICTIM.....one of millions..... looked up and saw the heavens open. There was fire and brimstone just like it had said it would be. A white-hot cloud.....a great ball of flame.....just like Hell..... Hair gone....skin peeling....eyes melting....bones disintegrating....blood boiling....soul burning....burning.



D. Patterson  
June '72.

# There's a Monster in our Garden!

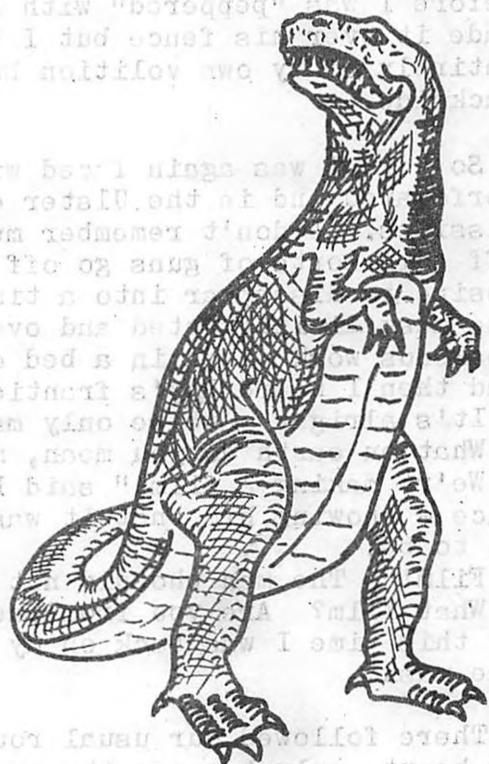
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Every year when June 30th comes around I hide - or should I say I try to hide. You see this is a special time of the year, not only for the millions of kids who erupt onto the streets for fifteen hours a day, but also for Gothic Films which under its Producer and Director Roy Spence usually commences operations on its annual SF or Horror epic for the Ten Best competition in G.B. Why do I hide? Well it's a long story but because brevity is essential I will simply say that I am the fall guy for dressing up in ridiculous costumes, getting into scrapes, and in general getting abused. June 30th 1973 was no exception, so having been abused for the previous three (or is it four) years running, I hid. As usual I was unearthed and two nights later I was on my way to another abusing evening.

SHADOW OVER FLATWOODS - set in the late fifties in a mid-western American town. The story is about a teenager who is waylaid by aliens and injected with a deadly virus. As he gradually turns into a tormented monster under the effects of the virus the youth terrorises the gang of which he was once a member. In the end the youth throws himself off a cliff. So much for the plot and the script - now let's get on with my part of the story.....

For one of the scenes we hired a disco at a hotel in the outskirts of Belfast, rounded up a lot of couples; the girls dressed in pony-tails, flared skirts and bobby-socks and the guys in T-shirts and jeans, their hair well oiled back with lashings of Brylcreem and a dance had been organised. So with the strains of Eddie Cochran's "C'mon Everybody" in the background, Roy and I got to work outside making the necessary preparations for the monster's confrontation with the others in the gang. We decided to shoot the approach of the monster to the 'Hop-Hall' and so while the others jived to the golden oldie, we headed towards a barbed wire fence and what looked like an orchard beyond it.

Perhaps I should describe the outfit I had to wear - just to put you in the picture. Imagine a cross between a cabbage, Humpety Dumpety and the most hideous



## THERE'S A MONSTER IN OUR GARDEN.....

muppet ever to hit the Sunday afternoon TV screens. The abortion fitted over my head and reached down to my waist. It had two peep-holes through which I could see virtually nothing - my range of vision stretching no further than eighteen inches beyond my toes. The mask (let's call it that for the want of a better word) was made of paper-mache and latex rubber, well cemented with a generous helping of Copydex. In short it stank to high heaven and with it on I felt as if I had been interred in a coffin made of fish boxes. I was strapped into it as opposed to it being strapped onto me! This monstrous creation was complemented by a pair of m/cycle gauntlets (suitable camouflaged of course) bedecked with the wickedest set of talons imaginable.

Anyway, on with the story. I suppose you could say that I was forewarned (by experiences of previous years - one of which you might recall if you read SPI 5 - but under the circumstances I felt reasonably safe. After all it was pitch black and according to Roy, who unlike me was in full control of his visual faculties, there wasn't a sinner within a hundred yards. He was, of course, discounting the crowd in the Disco. Satisfied, but not altogether happy, I wandered into the orchard, feeling my way through the grass and occasionally falling over the odd bush and half-grown apple tree in the process. So far - so good, I thought..... Then a breeze came up and what with branches creaking, rats squeaking and me having seen 'Legend of Hell House' just two days before, my nerves were as taut as a G-string.

The first scream merely frayed my nerves but the second one shattered them completely and in blind panic I fled in the direction where, as is usual in these circumstances, Roy would be retreating. Little did I know that I was running (Yikes! Stampeding is a better word) in the wrong direction - in the direction of the house to which the orchard belonged!!! Next thing I heard those unforgettable words - and only now they sound funny. "There's a monster in our garden". As I fled from the scene with my thoughts centred on escape I remembered a similar situation from my schooldays. On that occasion I was also fleeing from an orchard; racing for the safety of an adjoining lane before I was "peppered" with salt pellets by the irate landowner. I made it over his fence but I assure you that my mighty leap was done *not* entirely of my own volition but with the help of an extremely sore backside.

