



I am sitting in the Tun many months ago drinking Watneys Worst and thinking that all the beer in the Tun is Watneys Worst, eating a salami sandwich, when in comes Nicely Nicely Rowe. Naturally I turn the other way and try to hide behind my beer, but I am too slow and he sees me.

I wave and say hello Nicely Nicely, sit down and have a beer, since otherwise he is maybe thinking I am not overjoyed to see him, and he has with him Bernie the Peke.

"Hello," says Nicely Nicely, "just the guy I am wanting to see." He sits down facing me and Bernie the Peke sits down by me and I move a little further into the corner.

"Do I not just this minute say this is just the guy I am wanting to see?" says Nicely Nicely to Bernie the Peke. Bernie the Peke says nothing, since Bernie the Peke generally has nothing to say. Also his face is occupied with half my salami sandwich.

"I have something for you," says Nicely Nicely and pulls from his inside pocket a copy of 'K', which is Nicely Nicely's new fanzine. I thank him very much, though personally I would not give a bent shilling for a dozen 'Ks'. Of course, I do not tell Nicely Nicely this, since Bernie the Peke finishes the other half of my salami sandwich and is looking at my arm like he is wondering what it tastes like between two slices of Hovis, with ketchup and mustard.

"I look forward to seeing your next ish," says Nicely Nicely, nicely but with ominous meaning, "or a loc at least." And Bernie the Peke nods almost as if he understands what is happening.

In such ways does Nicely Nicely Rowe get to be a BNF, and though he is nice to neos he still does not give credit.

A guy who is wanting to be a BNF is Last Hope Easthope. He is called Last Hope because he is the last hope of the Brum Mob for a fanzine, which just shows what dire straits the Brum Mob are in since the Uncle turns pro. Some fans call him Least Hope Easthope, which is not a kind thing to say about a fan who is doing the best he can, though there is maybe a little truth in it, at that.

Last Hope is not prominent in fandom for a while and fans are saying he is burned out. They are also forgetting him. Naturally Last Hope does not like this. No BNF ever puts up with people forgetting him, so Last Hope cannot put up with it either. He produces a fanzine called 'Logo 4' and writes how he is all the time attacked in other fanzines. He gets irate and makes out that fans are doing nothing for a year but talk about him behind his back, which must make him a BNF.

A spavined ferret with a wooden leg and brain damage would make a Bigger NF than Last Hope Easthope.

Without much doubt the biggest BNF in fandom is Janus Jackson, though in fact some say the Uncle is still a fan,

and he is bigger than Janus. Janus is a big fan and Janus's boys are pretty mean with the Newcastle Brown bottles when they are all beered up. I read only the other day how Big Dave Cockfield hits a nuclear power station from ten yards first time with a Newcastle Brown bottle.

Janus is first called Janus by his university friends. It seems there is this guy from Mythology called Janus who faces both ways at once. This seems to me about as likely as drawing to an inside straight when Past Card Piggott is dealing, but I am never in Mythology to see for myself, and it is without doubt a very useful attribute, at that.

When Janus first comes into fandom he keeps quiet about his university time. For this I do not blame him. In this man's fandom it does not do to go about telling people all the time you are from university. People might get the idea you are very clever. People might get the idea you are so clever you should prove how clever you are by untying some concrete bootlaces at the bottom of the Tyne. So Janus plays it real cool about his university and about his university friends as well, and pretty soon he is a BNF, and soon after that the biggest, except maybe for the Uncle.

Then what happens is a few more guys come from this university into fandom. They get to seeing what Janus Jackson is saying and get irate about it. At first Janus ignores them since they are still nobodies, but then they become known about fandom. One even becomes a BNF, this guy being Half-an-Ear Langford himself. Janus does not miss this, since he is a pretty smart operator. He starts to talk about his university time and how it was not such a bad time, and in fact it was a pretty good time, at that. If Janus goes on like this only graduate fans will be allowed in fandom.

Half-an-Ear Langford is a new man in fandom, but he is rising fast to become a BNF. He is not called Half-an-Ear because he has only half an ear. In fact he has two ears, which he uses to stop his glasses falling off. He is called Half-an-Ear because he always has half an ear to the ground for the latest news. Half-an-Ear knows all the latest news and tells about it in his fanzine 'Twll-ddu' as soon as he knows it, which is sometimes before it happens.

