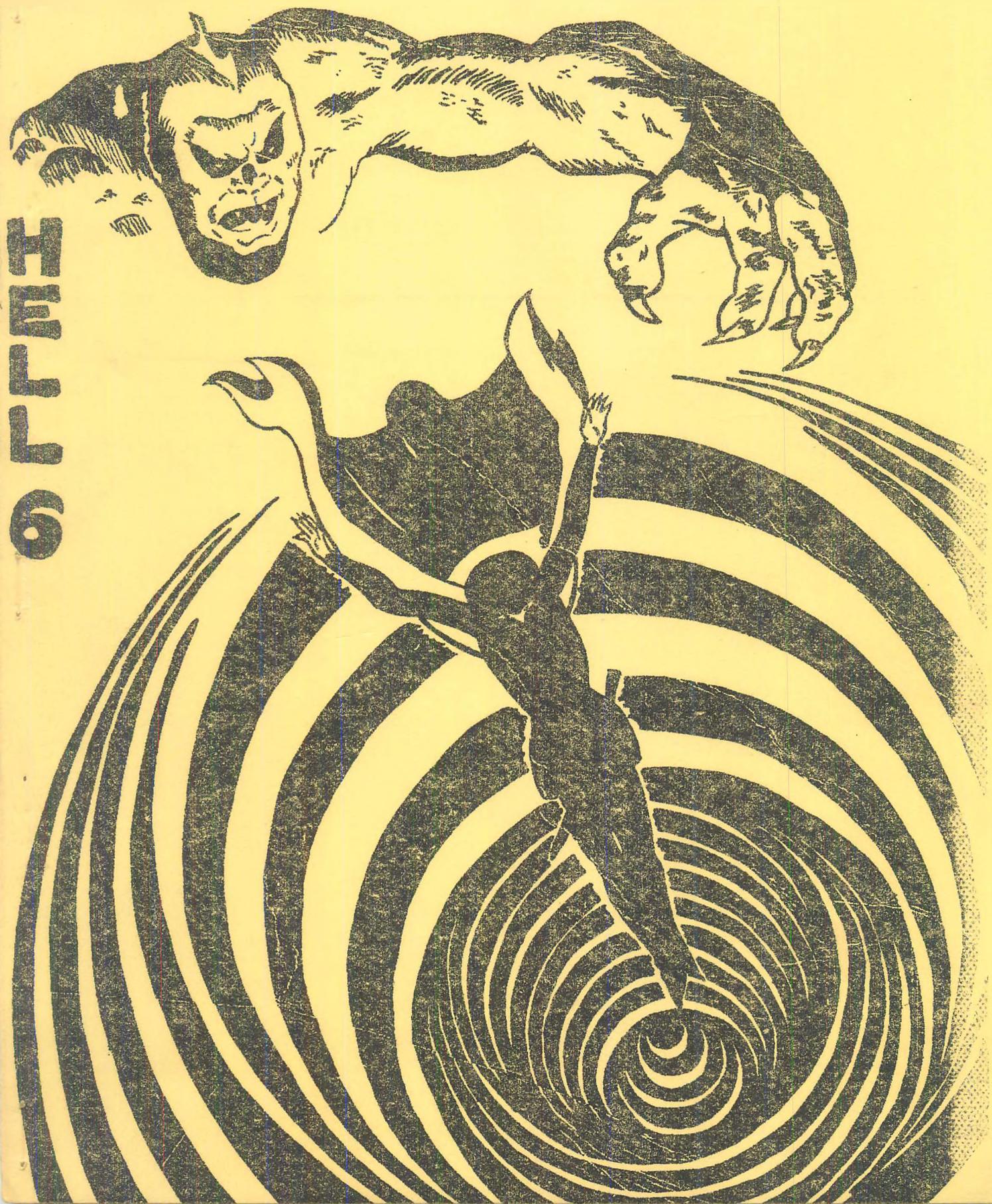


HELL 6



Contents	3.
Skel - tones	4.
High Goon	4, 5, 6, 7 & 8.
The Announcement	9.
Light Of Ancient Days	10.
.....a poem by Kevin Hall	
Inferno	12.
At The Sign Of The Crucified Gannet	20.
.....a column by Ian Williams	
The Story Of The Jazz Guitar - Part 3	26.
.....a series by Mike Meara	
Crossfire	34.
Cas	48.
.....a column by none other	
Back Chat	50.
D - I - Y Protest Meeting	56.
.....an audience participation feature by Joan Sharpe	

FRONT COVER -- Ken Mardle

Joan Sharpe 14·16·37·49·51.

Ron McGuinness 43.

BACK COVER -- Joan Sharpe.

B-ro 12·34.

Mike Meara 26·31.

Terry Jeeves 35·40.

Skel 9·20·23·48.

"Let's go out for a walk," said Cas.

"Knobrot!!!" I replied, in my usual charming manner.

"Aww, gwarn. I want to go out. I don't want to stay in."

"OK, but wake me up when you get back."

"Fun-nee! C'mon ya lazy sod!"

So we went for a walk. Out of the door, along the hall to the lift, press and wait.

"Here, put my purse in your pocket."

"Christ Cas! We're only going for a bloody walk, you wont need your purse. Besides, I've got enough rubbish in my pockets already."

So Cas goes and slips the purse back through the letter box and dashes back into the lift just as the door is cleaving shut. Down eighteen floors, out at the ground floor and away. Three hours of exploring some of the lesser known areas of Stockport, looking in estate agents windows. Then time to go home. Walking past large building sites with Cas in her split-up-the-front-to-about-(WOW!)-this-high maxi skirt, learning new words. Almost home, then, suddenly.....

"Oh-oh!"

"What's the matter luv?"

"The keys. I put them in my purse. Oh sh.....ugar! We're locked out."

Walk the rest of the way with suddenly wearied steps. After all, we do live on the eighteenth floor.

Even the Human Fly couldn't get in through our window. I see myself doing an Elliot Ness on the door and shudder at the thought of splinters in my shoulder. Within the past few seconds I have developed a headache. Cas is looking at me in her best 'my-man-will-fix-everything' manner. My headache gets worse. I feel inadequate. I have neglected to take a night school course in 'Breaking Down Doors'. We talk to the caretaker.

"We've locked ourselves out. Have you got a spare key?"

"No. It's probably too late to ring the joiner. He'll have



9-5-'71

SKEW

gone by now. Gone home."

"Where do we have to go for a key then, the Town Hall?"

"No, they don't have one either. We're not allowed to have a ~~spare~~ key or even a master-key. Not even at the Town Hall. When people lock themselves out I have to send for the joiner. Not allowed to keep spare keys. Try and force the lock, that's all I can suggest."

"The lock was loose. I fixed it. Large screws, rawlplugs, the lot. A Sherman tank would have to knock and wait. Still, I suppose I'd better try it, before doing anything more serious."

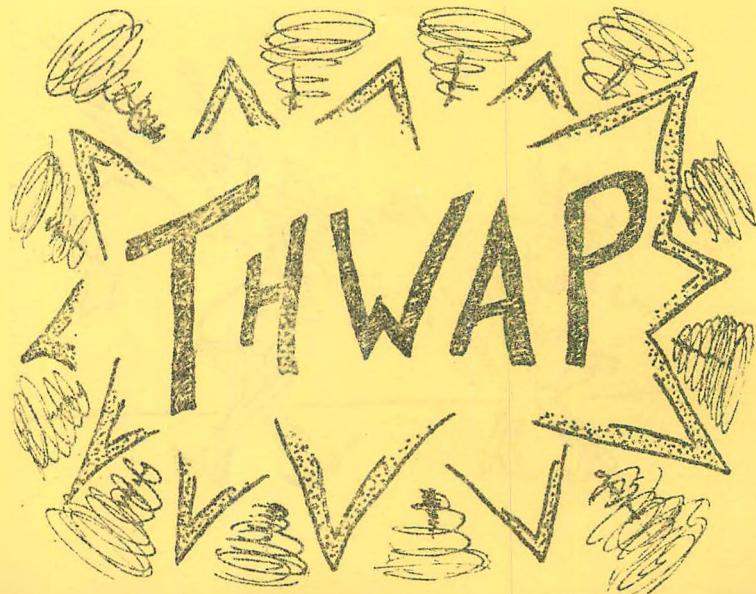
Into the lift, up eighteen floors and out again. It may only be my imagination, but I can almost make out the outline of a portcullis on the door. My headache moves to the base of my brain and grips tight. The door fits badly. There is a half-inch gap along the bottom and we can see the purse blocking the light. It sits and mocks us. There is no conceivable way of getting it through such a small gap. Gas recalls that my pork steak is cooking in the oven, on a low light. I like my meat well done, but it does add a sense of immediacy to our predicament. If we were to spend the night at my parents, just think of the gas bill. My headache is gone and I charge the door. Twice. It does not even shudder. I do, so I rest from my exertions. After all, I tell myself, I am a creature of intelligence, not brawn. Now if I had some string I could fasten it to my comb, lower the comb through the letter-box, retrieve it from under the door with my pen and, holding the purse firm with the pen, force the comb into the note section and haul the whole kit and kaboodle up through the letter box. I go and see a neighbour who provides the following:-

1) A curtain wire. Ghu knows why. I nod appreciatively and await further goodies. The curtain wire plays no further part in the proceedings. This is what is known as a bit role.

2) Several odd lengths of string wrapped around a strip of wood. Oddly enough it is the piece of wood, almost $\frac{1}{2}$ " thick which proves to be more useful item.

3) One of those 36" rules that fold this way and that way and end up just 9" long.