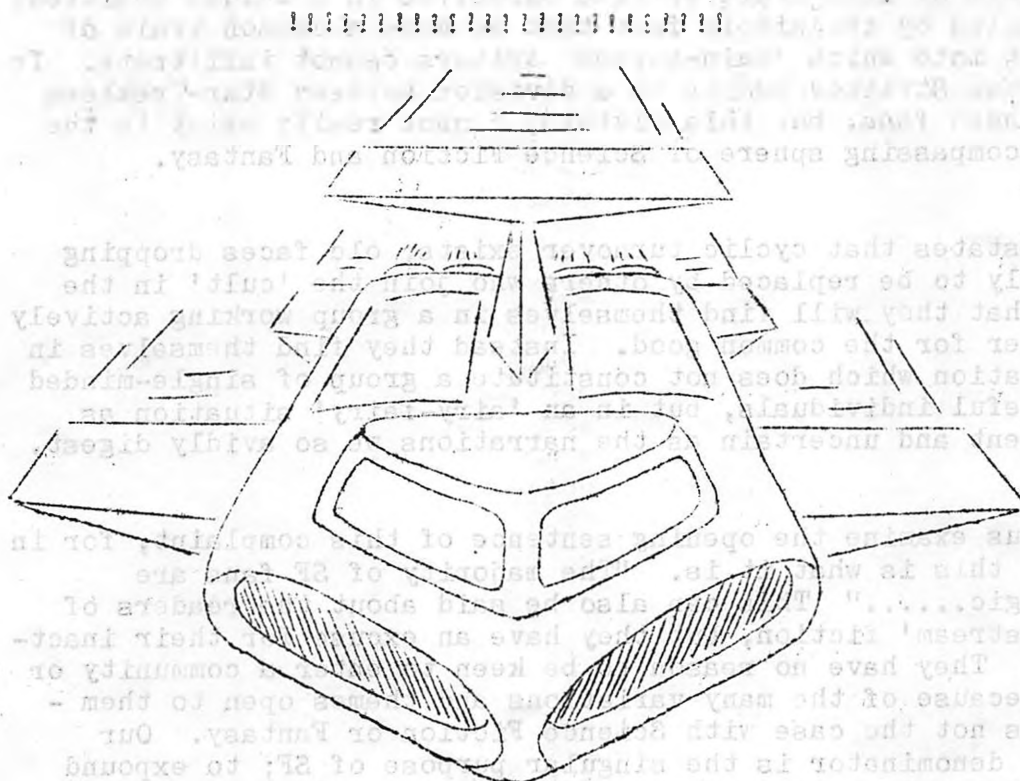
So here I was again faced with the threat of having my posterior perforated and in the Ulster clime perhaps with even more deadlier missiles. I don't remember much - just the fear of a shot-gun sounding off (all sorts of guns go off over here for lesser reasons!) and the desire to disappear into a time warp. Then down I went. Crump! The mask disintegrated and over the ether I heard Roy's moans as a weekends work ended in a bed of nettles. The girl was still screaming and then I heard Roy's frantic pleadings. "It's alright - we're only making a film!" "What on earth do you mean, man?" The voice was educated. "We're making a film," said Roy, pushing his camera into the man's face - showing him that it was not the offensive weapon he might take it to be. "Film!" The man who did not have a shot-gun after all, made a face. "What film? Are you from the BBC?" By this time I was back on my feet and stepping out of the remnants of the mask.

There followed our usual routine, something which we now knew off by heart, only because the man did not look like the ordinary run of the mill, we threw in an apology after every other word.



As it happened the man was a JP who, along with his rather anxious wife who had also come out of the house, after our apologetic explanation, was amused by the whole episode. His daughter who had been cavorting with her boy-friend among the apple trees was not amused however and got rather stroppy - in fact she practically insisted that the police be called and that we be summarily charged with trespassing. It was she, as you may have gathered, who let out the yell which caused the ruckus in the first place. Thankfully the father ignored her insane ravings and dismissed her and the boy-friend from the scene. He did insist on visiting the Disco however, and whether this was to check up on us I'll never know.

NEXT ISH..... When Bernard Falk (NATIONWIDE) got his feet wet.



My thanks to Paul Ryan for his O'RYAN 4 - a zine which rather deflated my ego. The drawings were superb and I have to admit, with a certain regret, that I envy him both his talents as a writer and artist and his association with that prolific of artists DILLON whose drawings I have always admired. I only hope, that given time, I can produce a zine which will remotely share the same ladder as O'RYAN. Keep it up, Paul, and all the best.

[illegible]

# WHO CARES?



The majority of SF fans are lethargic creatures; not at all similar to baboons, with whose clannish society they ought to be associated. The baboon is the most community-orientated mammal outside the homo-sapiens strain, but it can be vicious if its security within the overall group is threatened. The lemming terminates its life by a fatal leap into the abyss, but should we also toss ourselves into the chasm of doom? In the world of literature we find ourselves in a unique position; unequalled by the simple fact that we have a common train of thought into which 'main-stream' writers cannot infiltrate. In SPI 6 Mae Strilkov admits to a division between Star-Trekkers and Fandon fans, but this division cannot really exist in the all encompassing sphere of Science Fiction and Fantasy.

She states that cyclic turnover exists; old faces dropping out only to be replaced by others who join the 'cult' in the hope that they will find themselves in a group working actively together for the common good. Instead they find themselves in a situation which does not constitute a group of single-minded purposeful individuals, but in an 'airy-fairy' situation as transient and uncertain as the narrations we so avidly digest.

Let us examine the opening sentence of this complaint, for in truth, this is what it is. "The majority of SF fans are lethargic....." This can also be said about the readers of 'main-stream' fiction, but they have an excuse for their inactivity. They have no reason to be keen to enter a community or cult because of the many variations and themes open to them - that is not the case with Science Fiction or Fantasy. Our common denominator is the singular purpose of SF; to expound the futuristic beliefs that all things are possible - even beyond the twilight zones of our imagination - making that which is unreal or so incomprehensible, a living possible dream.

We are not baboons, yet we could do with some of their qualities. They know that strength is in numbers and they do appreciate that in the tribal environment there are those who do and those who don't do; those who bother and those who don't bother.....those who care and those who don't care. They acknowledge the fact that there must be those who dominate the scene - determining order, ensuring political and social stability and most important of all maintaining the group to ensure its survival. At the moment the baboons are one up on us for we are like the lemmings which stampede in utter chaos; running blind towards certain doom.