Because he knows everything about everybody it is a good policy to keep friendly with Half-an-Ear Langford. He knows more about certain fans than he is telling to the public. He tells it to the certain fans in such terms as ten gees make him forget how to spell Holdstock for three issues. This is maybe the reason why even Janus Jackson does not try to take out Half-an-Ear Langford.

In 'Logo 4' Last Hope Easthope says how he does not think much of Half-an-Ear Langford and his ever-loving wife

Hazel. This is a dangerous thing to say about Half-an-Ear. In fact it is probably the most dangerous thing anyone can say about Half-an-Ear. Half-an-Ear does not get mad at much, but he gets mad when his ever-loving wife is insulted. Half-an-Ear is the guy who takes out Huge Harlie from the US of A when Huge Harlie tweaks Hazel's nose. Last Hope probably sees this as his last hope to make it as a BNF, and in fact he is probably right at that. The guy who takes out Half-an-Ear is certainly becoming a BNF pretty damn quick, if he lives so long.

Personally I think Last Hope is only proving the ferret can have three wooden legs.

### SATURDAY...MORNING.

One morning a little while ago I am coming downstairs at about half past ten thinking the air molecules are acting very noisy this morning and feeling about as strong and confident of life as a Crown Derby doorknocker. This is on account of a night out to celebrate two guys leaving work, also the curry we have afterwards. This curry obviously does not like to be eaten and fights back. All the other guys and dolls are very wined up and scream for water to beat the curry. They do not realise this is just what the curry wants them to do, and the curry beats two guys and a doll. I also am pretty wined up, but I remember enough about the ways of curry not to drink any water until I finish when I down about three gallons. In the morning the blisters are disappearing.

At the bottom of the stairs are three letters for me. I pick them up one at a time since they are too heavy to lift all at once. One letter contains my new driving licence, which is the most science fictional official document I ever see, since it does not expire until 2023 and is covered in computer numbers which instantly tell the police all about me. As soon as they get a computer, that is.

The second envelope has a computer printed label and contains all the stuff about Novacon 7 and the three volume presentation set of Nova Award Rules, with the seven appendices. This is the responsibility of Half-an-Ear Langford, which just goes to show what a BNF he is becoming. Half-an-Ear puts himself on the Nova Committee, along with Janus Jackson and Woolly-bear Pickersgill. This is a wise move, since although Janus and Woolly-bear are good guys and are also without a doubt very big BNFs, they are probably needing Half-an-Ear to explain the rules to them. Personally I would not be surprised if Half-an-Ear wins the Nova Award by a landslide after he explains all the rules to Janus and Woolly-bear.

Woolly-bear Pickersgill is first called Woolly-bear by his doll Simone. I am at a party one day and say to Simone,

"People are frightened of Greg."

Simone looks astounded. "But he is such a friendly woolly bear," she says. "How can anyone be frightened of such a woolly bear?"

I do not answer this question, since I suspect it is rhetorical and there is no percentage in contradicting the doll of Woolly-bear, no matter how friendly he is. Also Simone herself is not a doll to get angry at you and I see no point in telling her a woolly-bear is the hairy caterpillar of a tiger moth.

The reason people are frightened of Woolly-bear is this: Woolly-bear is the ace fanzine reviewer. When it comes to fanzines there is no-one to touch Woolly-bear. When Woolly-bear decides to go for a fanzine the editor might just as well leave town. When Woolly-bear decides he likes a fanzine the editor can buy a new suit and move into the smart part of town, such as South Ealing, on the strength of it. One day Woolly-bear decides he likes 'One-off' by David Bridges, and before you can say knife Bridges is running the Little Moving Blot racket at Eastercon 77. That is the sort of thing that Woolly-bear Fickersgill can do for a guy.