I proceed as planned, laying prone upon the floor, frigging and poking about, but my luck has been dealt off the bottom of the pack. The purse had landed with



the note compartment uppermost, out of reach above the level of the gap. Thus we frustrate ~~Opposition~~ Skel. Such difficulties must be overcome. I must not be daunted by the impossible. I must try another approach. First I must stop crying. This will improve morale, as Cas will then stop laughing at me. At this juncture the neighbour appears once more upon the scene with, you've guessed it:-

4) A medium thick knitting needle.

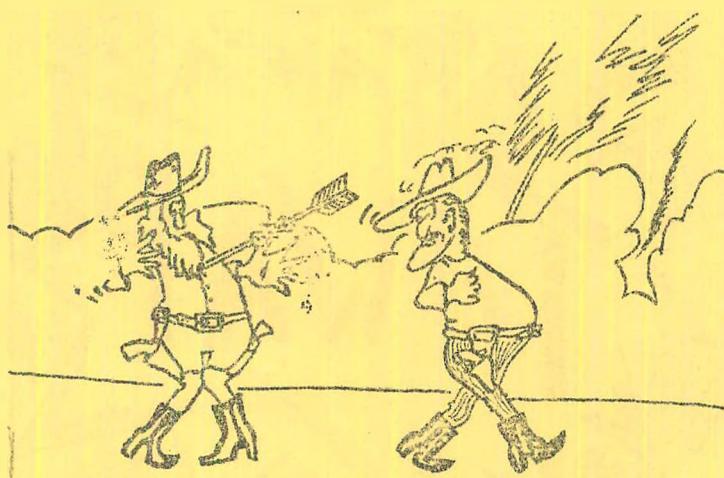
Our neighbour is muttering something about trying to bend the end into a hook (with my teeth, perhaps?) and hooking the purse up through the letter box. I pay no attention. It would not work anyway. Our neighbour is a woman and therefore not mechanically minded. I bend the knitting needle at right-angles half-way down its length and make a slight 'V' bend in the leg I will be holding. I now intend to slide the point into the purse, drag it up against the door and hold it firm with one hand whilst I force open the change section and poke out the keys. The keys will then be slid out under the door and presto!!!!!! The strip of wood is slid under the door, along one side of the purse, to hold it firm whilst I slip the needle in from the other side. I miss, but fortunately in doing so I force open the purse. This now enables me to hook the keys out with the knitting needle and..... presto, like I said.

OK, so you've heard of peeling an orange in ones pocket, but opening a purse whilst it's behind an inch-and-threequarter thick locked door? Maybe I really am as mean as my friends insist.

NOTES TO CONTRIBUTORS

Oh, it's great fun being a fan editor. Oh, the joy of it. Nothing can possibly match, for sheer thrills and uncertainties, the quarterly attempt to estimate the size of the next issue. Most of this uncertainty comes in because our kind contributors submit material in every shape, manner and form. Typed on the flyleaf of some ill-fated library book, or jotted down

on the back of one of the Dead Sea scrolls. Well, we've never actually mentioned it before, but we work on a line length of 76 or 77 characters, depending on the mood we're in at the time. Naturally, if you make your contrib's conform to this particular requirement then it is likely to be read in a more mellow mood than a piece with four inch margins. Also, the more alert of you will have spotted that this is a quarto zine. This makes it a trifle awkward to plan a zine



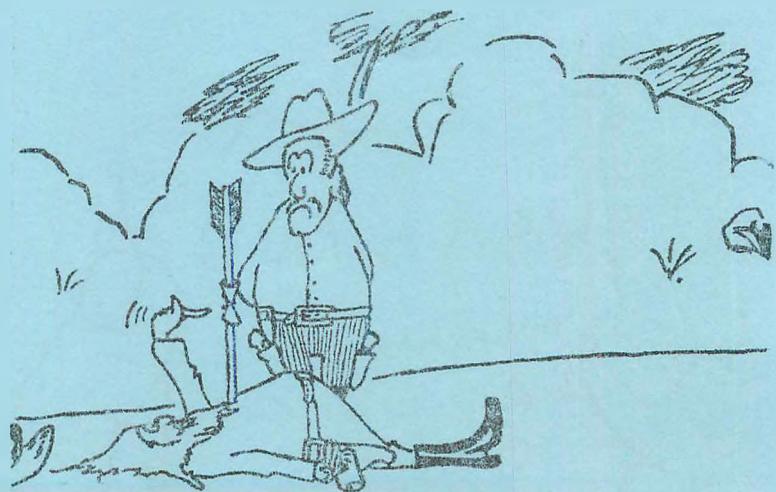
when finks like Mike Meara submit their contrib's on A-frigging-4. (Mutter, mutter, mumble, now let's see.....six and a smidge pages of A4 at seventy four characters to the line, allowing for the full page illo.....oh, mustn't forget the smaller illo.....that's approximately.....oh-er-um-er.....NINE PAGES???? Christ, that can't be right! Now where have I gone wrong? Hmmmmmm)

Since typing that little lot I have received the first installment of what John Piggott says will be an irregular column. Why is John's column irregular? Because it's been through Hell. Anyway, this worthy's epistle was executed upon computer print out paper, sideways, with a line length of 103 characters. We still haven't had anything typed on the back of a roll of bus tickets.....yet.

"Cas may not be a winner in the beauty stakes,
but she's certainly a front runner."

We're just back from a very knackering weekend. Up on Saturday morning at the creak of dawn, doing what had to be done. We could have done most of it on the Friday evening but I at least, am bone idle. 10.30 rolled around and we all (Cas, Brian and I) piled into the back of a Ford Transit with Pete Presford, Nete (my spelling) and childe Colley. Then we all vroomed off in the vague direction of Durham. Brian was navigating, hence the vague directions. Do not worry, this is not another tale of an in group orgy. That comes later. This is merely some musings on things that became apparent. Firstly, the MAD group doesn't travel well. We might be OK by train, but 4 hours in the back of a van are just too much. Oh, we were alright when we got to Durham. We pottered about there for a while and rested from our journey. The crunch came when we went on to Ian Williams' place for the boozing. After a couple of hours.....WHAM, it hit us. As Penman remarked, "There's only the Gannets still going. The MAD group's gone quiet."

Not knackered enough to go to sleep, but in that half-way world where one can't be bothered getting involved.....just sitting back and letting the world take it's own course. This is no good for a party. Let's face it, if you can't summon



"Quick, before I die,
the message....."

up the energy to tickle Irene, then man you're bushed. Sorry Ian, By the way, Cas says to tell everyone that she didn't puke on the way back. She is so proud of this you'd think she'd won a Hugo or something.

"Tell the world," she says.

You're told,

"I know that beauty is only skin deep, luv,
but why must you have such shallow skin?"

If you turn to the back cover and leaf forward you will be surprised to find that your copy has two back covers. No, you are not unique, everybody has two copies of the rear cover. Joan Sharpe submitted the illo but omitted the slogans, suggesting we might like to originate our own. Actually, it was more a case of, "I can't think of anything suitable, you try". We tried, and so did everyone who had the misfortune to step across the threshold of 185, but nobody came up with anything truly funny. So, when you LoC HELL 6 (as you no doubt are going to) detach one copy of the back cover, insert your own slogans and send it back with the LoC. A prize of six days on Grimsby fish dock at the contestant's own expense (in February) will be awarded to the entry which most satisfies the judges. Entries stapled to a nubile female will be looked on favourably. The judges decision will be final and will probably be made in an advanced state of alcoholic rapture.

Sometimes I wonder just what-the-hell sort of co-editorship I've got myself landed with here. Take Saturday night f'rinstance. There's Cas and me flogging our guts out to bring you this issue. Cas is typing stencils whilst I am knocking off some OMPA reviews. Having got them done and partly typed I realise that we need some more of Brian's reviews before we can stencil any

more. So I ring him up 'n tell him to pull his finger out. Mind you, I know better than to try ringing him at home. I call Pete Presford's place where B-ro is in the process of getting very drunk at a small party Pete was throwing.



I couldn't have made it anyway. It would have meant breaking my diet. I have this best suit but it is a bit tight on me. The trouble is, it is the only suit which goes with the dress Cas will be wearing for the wedding. So I diet.



ANNOUNCEMENT

The Date :- Friday the eighth of
September, 1972.

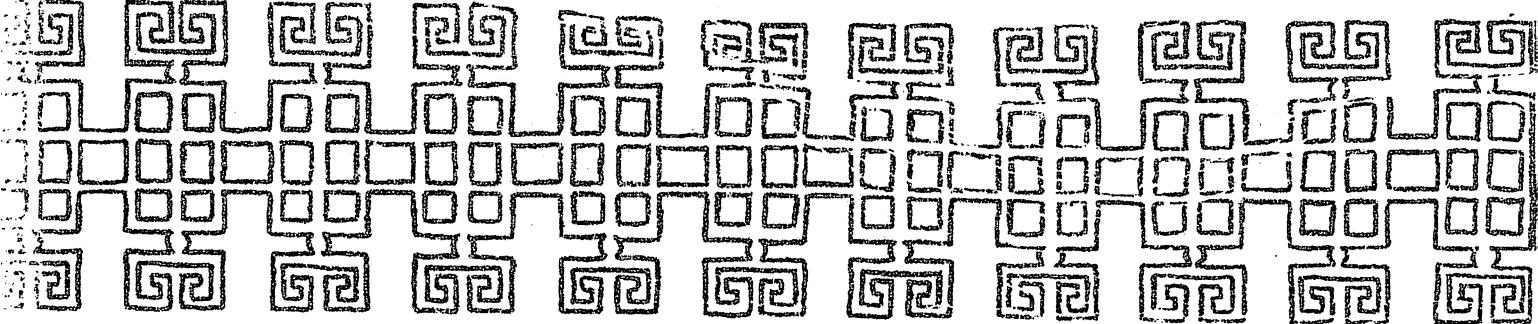
The Time :- 3.30 p.m.