Why does Mae admit the segregation between Star-Trekkers and

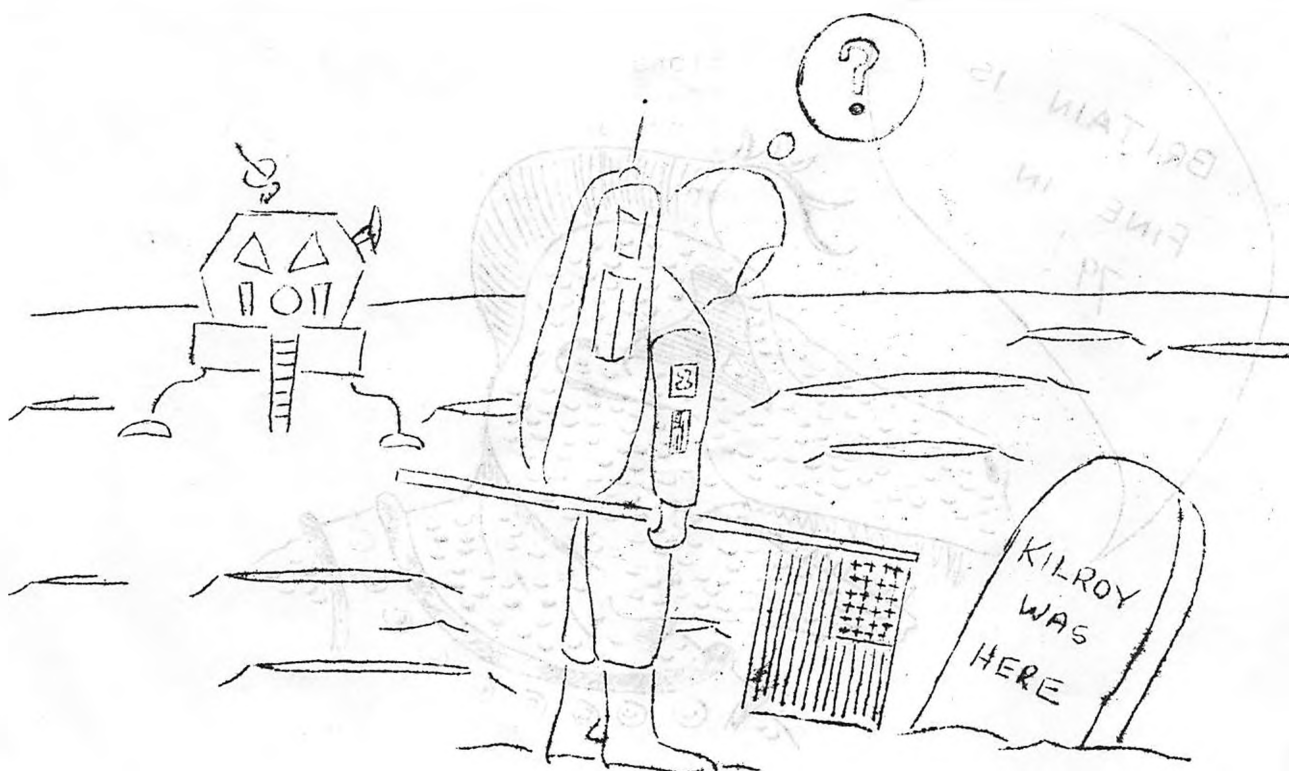
WHO CARES?.....

SF fans? Is there such a division between the enthusiasts of Lovecraft and Van Vogt? Is it because one group has removed itself from the colony and formed a cell which has succeeded in breaking away - differentiating its attitudes but revitalizing the objectives of beliefs? These objectives which should have been the factor maintained by the overall group!

In the case of our 'cult' there can be no leader in the true sense of the word. There can and there must be a leading body - a group of individuals who are prepared to determine order, ensure stability and maintain the group so that it will survive. There could be figureheads; one or more fairly renowned figures who will portray all that Fandom stands for in the total sense of the word, but it would be unreasonable to expect them to be the mainstay - this being the task of the dedicated few who must act together as one channel and not through individually inspired streams of thought.

There should be a complete re-think of attitudes. Ways and means should be considered, objectives formulated and once established, they should be adhered to. The BSFA should assert itself as the central core with the task of bringing together everyone interested in Science Fiction and Fantasy, be they Star-Trekkers or otherwise.

So! - who cares?



## ONCE MORE FOR THE RECORD

Before we go into the LoC's there are a few things I would like to say which I hope will be a reply to the majority.

Firstly.....to all who wrote or sent zines, and I mean all, my thanks for the support.

Secondly....your criticisms have been very welcome and indeed extremely helpful. CYG 1 was an abortion; put out pure and simply to start the ball rolling, and not expected to meet with total approval. Criticism is meant to be helpful and perfection (if at all possible!) can only come with practice and the will to act on advice of those who are willing to help. This ish may still not remotely come up to standard but I hope that it is an improvement on ish 1. However, keep your criticisms coming in; you are after all only trying to help.

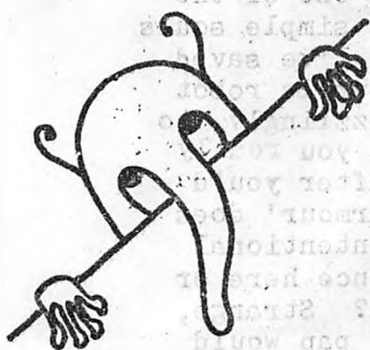
Thirdly....I'm sorry about the truncations - SF it is from now on.

Fourthly....sorry about the pens!

Now let's hear what you had to say.....







# LOCS

Paul Huddleston  
45 Fernwood Street  
Belfast 7 BT7 3BQ  
11.10.76

I received Cygnus No. 1 and I was pleased that it has finally got off the ground. In the zine you asked if I would do an illo for ish 2. Well I have enclosed a drawing of Conan the barbarian a Robert E. Howard creation. If you need any help with the mag. write and tell me and I'll try my best to oblige. If you want me to do any more art for the mag please write and tell me, because as you said, "I will gladly count on him for support." Just one more thing, I am now 14 years old, not 12 (ugh!!)

// Congrats - you are herewith declared a permanent member of the 'club' - that makes two of us! Ta for the illo and as you see it now adorns the cover of this ish. What about a critique on SF in comics for CYG 3. By the way, what's wrong with being 14 (Ugh??) - wish I was 14 AGAIN!.....//

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Paul Skelton  
25 Bowland Close  
Offerton  
Stockport  
Cheshire SK2 5NW  
11.10.76

T W I M C; I'm not sure how I feel towards this novel approach to fan-pubbing. I refer of course to the giving away of a useful free gift. A technological breakthrough if ever there was one. From the point of view of the humble reader there can of course be no ambiguity, but it is in my dual role of

fnz feader/fnz pubber that the ambivalence manifests itself. Here we are, all of us old fuddy-duddy stick-in-the-mud faneds simply pubbing our ish, suddenly left behind by the tides of fanhistory by a veritable tsunami // pardon? // of zines which innovatively offer the reader 'something extra', a useless and pointless free gift, whether it be an inflatable pound note or a peper airplane. Now whilst we are still adjusting to this state of affairs you escalate things by bringing out the Doomsday Doodlebic. It's about time we had an international summit conference of faneditors to stop this escalation in Silly And Loony Things.....our very own SALT talks. // Touché //

However, it is demonstrably unfair that the person whose biro lasts the longest should get an extra one. Surely any right-minded person would offer this reward to the person whose biro conks out the soonest. By the way I like the way the biro is ostensibly useful but in fact totally devoid of utility. Only a truly fiendish mind could offer SF fans a biro with the hated term 'Sci-Fi' printed on it, thus ensuring that the offending article would be thrown to the floor and ground underfoot in righteous wrath by all true SF fans.