I discover just in time that the last envelope is not an envelope at all. It is 'Checkpoint 84' from Peter 'Rabbit' Roberts held together with two large staples. I open it with the breadknife and find it is also 'Checkpoint 83', which is a great relief since I am thinking 'Rabbit' Roberts is forgetting to send it to me. I am thinking that it is a long time since he sends me 'Checkpoint 82' and that if I am not such a peaceable guy I am sending in the enforcers such as Demolition Dobson and Psycho Skelding. But this is before I have my coffee and cornflakes and I am not fully human in the morning before I have my coffee and cornflakes. Later I feel that it is maybe not such a bad thing to be a month late with a fanzine, since I myself am later than this, and am not sending anyone a fanzine for a year, unless it is old copies of 'Fanzine Fanatique' to Mary Whitehouse.

'Checkpoint 83' has the Checkpoint Fan Poll results, in which Pat Charnock scoops the big one with 'Wrinkled Shrew' and 'King' Kettle is best fanwriter once again, which is why he is 'King'. With these choices I have no objection. Janus Jackson's 'Maya' is only third and I think maybe we are seeing some real action from Janus now, such as lining the Charnox up against a garage wall and letting go with the old typewriter. But then I see in 'Checkpoint 84' where Janus is voted best fan editor in the FAAN Awards and 'Maya 11' is best ish. This is all very admirable and Janus is happy as his long term plan for world domination nears completion.

I always thought "innuendo" was an Italian suppository.

## THE ORANGE TREE.

One reason I do not publish Dot for a year is Jim Linwood. This is not to say Jim Linwood stands guard over my typewriter for a year and growls if I go near it. No, soon after Dot 1 appears Jim sends me a letter.

"Geographically," he writes to me, "you are now Kittenfandom."

Now, this is a great responsibility and I devote many hours to thinking of ways to duck it. I think maybe if I lie low for a while it will go away, and this seems to work. I hear nothing more about it until one day in March when I am sitting in the Orange Tree with Woolly-bear Pickersgill and Simone and the Naules and the Harveys and Graveyard Robinson and Brian the Dude.

Brian the Dude is called the Dude because he is always such a snappy dresser with very natty clothes, such as anti-static suits. Graveyard Robinson is always very quiet when he first appears, which is why he is called Graveyard. These days he is not so quiet but he drives a lethal motorcycle so the name still fits. Graveyard is the only fan who can talk to Brian the Dude for long periods of time, such as three minutes. About three months ago I am on the train going home from the Tun with Graveyard and Brian the Dude and Graveyard and Brian the Dude are talking about X-Y plotters all the way from Waterloo to Kingston and I have to drag Graveyard off the train still talking, or else he goes all the way to Shepperton.

Anyway, I am sitting and talking and drinking Young's Special and one thing and another when Simone turns and looks at me. I falter.

"What we need," says Simone in a voice with enough significance for a page full of figures, "is a meeting later in the month, say on a Saturday afternoon."

I say nothing and look blank as if I do not understand.

"We need to get back to the roots of Kittenfandom," says Simone.

I sense that Simone is not fooled by my look of total incomprehension and that firm action is required.

"No," I say.

"We could sit around and drink and talk all afternoon and evening," says Simone.

"I have to see what the other guys in the house say to this proposition," I say.

"I think it is a great idea," says Graveyard Robinson, who just moves into the house. For a moment I reflect that it is better when he is very quiet, and consider how his face looks with a pint glass in it.

But it is the name Simone suggests for this new fandom that really distresses me: "Kittyhawk Fandom."

I do not like this of itself and besides, the name once appears in an illustration by Nicely Nicely Rowe. If I host a group called "Kittyhawk" Nicely Nicely might get to thinking I am using his name and since Nicely Nicely does not give credit he might get to thinking also I owe him something for it, such as letting him come.

Now that I finish my exams I am thinking that this proposition of a meeting on one Saturday a month is not such a bad proposition at that. So long as it is not called "Kittyhawk".

#### POSTSCRIPT.

Jim Linwood goes on to say in his letter that he is writing two books on the history of Kittenfandom. These are: 'The Rise And Fall Of Kittenfandom, and The Wit And Wisdom Of Kittenfandom, the former being a 2000 page hardcover to be published by Boring Press and the latter being rather smaller ---one or two vowels possibly."

Pamela Boal sends me a letter as well. She says she likes personalzines because they come out more regularly. Well, Dot is proving regular, on account of the All-bran, but I think once a year is not what she means.