The Place:- Stockport Register
Office.

The Event:- The Marriage Of Mr.
Paul Anthony Skelton
to Carol Margaret Meaburn.

There, the bare facts are now before you. In fact what it actually means is that Skel, the hero of many hours of trufannish activity is now irrevocably and hideously doomed. No more the happy, carefree hours skipping lightly through his back issues of Astounding. No more the joys of laying back and listening to the four new records he'd bought that week. He has put aside the toys of youth. He is too busy getting Cas's breakfast ready.





* LIGHT OF ANCIENT DAYS

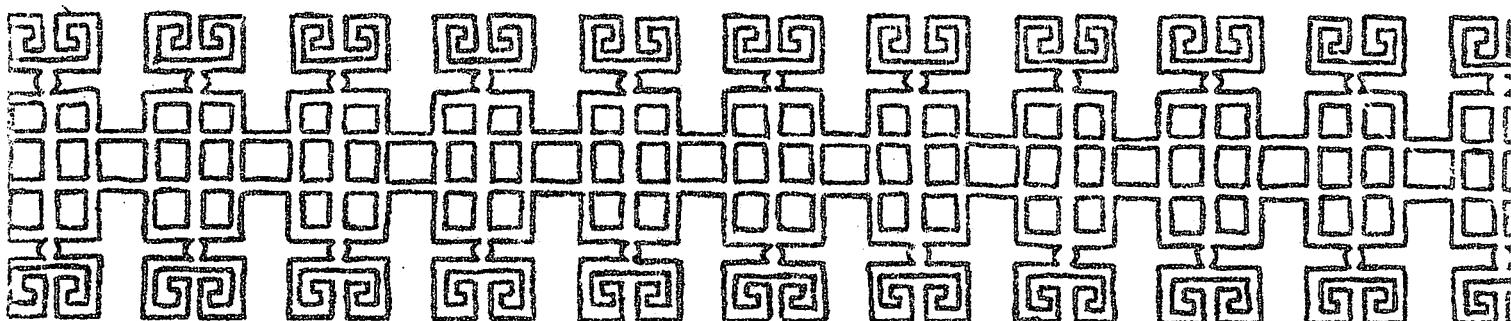
In days of turmoil, days of strife,
when the night time sky is split
with thunder. Days of decadence
are here, upon us.

Tombs and temples raise their hands toward the sky.
Remembrances of stories long grown dim;
Shadows of a mighty age.

When man was willing,
by his hand, to raise a roof
beneath the skies, denying gods of old
the access that they claimed.

Days when men could say
This land is mine.

Knowing in truth that all they claimed was so.
Yet even in success lie the first seeds of despair.
All things change, the older orders pass away.
Those behind them failed
the idea that all they had was theirs,
to keep, command.



For so it was, but the power
to hold what had been won
had passed away.
When challenge came
no longer was their strength enough
to defy the mongol horde,
the hosts of Ottoman.
A pile of skulls was all that stood,
in lonely tribute,
to a multitude of Islam
laid to rest.

The light where once Medina shined
was gutted, like a candle in the wind.
Decadence had fallen, like a plague,
upon the land where once a mighty empire stood.
A shadow of the past.
All that remained
of glories manifest
in days of old.

KEVIN HALL *



General

((B-ro))

OFF TRAILS 66 (Wheelwright?) After a somewhat dull for the 65th mailing of 447 pages, this one looked a bit sick, though post-con apathy may have had a hand somewhere.

@(@Gestalt@)

The really sickening thing is that, out of

twelve items (not counting OT) six managed to reach the staggering collective page count of 25, leaving the other six to save the day with 168 pages between them. Thank ghod for some of us. We know we're only repeating ourselves, but the chief fault of OMPA is it's tolerance of the crudsheets/letter substitute. These in no way enhance a mailing and only succeed in dragging down the overall standard. Are these people so pathetically eager for egoboo that they must spread their efforts over as many mailings as possible? In future nothing under eight equivalent-quarto pages will be reviewed in HELL...excepting OT, naturally.

I AM NOT A TURGID FUGGHEAD!

Let's see, 25 members on the current list means 6 associate members, which means £13.50. Hmm, OK if we can get it, it might enable us to be a little less penny-pinching. So would the sliding dues scheme. I don't think it would discourage minac, but it would help the finances a little. Can't we find some other APAs mug enough to trade mailings with us. These could be loaned out to members on a rota basis. This would not only have the advantage of giving people more zines for their money but would also let us see where we stood in respect to other APAs.

Of course we're not a turgid stew of fuggheads. We're just an ordinary group with a common interest. The fault lies in an outsider (sounds cliqueish) making the false assumption that because we've joined an organisation of fan editors we should automatically be uniformly good fan editors. Obviously there is a wide range of quality in

fanzines generally and any organisation such as ours can only mirror this range. It could be argued that an APA must be inferior to general fanzine fandom because of this fact coupled with one other. What APA could have zines like SFR, WARHOON, BEABOHEMIA, LOCUS etc.? So obviously we must start lower down the scale.

We have been very remiss in the past about completing a regular egoboo poll, but the semi-official one at the moment is most unwieldy. Too many categories. All we really need are:-

- (1) Best zine.
- (2) Best writer.
- (3) Best artist.
- (4) Best mailing comments.

.....and I only threw that last one in as it might encourage same. There is absolutely no need for a 'Best snide editorial comments written on a Tuesday whilst wearing ducky puce underpants' which is the way the trend is going at the moment. Although you could throw in a 'Best cover' category with some justification. So in order to mend our ways we vote the following:-

- (1) LURK
- (2) Thom Penman
- (3) Eddie Jones
- (4) Fred Hemmings.
- (5) ISEULT

BESTAVARAPUPETA CUMBUM 1 (Michel)

@@@Skel@@@

Well, Brian was pleased to see you. Stella Artois being tied in with Whitbread's in some peculiar fashion. Patrice Duvic's pencil is nowhere

near as talented as you seem to think, but the front cover illo was quietly intriguing. I tended to get rather lost about the head though, but faint ditto is an acceptable hazard these days. Perhaps it would have come out clearer with the extra contrast available from white paper. Why get yourself involved in so many apa's and then only have time to contribute such minac as you warned us about. How can you be so smugly proud of your inability to produce anything other than minac? Your English is certainly streets ahead of my French, only taken to 'O' level, and now 99.9% forgotten. Your atuo-APAography introduced several APA's I'd never heard of, but then that is hardly surprising. Your final paragraph is just the sort of thing which fills me with an overbearing sense of impotent outrage. It is so demonstrably UNFAIR. It seems that there should be something inherent in common law that would make such a practise unconstitutional. Glad to see you anyway. Anything that makes OMPA more international is OK by me.....even if it means bringing in a load of wogs.

(Uncle Gerb) This is one hell
(((B-ro))) of a way to staple
a zine, Gerald. But I like your page numbering system, seeing as you took the trouble to tell us all about it when you were over here. By the way I'll be sending you some photo's of 'The Scum Of The Earth At Skel's Place' when I get them back from whoever has them. You look ghastly.

ERG 39 (Terry)

@@@Skel@@@

For a guy who doesn't like NEW WORLDS you run quite a nice line in nicked artwork. I am not sure of the number, but they ran an appreciation of Escher's artwork in one issue. The piece from which your cover was taken was shown inside. The artwork

of his they used for the cover was really fantastic. The best cover I've ever seen on an SF mag. Just black and white, it reeked of SF, without really having anything to do with the subject. Gibberish???? Perhaps, but that illo affects me that way. I saw some of his artwork on a Scaffold LP sleeve in Woolworth's not so long back. Even I don't appreciate him enough to buy one of their LP's though.

Never having been to a Con I can't give any opinions on con programs other than stating that your suggestions sound like fun, even to a dyed-in-the-nylon non-participant like myself. Personally I reckon that films are only an ancillary item at a con. I'm damned if I'm going to trog all the way down to Bristol and then spend any amount of time watching films. If there is one I particularly wanted to see, but had missed previously, I might just manage to prise myself away from the bar. Likewise, though to a lesser and far more nit - picking



degree, the program items. Man is a social animal.....and I am more animal than most. The idea of a Campbell - Carnell - Derleth - Skelton memorial award (Give me time, just give me time) seems sound. In any small group there are always going to be more people worth honouring than there are reasons for dishing out prizes.

I've never actually given any thought to selecting only three favourite stories but it's a stone-cold certainty that they'd all be novels. Oh, I have read some fantastic novelettes and short stories, but a good big 'un will always beat a good little 'un. Another sure-thing is that two novels by Eric Frank Russell would be in the selection. 'Three To Conquer' and 'Next Of Kin'

Heard in piping tones whilst the grown-ups were talking about garlic sausage....."I like Dalek sausage".

are my favourite novels, purely because of the sheer pleasure I got from reading them. The third though could be any one from a list of, oh scores at the very least. Heinlein, Brunner, Simak and many others have all written novels that are among my favourites. Before I go on from Alan's piece, can you give me the recipe for....'Batter Vignette's'????