I have very fond memories of 'Three to Conquer'. It is still by

far the most suspenseful SF story I've ever read and one of the best. A rollicking good story, with a good hero for simple souls like me to identify with. Yes, yes, many's the time I've saved the world, but never, I must admit, from a strange purple robot with a sword, a shield and what appears, somewhat puzzlingly, to be male genitalia // tut-tut - what a strange mind you really must have - I had to look at the drawing twice (after you'd mentioned it) to realise that the 'chink in his armour' does resemble the male anatomical characteristic - unintentional I assure you....// Do I detect a New Wave influence here or is it simply a logical follow up to The Bionic Woman? Strange, I thought the next mining of that particular vein of pap would be a tale of a bionic dog, Rin Tin Can, surely the ultimate Film Wonder Animal of all time, leaving only 'Timmy The Tapeworm Saves The World' (and finds true happiness too no doubt) as the crock of gold at the end of this branch of the cinematic rainbow.

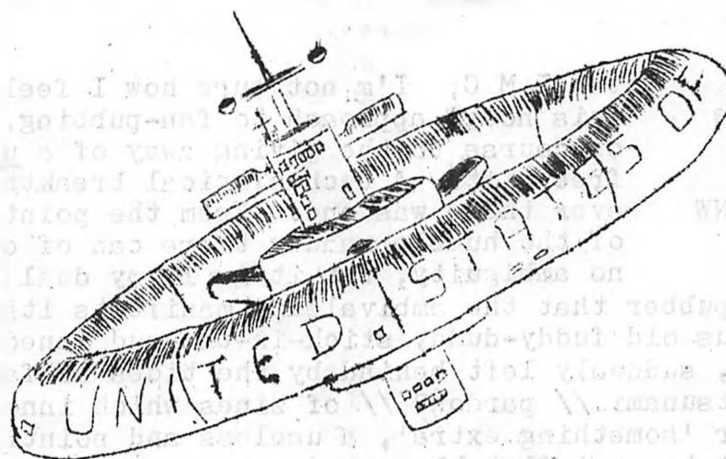
What am I going on about? About a paragraph too long, that's what. I'll go and watch The Sweeny now. This is a novel programme in which thugs hit policemen, realistically, in the gut and groin and the policemen return the compliment. This latter fantasy element would stop it being popular in Ireland, I suppose, although they might, like the USA, consider it too violent also.

End of sarcasm.

End of LoC.

// This sort of critique I can do without and anyway sarcasm is the lowest form of wit....no further comment. //

\*\*\*



Brian R. Tawn  
29 Cordon Street,  
Wisbech  
Cambs. PE13 2LW  
England  
11.10.76

Many thanks for the copy of CYGNUS 1 and for the broken pen. I have read the former and attempted (unsuccessfully) to assemble the shattered pieces of the latter. Perhaps you should have also enclosed a tube of glue and promoted it as a do-it-yourself BPP kit..... on the other hand, the top might have come

off the glue.

I'm pleased to see your review of LOGAN'S RUN. I've been wondering what it's all about, yet haven't got round to trying to find out...now you've done it for me. It sounds quite interesting,

though it strikes me as being a new slant on the theme of the, The Hunt game, as used by Sheckley and one or two others.

If you can't lay hands on a copy of 'THE COMING OF JONATHAN SMITH' (by Harry Ludlam) holler. I have a copy which I'm not prepared to sell, but I'm happy to lend it to you so that you can read it if you can't get a copy to buy. Meanwhile, I'll keep a watchful eye for another copy.

// My copy of Logan's Run is an SF Book Club choice but you're welcome to borrow it. As regards the C of J S - you hang onto your copy in the meantime. I have several books which I guard with jealous pride and knowing the GPO (look what happened to your BPP!!!) I would hate to have your lost copy on my conscience. I haven't given up hope of finding my own copy over here but if I can't, then I just might write (via Cygnus seeing as you're now permanently on the circ. list) asking to at least read it for the third time. Ta for the offer..//

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James White  
10 Riverdale Gdns,  
Belfast BT11 9DG.  
18.10.76

Thank you kindly for the first issue of Cygnus and for the horrendous and insidious BPP -- did you know that even primary school children are being indoctrined and trained in its use? --which accompanied the magazine.

It was witty, well-presented and informative, and the colour scheme of black on yellow implied the threat of horrors to come, like stinging wasps and nuclear radiation warnings (Now I'm talking about the pen, not the mag). I was surprised to see my name cropping up in a welsh square -- square I might be, but welsh I'm not and mention of your visit to our back wilderness.

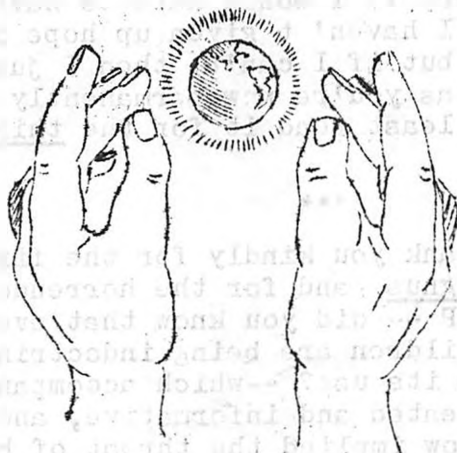
All sorts of strange people visited our back garden, so-called to look through my telescope, but so far as I can remember you were the only one who looked through it at Jupiter and complained of feeling homesick. // Ha-ha! I could've said the same about you that night in Armagh - remember? // I wondered about you, then, and when I read your little discussion about aliens on Earth wherein you accuse sane (well, reasonably) and sensible people like Arthur Clarke, Isaac Asimov and Mike Moorcock of being extraterrestrials, I think it is a clear case of the // wait for this one!// xystllix calling the //and this one!// priltriys black.