Acid-Joseph Nicholas is another fan putting paper to typewriter about Dot 1. Acid-Joseph gets his name because he irritates some fans as much as acid indigestion and Acid Indigestion-Joseph is too much of a strain on the false teeth. Some unkind fans are saying he is called Acid-Joseph on account of he is as irritating as an acid, such as conc. nitric, but I discount this.

Acid-Joseph is saying that Dot 1 is like 'Twill-ddu' by Half-an-Ear Langford. Well, maybe those unkind fans are not so far out at that. Acid-Joseph is lucky I am a peaceful guy and do not send in Demolition Dobson at the drop of a hat. Acid-Joseph had just better keep an eye on his hat from now on, to see it does not drop again. He also says a lot of other stupid things, such as when is the next Dot. This is a really dumb question. Real Soon Now!

Chris Morgan is writing also. He is surprised and disappointed I am bowing to the baser side of my nature. Chris is wanting me to outline a teleological theory of science fiction instead. Personally I am wondering if it is all right to say 'teleological' in a family fanzine. I look it up in my dictionary, which says it means 'of the doctrine of the final causes of things.' So that is what it means.

I receive three letters on one air-mail from the US of A. Times are hard everywhere. These three are from B.P. Indick,

Ben Indick who really likes Dot 1, and Ben who thinks the world needs more of Dot 1. Unfortunately I have only Dot 2 to offer, so I hope this is okay.

Other people mentioning Dot 1 are, in alphabetical order, Steve Sneyd, Andy Darlington, Ray Harrison and Edgar Belka.

### FINCHLEY CENTRAL.

I am suddenly reminded of a game I play a couple of times. A guy called the Berserker on account of he sometimes carries a four foot broadsword tells me about it one day after the Tun when we are both pretty scotched up.

"All we need," says the Berserker, "is a full map of the London Underground."

"Yes, Allan," I say, since although he is not carrying his broadsword at this time there is a small probability that he remembers today sometime when he is carrying it. In fact there is no trouble about the map since we are on King's Cross underground station waiting for a train.

"Two guys take turns to name an underground station from the map," says the Berserker, "and the first one to say Finchley Central wins."

I realise this is probably the reason why he calls the game 'Finchley Central'. He says I should go first.

"Okay," I say, "Finchley Central."

He looks at me scornfully. "You win," he says, "but it shows no finesse. It has no class."

We try again and go on for several minutes trying to out-think each other in the matter of Finchley Central. It does not matter, I discover, if you repeat a station, but it shows no finesse. Then the Berserker says he grows tired of this game and says Finchley Central to win it. I am thinking it is a good thing I do not have any potatoes wagered on the outcome when he asks me if I want another game. This time it is much better, as we approach Finchley Central station by station up the Northern Line, testing each other's nerve before cutting down to the District Line. Finally I decide to win the game because our train arrives.

Finchley Central is a very English game.

When I tell Andrew Stephenson about Finchley Central he falls quivering to the ground and calls me a looney. Since he is pissed as three newts at the time I disregard his remarks utterly. Already I am preparing a three volume boxed set of rules with awful illustrations and expensive supplements without which the game cannot be played at all. I am willing to begin a game of Postal Finchley Central.

Sign on a Durex machine: "Road gaskets for hot rods."

### SHAKE...

Last Friday I go to a wedding. It is a wedding between Mad Scott Rohan and Deb Hickenlooper, heiress to the famous Hickenlooper's Hamburgers fortune. The wedding is a Quaker wedding which is totally lacking in formality. This is fortunate since there is enough formality about the wedding as it is.

We go in and sit down in silence. After a while Mad Scott and Deb come in with the Berserker, who is best man. Then an old guy with no hair stands up and tells us how Quakers do things at weddings. It is all a matter of how the spirit moves you. He sits down and there is silence for about five minutes until an old doll stands up and says a few words about marriage. She sits down, the spirit having moved her enough by then, and there is silence for another five minutes. Mad Scott and Deb stand up suddenly. The shot of scotch the Berserker slips Mad Scott just before they come into the meeting house obviously reaches his brain by now. They say the words that hitch them together, then sit down again.