Regarding your comments on James Goddard's letter that kids still sneak in forbidden reading matter I get an impression that this is spoken from personal experience. If so, I'd be interested to know what it was you forbade. Everyone has their own solution to the Irish problem and they're all probably just as unworkable as yours, Jim's and mine.

THE FRENCH CONNECTION

(John Coombe)

((B-ro))

You're probably right about the soaring price of beef - panic buying. The supposed sugar shortage that did not come about some time ago was almost certainly caused by idiot housewives stockpiling the stuff at home. Woman down the street from us went whooping down to the supermarket at high

"It's my grommets".

speed and bought twenty pounds at once.....for a family of two. How daft can you get, for ghod's sake? Housewives are generally more rational than this, but at times they exhibit the brains of a flatworm.

F H T V 7 (John & Jane)

@@@Skel@@@

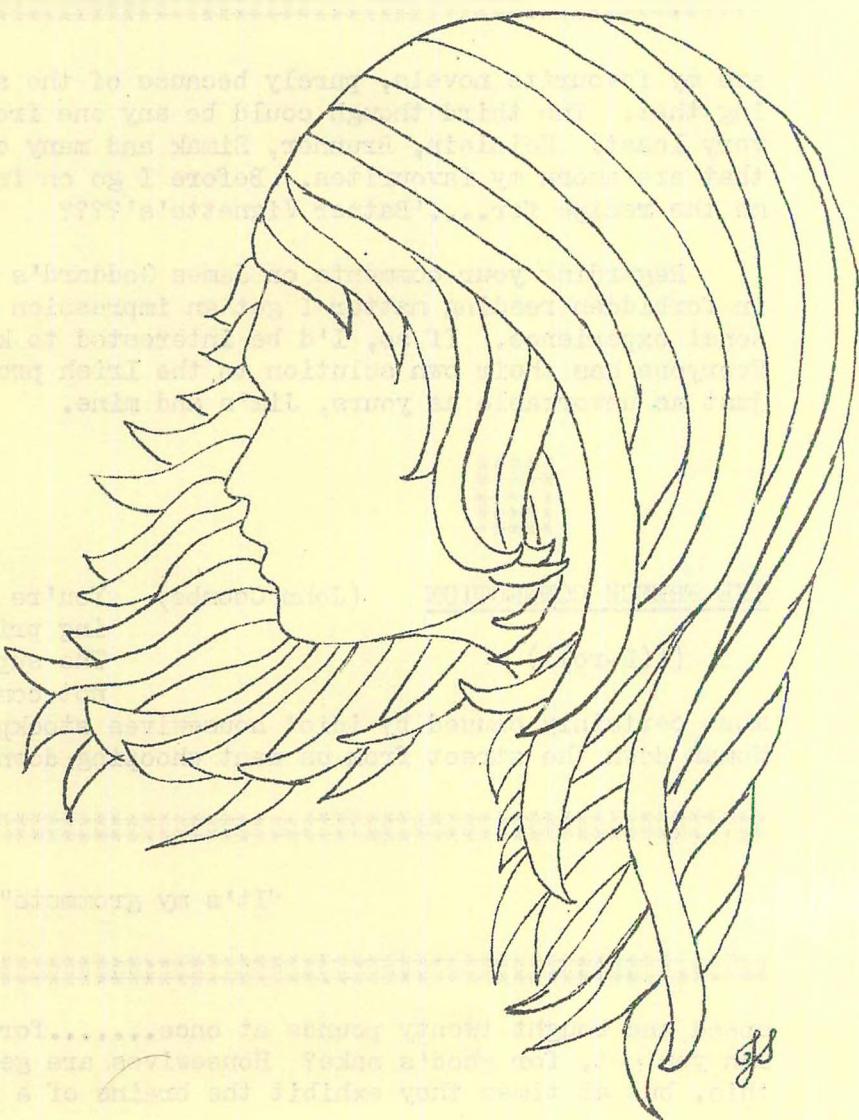
equal parts of cider and dry white wine. Brian brought this recipe back from Lisa's one day and it has proven a boon ever since. I add a spoonful of sugar out of sheer perversity and so's I can claim it as an original recipe. What the hell is a 'farm student'? Have they started handing out degrees in tatey picking? The howlers were good stuff this time. I've never gone much on them before, finding most of them old hat, but this batch had the stamp of originality (if that isn't a contradiction in terms). Like your review of 'Ul'.

The 'Vivid Glimpse Of Cornish History' was a bit too detailed. Too many shopping lists. Although, I particularly liked that entry:- Paid for a hundred of white salt to save my bacons. This is definately worth continuing, overall. Your artwork is still not good, but it is now far better presented. I

liked the effect you got from your restrained use of colour. It gave considerable impact to the front cover and even old Slan at the back was made acceptable.

VP 8 SUPPLEMENT.

(Fred) Your comments on (((B))) HELL 4... for my own part I've been pissed off with just about everything for the last few months, though this might have shown more in HELL's 5 & 6 than 4. I notice with gloom the fact that you aren't a Monty Python fan, else you'd have spotted the significance of LURK's front cover. Shame



on you. @@I didn't spot it either, and I don't believe Brian if he says he did.@@ Many thanks on your comments on page F, though by the time I realised what you were talking about I'd completely forgotten what I'd said to raise the point. Blame it on me gammy foot - it aches this afternoon.

OSTEEN UNIVERSITY REVIEW 6

(Sam)

@@@Skel@@@

Maybe you could help us work out a scale of fannish activity. The smallest possible measurement of fanac to be known as one 'Ul'.

How much energy would that

be at about 100 Uls to the Erg? I'd always thought that MAYDAY was derived from m'aidez, too. Thanks therefore, for the enlightenment. I'd like to see anybody run a war without conscription. Only the reckless and the stupid would volunteer to be shot at if they could avoid it and they don't do much for the quality of an army either. It's far easier to conscript everybody and then let those that can, wriggle out.

I'm not too keen on the insinuation that Brian and I are a couple of skunks. Even if it wasn't intentional it's significant that you chose to put our review there. The saga of Ompa recalls shades of Laumer's 'Tooth or Consequences'. Cricket is a bloody good game. How many other games have to be weighed up over a five day period? It's a unique game and is in no way comparable with ~~toppijietje~~ baseball. Baseball equates to soccer, as does American football. Off-hand I can't think of any game which is really comparable except perhaps such contests as The Tour de France and The Monte Carlo rally. Even these though do not involve direct competition. Contestants compete with each other by competing with a mutual antagonist, the course. Even so, it is admittedly not suited to radio commentary. Why the Beeb insists on giving it one is a mystery to me. Hope you settle down OK.

ARCANUM 0

(James Goddard)

@@@Skel@@@

Hi! Now how could an experienced fan-

ed like yourself back his pages up in-
correctly? Honestly, it's not the sort
of thing I would have expected from

an editor of your experience. Mind you, this whole (?) zine is not the sort of thing I'd have expected, either. Even in just two weeks or so you should have been able to manage a better presentation than this (Down Skel, down boy. The guy said he go sidetracked. Maybe he had to earn a crust or something like that). The contents read good though. I think I too would be surprised by first-hand proof that pro's are really human too. It's so easy to look upon them as some form of minor deity. The trip to Chester sounds like one hell of a journey. It seems to be the rule, not the exception, that whenever fen (and I suppose this includes pro's too) get together in a vehicle then the journey will at least be interesting.

LISEULT 2 (Lisa) Hopefully your castle is firmly fixed to the ground.
Why? Well....

((Brian)))

'neurotic' person who builds castles in the air.
'psychotic' person who lives in castles in the air.
'psychiatrist' person who collects rent from both.

Beware!!!!

I fail totally to understand your rather vicious attack on crosswords and the people who find enjoyment in them. It smacks of extreme narrowmindedness!! You disagree with the idea that it is better to do a crossword than to go out and duff up a few people. Remind me, next time I want to do a crossword, to come round to your place and set about you with an iron bar. Now then, which is better? You are probably right in saying that crosswords have "no influence whatsoever" on the behaviour of hooligans, murderers and the like. So what? Do activities that you consider to be 'intellectual' have any sort of influence? Chess, for example? The answer is obvious. You go on to heap scorn on the "magical respect we have for the printed word". Maybe you didn't mean it in exactly the way it reads, but coming from someone who writes fiction, poetry, and edits a zine, this is surely one of the most ridiculous sentences you have ever put on paper. Going further, can you tell me what mastery of the 'intellectual' game of chess is supposed to mean? What, apart from chess, has Bobby Fischer in life? Damn all - he admits it himself. Not that I've any particular axe to grind with regard to chess - I love the game, but what does it really prove? That you are some sort of marvellous person? I strongly suspect that the venom in your attack stems from the fact that you are (a) good at chess, or think you are, and (b) you are useless at crosswords. What really blows my mind is that you should spend so much time and effort producing over a page of what boils down to innane drivel. Apply symbolic logic to your effort and all you'd be left with is the flat statement "CROSSWORDS ARE SHIT", which is utterly meaningless on its own. Which leaves me just enough space to say that apart from Tom Penman's piece, which was witty and well up to his usual standard, I didn't like this issue at all. After wading through the morass of pages 2 and 2½ this is hardly surprising.

LURK (Mike and Pat)

Interesting point in your con rep about that idiot with the cine lights. If you were pointing your

((Brian)))

camera in the same direction as him, wouldn't there be enough light for you to dispense with your flash?