Harking back to ballpoint pens and my back garden (do BP's hark?) Well, we've all heard of those fine old songs "Hark, hark the Ballpoint and "The Ballpoint in the Clear Air", one of the strange people who visited it was a London fan called Vince Clarke. My daughter Patricia was about 18 months then and was in her play-pen beside us, and the plywood floor of the play-pen had flattened the long grass (at least, the lawn hasn't changed in eighteen years!) Vince observed this process for a few minutes, then said with great solemnity "The play-pen is mightier than the sword..."

What did grumpy-gub of Cheltenham ever do to you? // Nothing - I called him that in the nicest possible way // Is there another fannish feud starting, with the usual escalation into water-pistol (filled with beer, naturally) duels at six paces? Grumpy-gub can be a terror when he's roused you know. // You've seen nothing yet, Jim - wait 'til he reads 'WHO CARES' a few pages back - what! // Have a care, man, have a care. We would all like to see a second issue of Cygnus.

// Ta for the loc, James - your star is in the ascent. You a

square? Never!! Hope this finds you and the family well. By the way, the last time I was talking to Fred he was saying the 3-inch was still very much in use. I hope to meet Gra. Poole at the faancon in February when I expect he'll have a few choice words to say to me.....fancy a trip? (If he choses to meet me at dawn I might just need a second) What's new with you? I hear Bob is getting us a bad name across the pond, roughing up the Sassenachs at Convention football matches. Good luck.D.//



Gordon Johnson                      Thanks for Cygnus plus BPP which the GPO  
123 Johnston Gdns Nth           managed to deliver in a bent state, // No!  
Peterculter                      Not another one!!! // followed on opening by  
Aberdeen ABI OLD               collapse of plastic exterior of BPP. How-  
   ever, the refill is intact and will happily  
find a more selubrious outer garment from which all scribblings  
will issue. Cygnus was like a lovely thick sponge cake - it  
badly needed a decent filling! Still, any man (alien...??) who  
can fill ten pages with nothing much and retain my interest right  
through deserves at least a letter (How about the letter D?) ( I  
know - you'd prefer a D-D ).

So you like E.F. Russell's work? So do I, although I don't  
consider '3 to Conquer' one of his best. I like his humour so I  
plump for his 'WASP' as his best work, although the extended joke  
of 'Next of Kin' is pretty good.

Mind you, he can produce some good shorts, particularly in the  
horror line. I wish someone would publish some of his ASF material  
which has never been anthologised. The last collection, published  
by Dobson in 1975 was mostly re-reprint.

If you like interesting ideas, without much plot or action, try  
reading JBS Haldane's posthumous and unfinished novel 'The Man  
with Two Memories' just out from Merlin Press - ask your Public  
Library for it. I quite liked it, once I got used to continuous  
descriptive writing.

You seem to have some fandom over there, Dave; // Sure hope so,  
Gordon, I sure hope so // up here in real civilisation I seem to  
be the only one for many miles around. // I don't live that far  
away! // We have a readership for SF in our libraries, but  
nothing one could call fandom by any stretch of the imagination.  
// As I said - the majority of SF fans.....//



My only connection with the large green island wherein you dwell is that one set of great-grandparents got out of Monaghan donkeys years ago and flitted to the glamorous tenements of Glasgow.

Oh, by the way, congratulations on the herculean effort of colouring the front cover of Cygnus. Brave man! Regards.

// Nice to hear from you again. You may not remember but we talked on the 'phone some years back on the author and publisher of TO WALK THE NIGHT - I think you lived about the Clyde then (I think!). I do like EFR but I would not like to choose between WASP and SINISTER BARRIER both of which held me spellbound. Have ordered the book you mention. I hope this ish has a little more filling; it's still a one man band (apart from the cover) but I hope you find it "appetising". Colouring for ish 1 was courtesy of my two kids and I still owe them 50p for doing it (thanks for reminding me!) By the way I'm a bass man myself. Good luck.....//

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Fred Bustard 30 Kilberry Park Dundonald Belfast 20.10.76	I am in receipt of your mag. "Cygnus" which was handed to me on my last visit to Dundonald library a few days ago by a certain librarian whom I am sure is somewhat non-plussed to see me appear and make my usual appeal..." Is there anything new in the Science Fiction scene. We both at times have scoured the shelves to no avail. There are just none coming in. I wondered why - shortage of writers or what? // I doubt it, Fred, more like shortage of library funds.....//
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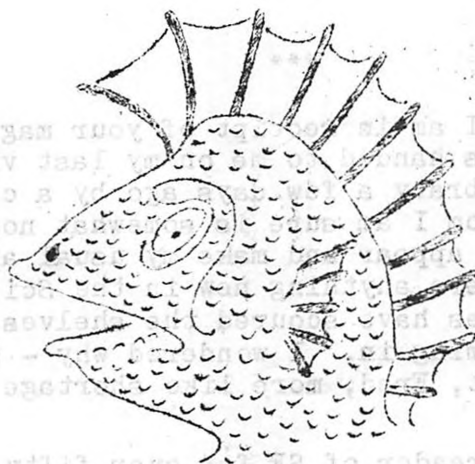
I have been an avid reader of SF for over fifty years and needless to say there has been some changes, going back to 1926 as a boy of 11 - 12 when the top SF mag then was "Amazing Stories"; Hugo Gernsback editor. Others of the time were "Wonder Stories", "Marvel", etc. Some good, some bad. (May add that I lived in USA at that time).

Through time all these just seemed to fade away from the magazine racks. Then after the war there came British editions of US mags. including "New Worlds SF", "Fantasy & SF", "Future SF" etc, - I have a few of these old magazines yet from the 1950's and in good condition; prices then 2/- and 2/6 per issue. I thought this might be of some interest to you and hope you have not been bored with the run down. // Not in the slightest, Fred - only too glad to hear from you. //

Now to get back to your mag. Cygnus. If I may offer a suggestion; why not include a short story in each edition, together with a cartoon; a character of the Bunion type, but from space, and charge 3p per issue. I don't know how that would grab your readers - but I'm sure they would like to see Cygnus prosper. So I will say good luck and wish you every success. Would welcome any reply and possibly a clue to a source of any good reading.