Right, I think, soon we get down to the serious business of weddings. But instead we sit there for a while longer and three more old dolls say something about marriage in the intervals between silences. By this time Tom Shippey is feeling the spirit moving him to say it is time for a pint. Finally Mad Scott and Deb sign the Quaker marriage certificate and everyone else there signs it also. This is the end of the ceremony. Quaker weddings are mostly silence.

The photographs take almost no time at all and I am sent by the Berserker to find taxis to take people down to St. Edmund Hall for the reception. Rob Holdstock bribes the waitresses to give him the champagne bottles as soon as they are opened. Since I am a friend of Rob's I stand near him all the time, so as to assist him with the champagne bottles should they become too heavy for him, and the two of us and Rob's fifty other friends standing solicitously nearby also get pretty wine'd up.

### ...RATTLE...

After the wedding, when we are nearly sober again, Half-an-Ear Langford and Hazel and I go back to Reading and after dinner we sit drinking home brewed beer talking about this and that and reading bits from books and fanzines. I peruse the secret BSFA magazines the BSFA refuses to send me. I guess this is fair since I refuse to send them the four pounds, or whatever. I notice in Vector that Tiny Fowler is getting all irate at huge, rotund, bloated D. West for saying he is tiny. Tiny Fowler says that all fans are disgusting, except the serious writers and critics. Personally I think that Tiny Fowler is showing himself to be tiny mainly in the mind.

Another interesting thing I read, in Matrix, is where Tom Jones says it is not part of the BSFA's function to

introduce people to fandom. Well well well, as they say to Isaac.

Guard Silicon well, dear people, it might be all we disgusting fans have left when the order goes out from the BSFA bunker for the destruction of unauthorised dupers and the disbanding of of fandom. Get D. West working on a duper disguised as a washing machine and a typewriter that looks like a bowl of fruit. The Frankenstein monster of fandom turns on its creator at last!

Half-an-Ear and I stay up late waiting for the Berserker to arrive on the train. "This is not possible," says Half-an-Ear. "The last train surely arrives by now. There are no trains at this late hour."

"Perhaps he gets all wined up with the parents of Mad Scott and Deb and is unable to tell a train from a hole in the road," I suggest.

"Perhaps he gets all wined up with the parents of Mad Scott and Deb and is unable to tell a train from a chasm in the carriageway," says Half-an-Ear in such a manner as to suggest he does not hear me.

We open another bottle of home brew and the phone rings. It is one o'clock and the Berserker says he is at Reading Station at last, after a pleasant hour in the company of British Rail seeing the sights of Didcot. Since the sights of Didcot can be seen in under two minutes by a blind man and consist of a power station I sympathise with his plight. While Half-an-Ear fetches the Berserker I open yet another bottle of home brew. "He will surely need it," says Half-an-Ear, "and I am strangely confident that I shall not say no myself." Sometimes I suspect Half-an-Ear of possessing telepathic abilities.

The next morning after breakfast we go shopping for things for Half-an-Ear's party. Part of this time is spent in an off-licence buying things, and part in a pub getting an advance on things, as you might say. When we arrive back at the house Hazel expresses great surprise. "I am expecting you back only after closing time," she says. We are hurt by this.

During the afternoon furniture is moved about in the house. Most of the movement is upstairs into the study where the mattress on which I spend the night is gradually surrounded by boxes of fanzines, boxes of papers and boxes of books. The place is cleared and looks twice as big as usual.

There is some uncertainty about things.

"Where should I put the table-cloth?" says Hazel.

"Er - on the table?" says Half-an-Ear uncertainly. And in fact it fits very well on the table.

The cleared surfaces are covered again, with food, and Selina Lovett arrives from the US of A via London. Selina is a member of the Suncon committee once. Does anyone know

how Suncon goes, she asks when she comes in. Like a giant Mancon is the word. Selina then has a bath and Half-an-Ear expresses a hope that this does not become a fannish tradition before his parties, or he will have to restrict his parties to two or three small midgets.

...AND ROLL.

Fans arrive. Andrew Stephenson brings some home baked bread that looks like policemen's truncheons, only heavier. I ask him tactfully if he thinks it is Passover and he says the bread is meant to be like that, there is nothing he can do about it and it isn't his fault so stop blaming him.