After all, cine films are notoriously slow, needing good lighting. You do have a meter on your camera, don't you? Whilst on this subject, I'm glad I found out who that guy was with the oh-so-expensive looking photo gear - Mervyn Barrett. I never did get a good look at his camera, but that flash gun.....wow!!! Mike, I just can't understand your intense dislike for putting things in boxes. There is obviously some deep inner significance in it, had I the time to search for it. Perhaps Pat can shed some light on the subject. At least boxes separate things that would otherwise seem rather cluttered.

-tered, don't you think? Unless someone comes up with the address of Gestetner in London, I suggest you nip down to the main post office in Derby and have a peek at the London directories - very useful things, I find. Then when you've found out, let me know. I'd do this myself but for a fucked-up foot that I happen to have. The cost of printing fanzines is awful, as Pete Weston illustrates. Ideally one should work for a firm who use masses of duplicating equipment, as Paul and I do. Thus we can get paper at 38p per ream, and ink for less than 50p per ream. Stencils? No, they're cheaper if you shop around. I'm not too sure that Pete is correct when he says that you can always get the use of a duper. Sure, Paul and I have the use of four such machines if absolutely necessary, but what about you two? Had you been unable to buy your own, what would you have done, there being no other fan that we know of in Derby? As for that chappie in Belgium who's compiling the Jazz Discography, all I can say is that he's a nut and I admire him for it.

VIEWPOINT 8 (Fred Hemmings) I quite liked Tony Rogers' piece, insofar as he looked at several oft-quoted solutions to the Irish problem, and rejected them as being unsatisfactory, which of course they are. I would disagree with one part of his "arm everyone" idea, namely that whilst ammunition could be airlifted in, why bother sending food? A little starvation would surely be good for a few more deaths. But as he says, it isn't a solution. There isn't any solution whilst the Catholics mistrust the Protestants and vice versa, and the IRA are there to stir up the shit. If the government in Dublin want a united Ireland in the physical sense, then for god's sake hand them Ulster on a plate and let them do what they want with it.

I'm in total agreement with John Brunner regarding neo's at cons. I recall my first at Worcester only too vividly. John says that a party with pro's and neo's is what is wanted. But surely what is wanted is a damn great batch of well known fan, with no more than a fair sprinkling of pro's. Otherwise one gets a picture of the neo returning home, with the following conversation :-

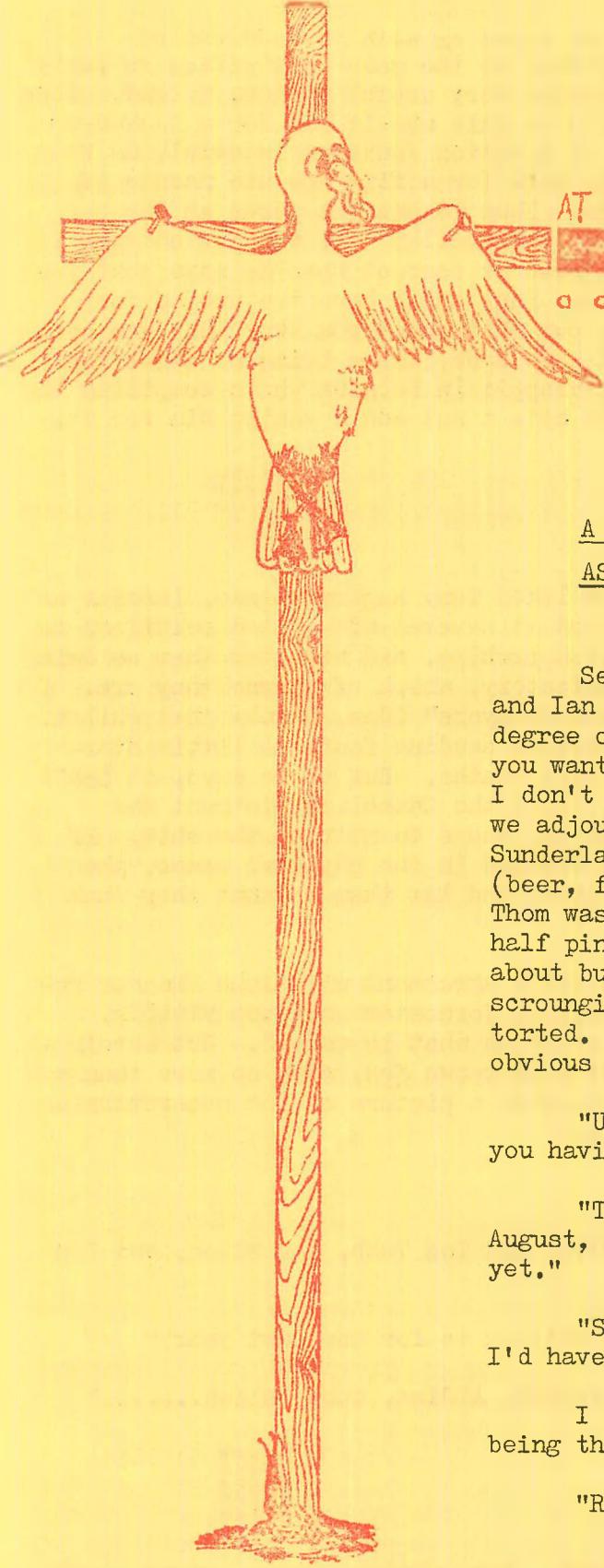
"Who did you meet?"

"Well, there was John Brunner, and Aldiss, and Ted Tubb, and Blish, and Don Wollheim, and.....and....."

"But what about the people you've been writing to for the last year?"

"Oh, I didn't meet any of them, just Brunner, Aldiss, Tubb, Blish....."

SPACEFREAK (David) Little for me here. Not uninteresting, but no hooks latch on to.
@@Skel@@@



AT THE SIGN OF THE CRUCIFIED GANNET

a column by Ian Williams.

A PISS-UP AT PENMAN'S CONSIDERED AS A DOWNHILL GANNET GATHERING

Several Sundays ago, I had Thom Penman and Ian Maule for tea, and there is a certain degree of truth there. (Tough and salty if you want the sordid details). After tea, as I don't keep a stock of booze in the house, we adjourned to a pub in the centre of Sunderland. Mauler was drinking cheap scotch (beer, for the uninitiated), I was on Tartan, Thom was debating whether he could afford a half pint. I made some sarcastic comment about buying five packets of cigars and then scrapping a drink. "Priorities!" Thom retorted. Mauler daintily sipped his pint with obvious lack of enthusiasm.

"Uh, Goblin," said Thom, "uh, when are you having your birthday party?"

"Tentatively the second weekend in August, but I haven't told/asked my Grandma yet."

"Shit, man, if I wanted to have a party, I'd have one."

I muttered something about his place being the only Gannethome I hadn't been in.

"Right, I'll have one next Saturday."

"Lucky you, angel," I said, raising one eyebrow. (That always makes him mad as it reacts with one of his complexes.) I returned to my ale and promptly forgot all about it.

Two days later at the Gannet, Thom ambled in clutching his crash helmet, making him seem to resemble a ghost with a spare head under his arm.

"Uh, hi there. Where is everybody?"

"I'm here," I smirked. "What more do you want." Mauler, who was coming from the bar, giggled. Thom told me to piss off and said the party was on Saturday and to bring a couple of bottles. "Oh," I gaped, a little taken aback.

The others came in shortly afterwards and Thom gave them maps on how to get to his place. I arranged to get a lift from Jim Marshall as South Shields is several miles from Sunderland.

Things seemed fine. A Gannetgetogether in more relaxed surroundings than a pub implied a lot of fun and games and a chance to get away from the rather fragmented conversations we normally end up having. Then Thom turned up at my place late Friday night to inform me that Jim and Ian Penman wouldn't be going as they now intended to indulge in the highly unfannish activity of taking two women to Newcastle Town Moor Fair instead. Which meant no transport for me there or back.

"Well," I said, "It's hardly going to be worth me bothering to come. I probably wouldn't be able to get to your place 'till eight and would have to catch the bus back home about ten and I have been having bad hay fever lately and I'm not feeling all that well." Thom paled. I sneezed loudly to soften the blow.

"But you can't do that! I'm counting on you to get things going there." He fell at my feet (not such a long way to fall) and clutched my ankles sobbing. "Without you the party will be a flop. I'm no (choke) good at being a host. It'll end up with Dave Douglas sitting saying nowt, Harry and Irene whispering sweet nothings, Mauler giggling to himself, Ritchie and I doing nothing but rectie our own private jokes to each other. It'll be hell. You're the centre of attraction. (Whine.) We need you." He began kissing my toes and banging his head against the floor. From my god-like altitude, I smiled benignly.

"Well.....I suppose I might. Just to get things going and then leave

"I like reading old fanzines.....NOBODY MENTIONS LISA CONESA!!!!!

when things are starting to liven up." I put on a martyred expression.

"Thank you, thank you," he grovelled.

"But my hay fever has been bad." I sneezed again, Thom shed a tear and left.

The idea of traipsing all the way to South Shields and back, and leaving a party at ten o' clock pissed me off no end so I had no intention of going. The following day I got back from work just after five to find out I'd just missed Thom who'd delivered the information that I and the rest could kip at his place that night. Well, I said to myself packing my sleeping bag, that makes a difference, and got off the bus in South Shields at seven. I walked up a wide pleasant road in bright sunlight, birds chirruped nicely. I felt relaxed and at ease. Then I turned a corner and thought myself to be in a scene from Garner's ELIDOR. The middle class area had given way to derelict slums. Empty, half torn down houses with broken doors surrounded me. Dirty looking children threw half bricks at any windows that still had panes of glass. Grass grew thickly between the cobblestones. Winterbottom Street on a sunny Summers Saturday evening. I crossed myself for effect and knocked on Thom's door. Thom opened it, beaming, and ushered me inside. His house was like an oasis, it was extremely pleasant with comfortable chairs and settees, Captain Beefheart Lps. lay obtrusively on the floor. Ritchie Smith was standing gargling from a bottle of cider. I asked where the booze was.