// Ta for the LoC, Fred - and your welcome comments. I must give Dan Dare & Co credit for my initial intro to SF but my first real SF book was "Dangerous Waters" which I got for my 11th birthday...from then on even "Biggles" took a back seat. As regards a cartoon character I'm afraid I'm not adept enough

enough to try that sort of thing yet - but you never know..... In this ish is a short story of sorts just for you. Now to charging for Cygnus. At the moment I run this zine in the same fashion as others across the Irish Sea - as a hobby really. I get a kick out of doing it and I like to hear from people like yourself who are interested in SF. There are lots of others who feel about SF and Fandom the way I do and as you can see from the other LoC's; they are only too willing to help. Cygnus is free to those who are prepared to write or send a zine in return and its objective is to promote our 'cult' and get together those equally interested. I've done it for people who are interested in SF movies but my scene proper is the written word and not the screen....you see you can do so much more on paper. Try the APCK bookshop in Calendar Street - they have a very good selection. Suggest Jack Vance's 'Planet of Adventure' series. ATB. //



Joseph Nicholas      Many thanks for Cygnus - always good to receive  
2 Wilmot Way      a fanzine from someone or other, particularly on  
Camberly      dull, mundane-like days such as Saturdays, full of  
Surrey GU15 1JA      nothing but driving lessons and mongs watching  
Match of the Day. I have to admit, though, to a  
certain amount of trepidation when it arrived - when I saw the  
stamp, looked closely at the postmark and wondered at the bulge  
down the centre of the envelope, I started trying to remember whose  
toes I might have trodden on recently, someone who might have  
wished me a death as ignominious as being crushed by a road-roller..  
Then I looked through the small tear in the end of the envelope, and  
began to feel rather sheepish...

Mine's broken. My free pen, I mean; snapped clean in two just  
above the lettering denoting its point of origin. Presumably the  
much-vaunted GPO have a technique whereby they instantly recognise  
- with no more than a token glance on their behalf - anything poss-  
essed of any degree of fragility, and promptly break it, thus  
delivering maximum satisfaction to those among their employees who  
suffer from a repressed hooliganism.

I wonder how many others broke in transit? // I think I had a  
thirty percent hit rate, but I may never really know...// If  
you're intending to send out any replacements for those that did,  
then you'd better wrap them in cardboard and label them "Palaeol-  
ithic Fossil" or something equally unlikely, because only then will  
they receive the treatment they deserve. Not, only that, but the

recipients will probably get an armed guard escorting the thing to their letterbox. Idiocy rides triumphant again.

Ah yes. The pen has "sci-fi" inscribed upon it, does it not? Shrieks of anguish rend the air upon all sides.... As a fan, you shouldn't be using this term, not even in your nightmares. Of all the demeaning abbreviations that I've come across, this is the one I really hate, heaved about indiscriminately by TV directors and Sunday journalists, denoting something intended more as an object of mirth than of appreciation. I don't care that the term was first coined by the venerated Forrest J. Ackermann; that doesn't alter its innate mindlessness. After all, Ackermann has also been responsible for inflicting Perry Rhodan on English-speaking/reading fandom by getting his wife to translate it from the German and Ace to publish it. And he's proud of it. // Do I note a sense of cynicism here, Joseph. I'll not pretend to know about Ackermann and his Rhodan character but perhaps someone else might like to pass a comment. Any offers?//

Never refer to SF as "sci-fi"! Else suffer a nameless doom at the hands of an irate fandom!

Mein Ghatt, who is the dumkoph who is getting you to write sentences no. More than fourteen words long? (Count it. There are fourteen words in that first sentence; I couldn't resist the temptation to chop it so.) This is one of the most ridiculous things I've heard in recent months. Goddamn it, it doesn't matter how many bloody words you put in any one sentence, as long as it still forms a coherent, readable entity - as long as it makes sense. There's a lot of crap talked about syntax and grammar and all the other cods that overburden the English language - I know, because I often go on about it myself - and it all gets rather wearisome at times.

William Nolan's Logan's Run is an excellent book, but the film supposedly based on it is a disaster. The thing that its makers have failed to appreciate, as far as I can see, is the period in which the book was written, rather than the period in which its story is based. The whole idea of the novel is the idea of escape - that the only hope of creating something new lies in a complete rejection of all the old values, and the establishment of something new, as far removed as possible from the influence of the "old society". Now tell me - what was the feeling predominant amongst the young in the last half of the sixties?

Logan's Run is little more than a thinly-disguised hymn to the youth revolution. It's no accident that the age chosen was twenty-one; remember the feeling then that anyone who was over thirty was past it, destined for the scrapeap? It's no accident that the book is totally devoid of explanations; if you'd ask a leader of the youth community why he was doing what he was doing in 1967, the only answer you'd get would be some semi-articulate mumble about "doing your own thing, man".

It was an immediately-successful book because all this struck a chord amongst its readers. MGM bought the film rights almost as soon as it was first published, and they have been waiting this long before doing anything about it. They've waited so long, in fact, that all the relevance originally possessed by the novel has been wiped out by the passage of time. Audiences this time demand explanations, and the film's makers have given them some, explanations that are not at all consistent with William Nolan's original aims. They have preserved his framework, worked in several changes to make it easier to swallow (including raising the age limit to thirty, perhaps because they couldn't make Michael York look any

younger, but also because the youth cult has withered and died and those aged thirty are no longer the crumbles they used to be),

// Hurray for that, Joseph. You were beginning to make

me feel positively ancient...//

tacked on a lot of pretty sets and special effects, and earned Nolan's undying hatred. The SFWA Bulletin, I understand, has been full of letters from Nolan telling everyone to ignore whatever the film's makers say; they never consulted him.

End of tirade. // and if I may say so the end of an excellent expose...//

I didn't like your book review, incidentally. It didn't tell me anymore than I could have got by reading the thing for myself, and it took up a page that could easily have been filled with a few more personal ramblings about where you live, what you do for a living, how many brothers and sisters you have in cold store in the attic, who you went to bed with last night, and all this sort of typically mundane stuff that might prove interesting to other fans. Who reads book reviews anyway? I find that people - myself especially! - have their own ideas about what they'd like to read, and no amount of posturing by some overpaid newspaper dilettants will shake their convictions. // I note that this is the second you have referred to newspapermen with a certain (contempt!!) -

surely not all journalists are as bad as that, Joseph...//

I'll allow a book to be recommended to me, but that's about all; I sometimes think that fans are so independent in their tastes and inclinations that it's wonder fandom has any kind of organisation at all. People's taste in reading matter reflect this independence to a certain degree.