Acid-Joseph, in an effort to shake off the totally unjustified image of scrooge, brings a bottle of wine and two four-packs of beer. They are only small cans, though, the mean bugger.

The fans flow thick and fast. Leise Hoare comes in with the Elings and Boris the Blank, but not Martin since he is in Belgium at a European con. Since I never hear Martin speak other than English I think maybe he converses in Basic or Machine Code.

London Welsh stagger in almost by accident since they are visiting pubs all the way from Reading Station since six o'clock. The London mob arrange to meet with the Welsh lot at the station at five. They forget that pubs in Reading do not open until six, but make up for the lost hour by greater speed, as is evident when they come in. Bryn Fortey does not come as Mrs Fortey does not let him. Rob Holdstock does not come since he has to finish his novel based on an idea nearly used in the BBC production 'The Stone Tapes' or else his publishers nail him to the wall by the groin. His groin they nail to the wall first.

Mad Scott and Deb Rohan come with Phil and Phillipa Stephenson-Payne. This shows friendship indeed, coming to a party on their honeymoon.

The party progresses. Acid-Joseph learns things from Helen Eling in the kitchen. Andrew's leadened bread vanishes, as does Leise's little round bread which this time she does not colour blue or green. "They are drinking your Crown of Crowns," says Half-an-Ear urgently to me. "They ransack the fridge and find it." I rush across, but am too late. Mad Scott and the Berserker are finishing the last drops. Mad Scott is built like a barn door and although the Berserker does not have his broadsword, on account of British Rail charge extra for broadswords, he does have a doorknocker on the end of a leather thong which looks pretty lethal to me. So I say I hope they appreciate it and hope they are too wine'd up to notice the irony in my voice. Although my irony is probably slurred, at that.

In the kitchen Helen Eling tires momentarily of Acid-

Joseph and attempts to ascertain whether Andrew S. has more than twelve hairs on his chest. Andrew beats her off, but not before I tell Simone Walsh what is happening. She thinks this is a good idea and ascertains that I have many more than twelve hairs on my chest by peering down the top of my shirt. Andrew escapes from Helen but runs into Simone. "Oh no!" says Andrew. "Not another one." Simone peers down the top of Andrew's shirt. "He is wearing a vest," she says. "It is too dark down there, I can see nothing." She whips Andrew's shirt out of his trousers and ascertains that Andrew has more than twelve hairs on his blushing chest. Acid-Joseph looks on enviously since he has only one hair on his chest, called Saul. "Saul there is," he explains.

Time rushes onward. The people from Oxford return there. In the sitting room Simone organises a drunk test. The idea is to stand on one leg with eyes closed and arms outstretched for a count of ten. If you agree to do it you are drunk. I manage only six, but King Kettle gets upset when we stop counting at twenty, so maybe the King is drunkest of all.

The drunk test leads to other tests of strength and endurance. Simone can lie on her back with her feet together six inches in the air while we count to twenty and more. She can also beat Rob Hansen at Indian Wrestling stretched out on the floor. Andrew says it is more fun with live tarantulas, but he makes no effort to provide the tarantulas. King Kettle beats Simone, then I have a titanic struggle with the King which lasts for hours while the spectators say it is like watching cricket since nothing happens. The King and I smile feebly at this as the sweat flows off us and forms small oceans on the carpet. Finally I force his arm to the floor. We stand up and I think it is a little silly to shake hands after such a contest. Besides which, my arm is still lying on the floor.

The party winds down. London people leave, Welsh people do not. I wander the kitchen in search of beer and find only a Watneys party seven. As I am even Watneys tastes like beer. John Harvey hugs his half-bottle of scotch like it is his soul. Finally I go to bed, finding a pass through the mountains of paper around my mattress.

The party dies.

I sleep until nearly noon, but John and Eve Harvey and Acid-Joseph are awake since half past eight, on account of Dai Price stumbles through at that time on his way for a piss. A man's gotta do what a man's gotta do, but he can surely time it better.

Tha-tha-that's all folks. The next issue of Dot will be. A.C.A.s Rule, O.K.