"There isn't any," said Thom. I aimed a savage kick at his left knee. He moved deftly to one side adding "...yet." My rage subsided and I started dragging him outside informing him we were going to the beer shop. The three of us went round the corner and he bought a crate and a half. I thought that was a little skimpy so I bought a couple of pints more.

I slumped into the settee, opened a pint and poured it into the glass Thom had provided. We got talking about stories the pair of them had written and I said I'd like to see them sometime. I never have. A little later, Mauler and Dave appeared bearing a half bottle of vodka. Mauler said he wouldn't be drinking much. When I naturally asked him why, he said:

"Well, I've had to take a couple of very strong tablets for my headache," and he sat down.

"Bet you're on acid," I said jokingly. I poured another pint for myself.

Thom put on a Beefheart Lp, loud, which is a good way of ending conversation. I listened to it and began laughing. Thom asked why.

"It's a parody of Dylan. A series of outrageous lines totally unconnected. Beautiful." And laughed some more.

"Goblin, you're a fucking idiot! It's supposed to be sad! Jesus! at times you're a stupid..." He began getting really worked up and as Thom is, next to Pickersgill, fandom's aggro king, I slipped my hand down the side of the settee to clutch tightly a bottle of brown. But he subsided into mutterings. After that, the conversation got a little nasty, at one point nearly



turning into a let's-all-shit-on-Goblin. Then I saw Harry and Irene coming up the steps. I breathed a sigh of relief and rushed to the door and let them in. I gaped at Irene. She'd had her hair cut.

"Whattayadonetayahair?" I shrieked. "Where's the lovely longhaired lass gone that I know and love?"

"Less of the 'love', Williams." said Harry menacingly.

"Why, lightofmylife? How could you do this to me?"

"I've only had two inches taken off." Irene said, deflating me.

"Never mind," I said, "you still look beautiful to me and always will." Gallant to the last. Harry glowered as if my last had come.

"Cobblers!" yelled Maule, appropriately.

Harry and Irene sat on the settee next to me. Irene in the middle. Nice. I gave her a cuddle with my right arm, pacifying Harry by thrusting a bottle of brown ale at him with my left. By this time, Maule had decided to bugger his pills and was knocking back the vodka.

"It's Gannetfandom's head!" I shouted. "Pill-popping Maule, the acid head kid." Maule belched and giggled. With Harry and Irene to back me up I launched into a series of insults, extracting every last drop of urine from Thom and Mauler. Ritchie pointed out, rather obviously, how the balance of power had shifted, with the arrival of Harry and Irene, from Thom to me. I smirked and clenched my fist in a gesture of power.

Somehow this had taken us up 'til ten o'clock. I was about four pints into the Newcastle Brown and decided it was

time to have intimate relations with the toilet. I got to the landing where it was situated and met Thom coming out. We commenced talking and ended up doing character assassinations of everybody downstairs. We were just well into a nasty butchery of Maule's good name, when up the stairs he staggered.

"Can't wait any longer," I said and fell into the loo. Outside I heard faint whisperings of Thom and Ian. That seemed to set the pattern for what I can remember of the rest of the evening, which is admittedly little and vague at best. It seemed to be a fluctuating series of caucuses of people outside the loo discussing who was left downstairs in the lounge. I remember talking to Harry for about twenty minutes when Irene came up and joined us, that lasted a short while when someone else came up the stairs and we all moved one square or went back to go. At another point in the party, everyone was on the landing except Harry and Irene, all talking futilely about what those two would be doing now they were alone. Then Harry came up and we all moved again. At times it was like a tactical battle trying to arrange it so that you were on the landing with someone you wanted to talk whilst the object of the conversation was downstairs. Still later, I remember comforting Irene who was upset about something Harry came out of the loo with a some-people-you-can't-trust-for-a-minute-but-you-two-I-can-smirk.

About one o' clock, I realised that if I didn't go to sleep voluntarily, I'd pass out anyway.

"I'm pissed an' I wanna got' sleep!" I bawled above the noise of a Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young record.

"You wha'?" mumbled Irene who had been asleep sprawled across Harry's knee.

"Yuh, I wouldn' mine goin' sleep eivuh," muttered Dave, to be echoed by nodding heads.

I got out my sleeping bank and crawled, fully clothed, into it. Maule and Thom were still on their feet making noises.

"Shurrup and turn the fucking light off," I dribbled inaudibly passing out until next.....

...morning when out of the corner of one eye, I saw, closeup the heel of a boot. I tried to bite it but missed and got a mouthful of carpet instead. I found my glasses and looked at who the heel belonged to. It was Maule doing a reversal of the first night of this year's con, at which I was last to bed and first to wake up.

"A watched Robinson never comes."

"Pissartist," I mumbled. "What's the time?" I was too lazy to look at my own wrist. Maule told me it was half eight. "Bloody ridiculous time." That I'm normally up before then every day of the week, I conveniently forgot. "Sod off and go back to sleep." It then occurred to me, I'd better get up myself as the sun was shining in bright and my bladder was calling for release. I went upstairs for morning ablutions and felt much better for them and bounced back downstairs bumping into a pale looking Penman.

"Uh, hi there. Want some coffee?" He shambled into the kitchen and put the kettle on.

By the time the coffee was ready we'd all more or less got ourselves together in the lounge. I was finishing off the previous night's sandwiches which I hadn't touched then and was generally making a noisy nuisance of myself, gabbling away idiotically to Mauler and Irene, Harry was trying to dig himself into the settee to sleep/die. I was feeling pretty good and rather inconsiderately amused at the greyness of some of the others. After we'd had the coffee, Mauler realised there was still some vodka left so he poured it into a glass, after a little prompting from me. He sipped it and.....

"Urghh! Can't finish this. Do you want it, Ian?" My eyes lit up and I tried not to make a facetious reply, instead taking the glass, adding a drop of lime to it. I drank it slowly relishing every drop. A Bonzo Dog LP was on and I started singing along to it. Harry raised a bloodshot eye from Irene's lap.

"Jesus," he said and his head sank back.

"Right on," I cried, sarcastically. "Let's all go to Church!"

"Only if we can crucify you," said Harry as he fell off the settee. I laughed, but when Thom brought out a hammer and some nails.....

Well, come up and see my scars, sometime.

This is HELL 6, the fanzine of alternatives (either read it or throw it away) and has been published as a philanthropic act to improve the standard of the 67th. CMPA mailing. HELL is published by those great stalwarts of Britfandom :- Brian Robinson (of 9 Linwood Grove, Manchester, M12 4QH) and Paul Skelton (who's address wont quite fit in this limited space).



THE
STORY
O F
THE
JAZZ
GUITAR



PART THREE



D J A N G O L O G Y

At the time of which I am writing - the mid-thirties - jazz was and had been exclusively American in its development. Due to sheer geographical distances involved, there was no influence from Europe or elsewhere. There were of course many talented Europeans playing jazz at this time, but they were followers of the trends set by America, rather than originators of anything new. It is possibly not surprising, therefore, that the first non-American to have a real influence on the development of jazz should come from a completely different cultural background.

He was born Jean Baptiste Reinhardt in Liverchies, Belgium, on 23rd January, 1910, the son of French-speaking gypsies. The identity of his and his younger brother Joseph's father is not known for certain, but his mother was a member of a troupe of travelling entertainers. The fatherless family spent the war years in Italy and Algiers, eventually returning to Paris when Django, as he was soon to be nicknamed, was eight years old, and he spent the next fifteen years or so in one of the many gypsy 'villages' on the outskirts of the town. His childhood was that of a typical Romany - gang-fights, stealing pears from the Cure and coal from lorries, which was then sold and the money spent in the cinema or gambled away. Other popular pastimes were billiards - at which he became very expert - and playing dice with his elders. His education was sadly neglected; it is said that he went to school for only a single day! In fact, he never really learnt to write.

At an early age he showed the gypsy's characteristic love of music, and at the age of twelve was given his first instrument, a six stringed 'banjo-guitar'. He learned to play it simply by watching and copying his elders, and he learned very quickly, soon far surpassing his teachers in ability. His Uncle, like many gypsies, used to earn money by playing in cabaret-spots and night-clubs in the city, and eventually Django was allowed to go along too. He was not yet thirteen when he began his musical career on banjo, accompanying the accordionist Guerino in various dance-halls and night-clubs in Paris. Every night his Mother collected him and his earnings, to prevent him gambling them away; throughout his life he was to lose vast sums in this way.

He spent much of his time travelling around Paris listening to other musicians, especially to the new music from across the Atlantic. He worked with various local groups and soon became well-known in the city, making his first known records in 1928 as a banjo accompanist. The previous year his first marriage had taken place; that is to say, he and his fiancee had disappeared for several days, hence, according to gypsy tradition, the wedding was an established fact.