Well....what was the fanzine like? I rather liked it, he says, striving mightily not to be too bloody patronising. Your lead-in was somewhat idiotic, and went on far too long. The headings could have been improved, even if they'd been handcut onto the stencil, // Sorry 'ol son - ish one was litho, which I suppose

makes it even worse than you thought...// they would have been bigger and thus better. The last few pages gave the impression of having been hastily slung together in an attempt to boost up the zine; the material could have been compressed into a smaller space, so that, if you'd kept to the same number of pages, you'd have given yourself more to play with.

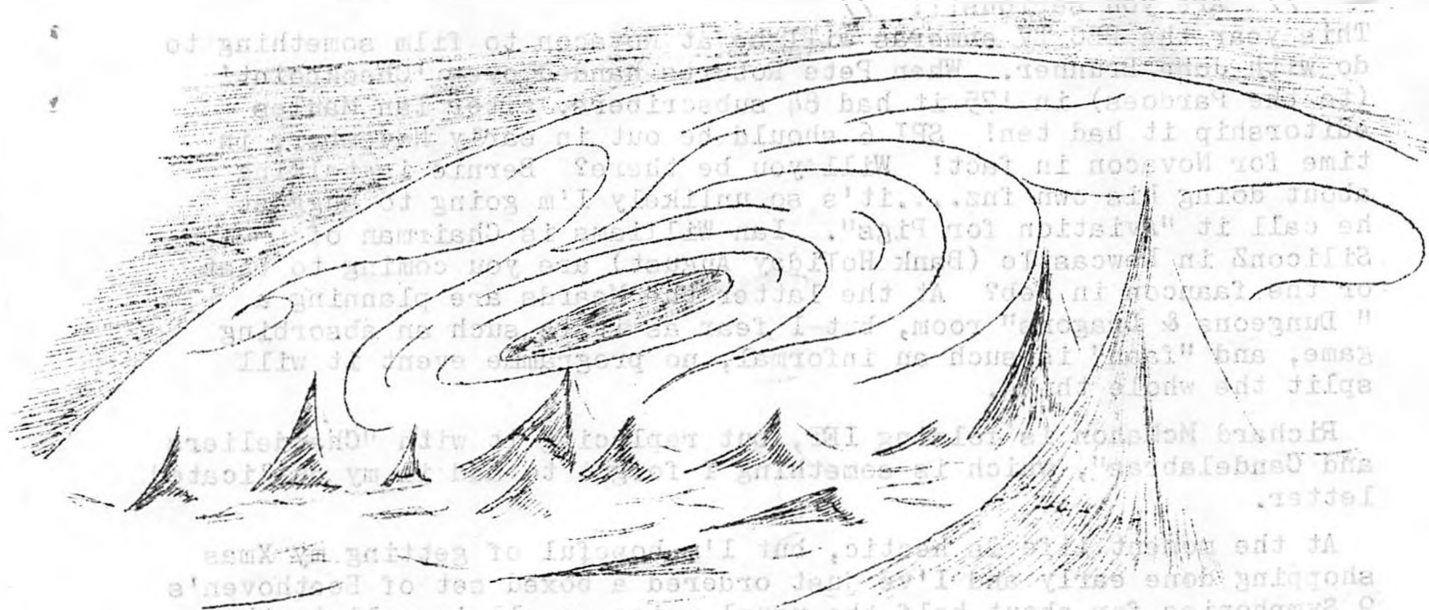
Don't I complain so? On the other hand, criticism is supposed to be helpful, and I hope mine makes some gesture in this direction.

On which note it's time to end. I've got a driving lesson coming up fairly shortly, but let me recommend to you, if you can find it, this week's MAD magazine, the one with "Half price Issue" printed on the cover. It's got a reprint of their "2001 Minutes of Space Idiocy" in it. Great fun. No prizes for guessing what it's based on....

// What can I say! What can I say! Joseph, I have a little pile of cards on which are the names of those on my circ. list. On your card I have written in capitals 'PROLIFIC LOC WRITER'. In truth this loc deserves better - it's darn near an article in its own right. I'll buy you a pint in Feb. that's a promise! Your reaction to the envelope was a problem I had considered and I wondered of the thirty or so I sent across the pond, just how many would end up in buckets of water with frantic bomb squads running around deserted streets and hastily vacated houses. As far as fourteen words go - they're alright for business reports but not for our type of



reading. We'll leave Drucker to business, eh! You're right 'ol son on my book review, they're not my scene and to prove it I ain't writing another. Look forward to hearing from you again and I hope your driving lesson went okay. All the best...//



Dave Rowe  
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25.10.76

Thanks for Cygnus which made for a chuckle-  
some read on the last day of British Summer time.  
I quite liked your style in a mild but constantly  
amusing way, I could just imagine Richard Briers  
reading it out loud - but somehow I can't imagine  
RB with a northern Irish accent. I hope you

realise that if you start sending Cygnus to the States people are  
going to start expecting a Walt Willis col.

From this end things have been hectic but last weekend I took time  
out to get Pandora & Rog's engagement party. Especially as 'ol  
grumpy-gub of Cheltenham was there (Sweet heavens! I nearly laughed  
for a full minute when I read that line in Cygnus). Actually we'd  
bought them a Rotostak Hamster box, so you can imagine my disappoint-  
ment when I arrived there and found they had already bought themselves  
a new large hamster cage.

Bernie and I were instantly put to work, tac-ing up posters -  
in our suits. (I didn't even have time to change into some 'dirties'  
I'd brought), then Pandora arrived with a new female hamster and said  
they were going to start breeding them....no one understood the sigh  
of relief I gave.

In the morning we went on an 'expedition' to find the North Pole  
and Bernie discovered the "corner shop" sold Kojak lollies, so he  
bought them wholesale and handed them round and we all marched home  
licking away muttering "who luvsya Babe?", generally acting tough,  
and avoiding billiard halls.

Back at the flat, Gra had said his cover artist was way behind  
the deadline and was worried it wouldn't show up. So I said I'd  
draw him an emergency illoe and title-logo. That wasn't too bad, but  
Gra had his own ideas about what he wanted, and I'm a regular little  
Norman Rockwell and demanded a model. So there Gra sat in the middle  
of a room of talking fen and friends, with his trousers down,  
actually with my trousers down, his were rolled up above his knees,

(mine were that spare pair of 'dirties' I should add - well you don't think I go around sketching with my pants off, do you?) The scene was one to put idiocy back into fandom, where it belongs, I especially remember one absent girl yelling out from the toilet "Hold him there, don't let him get away, I wanna see, I wanna seeeee!"

Are you going to Suncon in Florida next year by any chance?

// Are you serious!!! //

This year the BBC TV cameras will be at Novacon to film something to do with John Brunner. When Pete Roberts handed over 'Checkpoint' (to the Pardoes) in '75 it had 84 subscribers, after Ian Maules editorship it had ten! SPI 6 should be out in early November, in time for Novacon in fact! Will you be there? Bernie is talking about doing his own fnz....it's so unlikely I'm going to suggest he call it "Aviation for Pigs". Ian Williams is Chairman of SiliconZ in Newcastle (Bank Holiday August) are you coming to that or the faancon in Feb? At the latter the Meards are planning a "Dungeons & Dragons" room, but I fear as it is such an absorbing game, and "faan" is such an informal, no programme event it will split the whole thing.

Richard McMahon is folding IET, but replacing it with "Chandeliers and Candelabras", which is something I forgot to add in my duplicated letter.

At the moment life is hectic, but I'm hopeful of getting my Xmas shopping done early and I've just ordered a boxed set of Beethoven's 9 Symphonies for about half the usual price so all is well in the world, for a short time at least. P.S. I heard a rumour in the States that Holmes and Yoyo (screened on BBC 1 Fri 29 (London Area) is what became of the film version of CAVES OF STEEL (ASIMOV). I hope it's not true.

// I see Gra has knobbly knees (SPI 6 dropped in through the letter-box a week yesterday). Unfortunately Novacon is just a little too close to Xmas to justify the expense, however I will be at the con in February (D.V) if 'ol gr...(no I'd better not - I need to stay in his good books)...dear Gra will look after me. B's 9th is very good. The other week I picked up R. K's 'Cheherazade' and I sit and drift off into the nicest dreams with it in the background. Good luck and ATB. D. //

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Jim Henry  
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5.11.76

I enjoyed Cygnus 1; thank you for putting me on the circulation list. I am however. writing this letter mainly for educational reasons. Not, I hasten to add, for your education, though I think that if you listen carefully there may be a lesson for you too. The lesson takes the form of a story. So, if you are all sitting comfortably, children, I will begin.

Once upon a time, in the faery land of North Down, there lived a young man, who, because he prefers to remain anonymous, we shall call him David. Now David was sorely afflicted with a dread disease, known in the trade (which trade? Don't interrupt with silly questions!) as the DDTTP. And, since that is trade jargon, understood only by the in-crowd, I will clarify things by telling you that this means the "Dread Desire to Print and Publish".

In the midst of one of his convulsions, poor suffering David produced a, well, I suppose we could call it a thing, but he called it SFFUN. And, since some of you may not have seen copies of it, I should explain that he claimed that that stood for "Science Fiction Fans Unite Now". This cathartic emanation left him, for



a time almost as sane, healthy, and happy as any other human being.

But sadly, this state of affairs did not persist long; and fairly soon it became obvious that he was fated to suffer recurrent bouts of his sad affliction. When the first arrived, he bravely acknowledged the recurrent nature of the ailment by labelling it, a little more pronouncably, CYGNUS No. 1. A further symptom of his mental derangement became obvious shortly later, as he became given to yelling along the corridors of the Institution at which we apply ourselves for pecuniary reward, a rather unusual cry, "I wanna lock from yew", when he spotted me in the distance.

I found myself unable to decide whether he was desirous of obtaining a tumbler, cylinder or combination lock; or perhaps the canal variety, or even (surely he hadn't started a one member club of Jim fans?) a snippet of my hair. If he had intended a capital 'L', maybe he was annoyed at the philosopher of that ilk....or should there be a terminal "e" as well, so that he might, in fact, be yearning for the sound of an Irish tenor voice? One after another, as I offered him various bits of hardware, photographs of scenes of riparian tranquility, books of philosophy, and record albums, these possibilities had to be rejected, and eventually, determined not to allow myself to remain the subject of his adulation, I bade him sternly to be more explicit.

To my surprise (though I should have known better, from my previous experience, scanty though it was, of his complaint, then to be surprised at anything he said or did) he informed me that none of my alternatives bore any noticeable resemblance to what he wanted; he wanted a LoC, which, being translated from the original, denotes a Letter of Comment.

That, of course, brings me to the moral of my story (don't be silly young Johnny! Lewis Carroll meant it when he wrote that every story has a moral....), for the benefit of neophytes: If you don't understand what these fans say to you, ask, and they will explain. If you do understand what they say, for heavens sake ask, for you're sure to have a firm grasp of the wrong end of the stick.

There is, as I said earlier, an alternative moral (and all really good stories have two or more) for your benefit, and for that of your fellow-sufferers. If you can't see it at once, keep thinking. You never know, the resulting mental exercise may keep you apparently comatose for long enough to save the cost of two or three issues of CYGNUS or SPI, or SPACES, or K, or TTCCH, or ONE-OFF, or whatever pronouncable or un-pronouncable label you attach to your own bouts of the DDTPP.

I am thoroughly convinced, David, that nothing I have written so far bears any resemblance, coincidental or otherwise, to anything living or dead that you might have hoped to receive as comment in a letter of same; but now you're stuck with it, and I'll leave you with only one final injunction - DO IT AGAIN SOON!

// Chuckle..chuckle...I'm sure this will be as funny for you out there as it was for me. Jim is a keen E E 'Doc' Smith fan and has asked me to get him 'Tri-Planetary' which he loaned out and was never returned. I understand that failure on my part to purchase said book next time I'm in town will result in me being summarily expelled from the Department Backgammon league. Jim, after this loc, if I didn't know you better, I'd think you were wired up to the lights. Thanks a million for the giggle.... //

L A T E C O M M E N T . . . . .

I see Ulster Television is screening SPACE 1999 for the second time around; merely weeks after the last episode was shown (Was it the last?) Unfortunately I missed the last episode (if it was the last!!) and now I don't know if the marooned members of Alpha 1 ever found a world on which to latch on. If they did - all well and good, if they didn't and the series ended hanging in mid-air, which usually happens to most serials nowadays (the only one I can remember which finished successfully was THE FUGITIVE and even it was threatened with expulsion from the TV sceens before the one-armed man was finally brought to justice), what was the purpose of creating the series in the first place.

Don't serial producers realise that there are still some people knockin' around who like "happy ever after" endings.

But then again I did miss the last episode.

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