It was at this time that an incident occurred which was to affect his whole life: Django's wife used to earn money by making celluloid flowers to sell as grave decorations. On returning to the caravan late one evening after playing in the city, Django found it full of the day's production. He was getting undressed ready for bed when he thought he heard a mouse moving amongst the flowers. Taking the candle, he went to investigate, but the candle was nearly burnt down, and the burning remnants of the wick fell out amongst the decorations, which immediately burst into flames. He grabbed a blanket to protect himself, and the couple managed to escape from the caravan, which was burnt to the ground. His wife's hair was badly burned, but in much worse condition was Django's left hand, with which he had held the blanket. It was very badly inflamed and twisted, and in addition his right side was burned

from knee to waist. The surgeon at the hospital wanted to amputate the leg, but Django, though in great pain, would not allow it. He was moved to a nursing home, where his leg soon improved, but it was almost two years before his hand healed. Even so, it remained deformed; the third and fourth fingers were permanently doubled over and bent back, almost useless for guitar-playing except for certain chords. How could he ever play again with a handicap like that? As it turned out, by means of constant practice he was able to develop a unique style of playing which sounded better than ever.

During Django's absence from the scene the musical life of Paris had changed; jazz was now heard much more, and Django was fascinated by it. At about this time he left his first wife and began to live with a childhood friend, his cousin Naguine. He was now travelling around the country, and whilst in Toulon he and his brother Joseph first heard 'real' American jazz - Joe Venuti, Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong - via the record collection of Emil Savitry, an important figure in early French jazz. Django joined the band of bassist Louis Vola, but failed to turn up for work as often as not, due to the fact that wherever he and his wife settled soon became a rendezvous for all the gypsies in the neighbourhood. Typically, Django needed little encouragement to stay at home with his 'cousins' rather than turn up for work.

In 1932 he returned to Paris, and made some records as accompanist to the famous French singer Jean Sablon. A little earlier he had first encountered and worked with the violinist Stephane Grappelli, who took Django in hand, more or less acting as 'nursemaid'; he taught him to sign his name, instructed him in the use of nailbrush and scissors, and showed him how to knot his tie.

In December of that year the Hot Club of France was formed by a few jazz enthusiasts, with the aim of encouraging the development of jazz in France by organising concerts with the best French and American musicians available. Emil Savitry arranged for Django to be featured in these concerts throughout 1933. The Hot Club's dream was of forming an all-French band, and this happened, quite by accident, as Stephane Grappelli relates:

"Django used to get behind a screen; you know what he was like. He'd retreat into a corner and leave the communication of his thoughts to his guitar, I suppose. Sometimes he would pluck the strings as the fancy took him. At others he would lean on his instrument and stare thoughtfully into space through an open window with that melancholic look of his. I still know him very well. Sometimes I'd sit down at his side to listen to him. One day, to amuse myself, I picked up my violin and started to play with him. He asked me to play a little riff that he'd just put together. The effect pleased both of us and we went on to play some more tunes. The next day we waited impatiently for the intermission so that we could go and play backstage again. It was 'Dinah' we played, I remember quite clearly. We went on and on! Maybe we played for half an hour or so. Roger Chaput, an artist if ever there was one, soon hastened to join us (on rhythm guitar), followed by friend Vola, inquisitive as a caretaker, as always, who had gone off to fetch his bass."

The quartet became a quintet when brother Joseph joined at Django's insistence on having two rhythm guitars to back his solos, and thus the quintet of the Hot Club of France was born, though it was not so called for some time.

It was a completely new idea, an all-string group with no drums, brass or reeds. The original quintet stayed together until the outbreak of the war in 1939, and proved very popular, especially in England. At first, however, no record company was willing to record them! Eventually the Odeon company offered an audition, but the group's two sides were rejected as being 'far too modern'! Undaunted, the group, now under i's official title, made its first commercial records for Ultraphone, on the condition that the musicians' fees should be low enough to permit a profit to be made in the unlikely event of as many as 500 discs being sold! With his pay from this first session, Django was able to realise one of his ambitions - to own a huge white Stetson, as worn in the American cowboy movies!

Happily, the records were enthusiastically received by the critics, who were usually hostile to the 'cacophony' known as jazz. Public acclaim was slower in coming, but by 1935 their records were becoming well-known. In the same year the group recorded the first of Django's many compositions - 'Djangology'. This was a more settled period in Django's life, partly because of his enthusiasm for the new music, partly because he was, of necessity, working more regularly. Jazz was still not very popular, however, and the quintet itself was brought together only for concerts and recording dates. In January 1936 the quintet toured Spain, getting a marvellous reception and enthusiastic reviews. Despite this, however, things did not go too well: there was tension between the members of the group, especially between Django and Stephane, whose personalities were very different. In fact, were it not for their amazing musical rapport, they would never have stayed together as long as they did.

1937 was a good year for the group; there was regular work, and many records were made. Django recorded and took part in jam-sessions with such visiting American musicians as Coleman Hawkins, Benny Carter, Bill Coleman, Dicky Wells and violinist Eddie South. In the same year the quintet toured Holland and Belgium, and in January 1938 they appeared and recorded in England for the first time, returning in July for a full tour, during which they shared top billing at the London Palladium with Tom Mix and his horse!

Compelled to tour Europe through lack of work in France, the quintet visited England again in August 1939, an England under the shadow of approaching war. After only two weeks of their scheduled tour, war was declared and Django fled back to France, leaving Grappelli in England where he stayed throughout the war. In 1940 Django formed the second Hot Club Quintet, with Hubert Ross taing on clarinet replacing Grappelli, and a drummer replacing one of the rhythm guitars. With this group he made the first of many recordings of his most famous composition, 'Nuages', or 'The Bluest Kind of Blues' as it was known in England. In the absence of American jazzmen the new quintet, though inferior to the old group, enjoyed phenomenal success, as did the other better-known French musicians, and for the next year or so, Django worked almost continuously. Soon after, however, the strain of the occupation began to tell, and enthusiasm for the music diminished. Once again it became necessary to tour the provinces and neighbouring countries, where the group's popularity was still high. At this time Django was earning too much for his own good, and he became unbearable as his interest in playing for the public began to wane.

In July, 1943 he was officially ~~married~~ to ~~to~~ ~~in~~ Noguine, with whom he had been living for the past fifteen years or so. Paris was now being bombed regularly, and the Nazis were becoming insistent that he tour Germany, a thing which he had so far managed to avoid. It was for these reasons that he made an unsuccessful attempt to escape to Switzerland.

In the spring of 1944 his second son, Babik, was born. (He had also had a son by his first wife.) Despite his attitude to his public, Django was more popular than ever, but at about this time the government banned dancing in the clubs. As a result, Django spent the rest of the war playing with and for servicemen from military camps along the Cote d'Azur. He had to play almost for nothing, and seemed better for it.

Early in 1946, Django was reunited with Grappelli in London, and the string quintet was re-formed, with an English rhythm section, for a recording session. The reunion was brief, however, as Django was taken ill and underwent an operation, after which he returned to Paris with his family. At this time he was unable to find any musical outlets, and as a result an interest in painting developed. An American tour with Duke Ellington's Orchestra, which had been proposed for some time, finally took place in November. It was not an unqualified success. The Americans didn't take kindly to Django's erratic behaviour, and for his part Django was very disillusioned about Americans and things American. Though the public received his music well, he was unhappy and homesick, and returned to Paris in February, 1947.

It was at about this time that Django began to use an amplified guitar for live appearances and some recording dates, and naturally there were problems, both in regard to the equipment itself and also to the adaptation of his style to the new instrument. Whilst in America he had undoubtedly heard at first hand the new style of jazz known as bebop, and it took him some time to come to terms with it. Probably this is why he decided to 'go electric' - certainly the tone of the unamplified instrument wasn't suitable.

He joined forces both with Grappelli and Rostaing again, but never for any length of time. There was little doubt that his enthusiasm for music was fading, along with that of the general public, and though he could still play as well as ever when inspired to do so, the moments of inspiration were few. He preferred to spend his time painting, or with his son Babik, of whom he was very fond and proud. He still recorded, but the spate which had continued almost unchecked since 1937 was diminishing, with commercial recordings being largely replaced by private sessions, or recordings for RTF, the French broadcasting service. In 1947 he made a long and largely uninspired series of the latter; from 1948 we have a short studio with Grappelli, plus a recording of a concert in Brussels, made on Django's own wire-recorder; in 1949 and 1950 he made no commercial recordings at all, but an Italian jazz enthusiast recorded him privately and at length in Rome, once with Grappelli and once with alto-saxophonist Andre Ekyan; 1951 and 1952 produced one studio session each, eight titles in all.

He took to wandering about in his caravan again, and drifted further away from his musician friends. Little was heard of him until February, 1951, when he made a comeback at the Club Saint-Germain. Here he found himself

among much younger men who may have lacked his experience, but who were vitally concerned with the new trends in jazz. They looked on him as a patriarch, which angered him and spurred him to accept the challenge to play in a new style, to try to catch up with a music which had overtaken him during his years largely away from the scene. He was a changed man; he gave up his caravan again and was more punctual than ever before, happy to be before an appreciative audience once more.

Django now lived in a house at Samois, near Fontainebleu, and was content to spend much of his time fishing, venturing away only for an occasional broadcast, concert or recording session. He seemed to have 'grown up' at last. He'd given up gambling and seemed more serious. He said that nobody understood him any more, but that he didn't mind and was content to live a quiet life away from it all. In January 1953 he met Norman Granz, promoter of the famous 'Jazz at the Philharmonic' concerts, and recorded an LP for him, which was intended to serve as an introduction to a planned tour of the U.S.A., Japan and Europe, but it was not to be. During a short tour of Switzerland he complained of severe headaches, and of not being able to close his fingers properly. Naturally he refused to seek medical treatment, which would probably have been too late anyway.

Charles Delaunay recounts Django's last hours like this: "Back in Samois - it was May 15, 1953 - Django was obviously delighted to see the banks of the Seine, his friends and all his fishing gear once again. After he'd spent an hour or two down by the river, he made his way along to the cafe and was sitting there gaily chatting away with the regulars when he was seized with a stroke. They took him back to the house. It was a Saturday and they had a good deal of trouble finding a doctor. When one eventually arrived it was already too late. Django, who always had a sarcastic side to his character, looked him ironically in the eye.

"You've come now, have you?" he said.

Those, it seems, were his last words.

He was moved at once to the hospital at Fontainebleu, but died during the night. He was only forty-three years old."



In the above I have dealt largely with Django the man and have said little about Django the musician. This is partly because I feel that music as great as his is better listened to than described in words, partly because I don't have the ability, even assuming I did have the inclination. However, to complete the picture, perhaps a few general comments are in order. He never learned to read music; all his compositions were either 'head' arrangements or were written down by friends, from Django's own playing. To compensate for this he was gifted with a phenomenal 'ear', even more so than Eddie Lang (see part one). Play or sing any tune, and within a bar or two Django would be with you, accompanying faultlessly, soloing brilliantly, urging on a flagging soloist by 'comping' - suggesting ideas via his own accompaniment. His accompaniments were as inventive as his solos, and without him the quintet's stodgy four-in-a-bar rhythm would soon have palled. There is little one can say about his improvisation without going into technicalities of interest only to guitarists; suffice it to say that it could be dexterous, swinging, amusing or sentimental by turns, but always straight from the soul, straight to the heart.

I said at the beginning that Django was the first non-American to have any influence on jazz. That is true enough, but that influence was largely confined to his fellow-guitarists, some of whom I shall discuss in part four. Among other musicians his influence was minimal because his style and background were too different, at a time when jazz was still developing within itself at a whit-hot pace. Had he lived to visit America again, or to witness the loss of momentum in jazz in the sixties.....but that is just idle speculation.

For those wishing to know more of this unique character, they can do no better than to read Charles Delaunay's biography of Django, from which the quotes herein are taken, published by Cassell's and the Jazz Book Club in 1963. Written by an admirer and close friend of Django, it portrays the man skilfully and with great affection, and includes a wealth of anecdotal material outside the scope of the present work.

Django's career has been very well documented on records, and most of the seven hundred or so titles he recorded have been reissued on microgroove at some time or other. Obviously only the fanatical admirer and collector (such as myself) would wish to have them all; what follows is a representative selection in chronological order where possible. Nearly all are currently available.

1. Quintet of the Hot Club of France - CBS Realm 52213
Twelve of the quintet's first recordings from 1934 - 35.
2. Swing '35 - '39 - Eclipse ECM 2051
Fourteen Decca items covering almost the whole timespan of the first quintet.
3. D.R., S.G. & the Q.H.C.F. - Ace of Clubs ACL 1158
Fourteen pre and post-war items, all recorded in London on the occasions of the quintet's English visits. Far superior to the companion issue, ACL 1189.

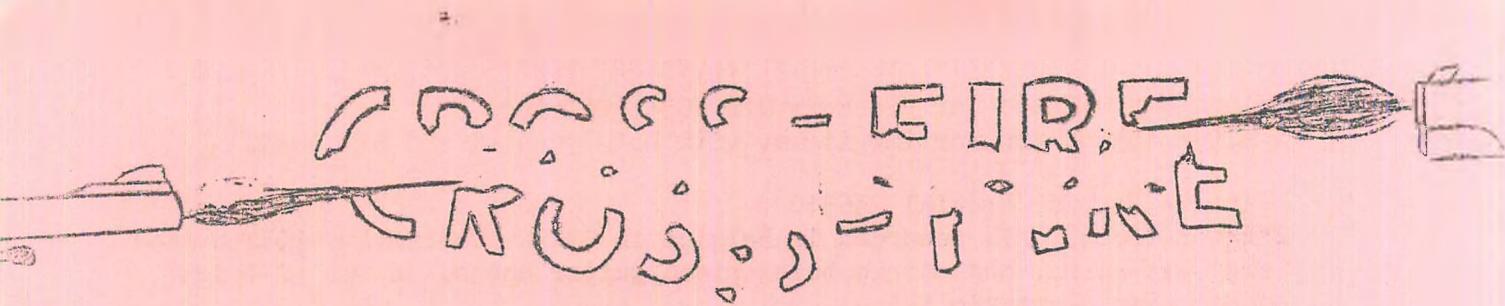
4. Djangology - Music for Pleasure MFP 1054 (Deleted)
A mixed bag of ten wartime items, with both quintet and big band.
5. Django - Polydor Special 236510
Sixteen tracks, all recorded in Belgium in 1942. Twelve are with a good large orchestra, the others being piano/guitar duets, on two of which Django also plays violin!
6. Django Reinhardt Vol. 1 - Xtra 1092.
7. Django Reinhardt Vol. 2 - Xtra 1117
8. Gypsy of Jazz - Ember CJS 931
All the above contain 1947 material and are equally recommended. The various sessions are regrettably split and shuffled, but all three records contain some of his best early electric work.
9. Django in Rome 1949-50 - Parlophone PCS 7146
Previously unissued material from the privat Rome sessions. There have been several similar compilations, some better than this, but this one has the virtue of covering both sessions, and is the only British issue currently available.
10. - 28. In addition to the above, the French record company Pathe have recently issued a gigantic 19-LP set, all available separately, entitled "Djangologie". This covers nearly all the titles made for this company and spans the years 1928-50. The titles are arranged in chronological order and replace the somewhat haphazard compilations on French HMV. Unfortunately the informative sleeve notes of the latter are not preserved in the reissues.

AFTERWORD On re-reading all I have written here, it is apparent that I have let my enthusiasm carry me away, and I have written at greater length than I originally intended. I hope I have not bored you, but if I have, please be so kind as to direct your criticism at me and not the editors of this magazine! I hope also that something of this man's unique and fascinating character has come across to you, even if you had never heard of Django Reinhardt before today.

Many have debated his worth and validity as a jazz guitarist; they have said that he could not play the blues, but the blues is the preserve of the American negro, so what is surprising about that? What he could and did contribute to jazz was from his own musical heritage, not someone else's.

But this is all irrelevant. The essence of music and of all art-forms, is communication, and here Django was truly the genius he has often been claimed to be. The Brazillian guitarist Luiz Henrique has said "any other instrument you pound, you blow into, you stroke, but a guitar you embrace". And very few have been able to embrace a guitar to such good effect as Django. I know of very few pieces of music so emotionally powerful as to make me lose all awareness of my surroundings, all awareness of everything but the music, but I can say this: that Django has created most of them.

To be concluded.



((Brian))

@@@Skel@@@

MISS LISA I. CONESA 54 Manley Road, Whalley Range, Manchester M16 8HP.

And now for something you've doubtless been waiting for, all breathless and impatient...! A thought or three on HELL-5. From cover to cover. Cover is nice. I like the clear layout on the contents page, but your addresses are still missing; why don't you make it easier to find them and put them in the normal place i.e. on the contents page?

((.....and become a run-of-the-mill zine with everything in the same place every time! "Hunt the Colophon" is so much more fun, don't you agree? No? Ah well, there's no pleasing some people.))

Some of the interior illustrations are superb. The lacy monolith thing on p.7 for a start. It's perfect; thoughts of ivory lace, strange alien forms and landscapes one visualises around it... it really is beautiful!! I wish I had it for Thom's Rite of Spring, and there's nothing more complimentary I could say about it.

((?))

Over the page the illo for ONE YEAR OF MADNESS saved the sterile words that went with it. Hmm, did I say 'saved'? No, it had nothing to do with the article, cos the illo prepared the reader for some real happenings.... then one got to read it and...well...why bother? The illo was certainly inspired. Your creatures on p.11, as all your creatures this issue, are a joy to behold. The group sitting round the table on p.11 live! I can hear them talking, telling tales of exotic worlds and strange cultures. The broody owl on the right is almost blinking its eyes, and the thin chap holding the magazine I could almost put a name to (it's only my sweet nature that stops me).

((Before you start naming names, have you considered which of the entities there is supposed to be you? Think on it.)))

Looking at them again I'm almost inspired to write my own tale around that illo. One of your best, Paul, but I could say that about almost all your work in this ish. Then here comes another of your beautiful creatures on p.21. Has he climbed the ivory tower and pinched the jewel off it?

((No, SHE hasn't. Do look at it again. But the possible connection between this alien unmarried mother and the top end of the phallic symbol on page 7 is rather interesting. Skelton refused to comment on this.))

Cy's girl in another dimension on p.22 is better (((i.e. than his other piece in H-5))) whilst Paul's arrow on p.23 just is. I also like the ostrich-type creature. Joan's isn't it? Definitely influenced by Paul I would say. Her eye-mobile is far better, tho.... very decorative indeed. And last but not least, the angry knight sitting on the back cover looks as though he's about to fall over into the heap of ashes.....meaningful?

((Give me strength! Can I recommend to you a good occulist??))

I agree with Brian about the OMPA Combozine. If it's all going to be as cruddish as the last lot, why bother at all. I doubt that saying so will get any more response, tho, because if fan eds have something worth reading they would be more than likely to stick it in their own productions, and who could blame them. The whole idea was doomed to die, and may it rest in peace as far as I'm concerned. I'm quite happy with the individual zines. I enjoyed Mike's guitar story; it's informative and obviously he's enthusiastic about the subject. It shows, if not infects. Imogene Eustace Nogg must quite obviously live in a different dimension than I, cos this guide of hers could only lead me into an asylum...and I ain't gonna go there ...YET.



((Yet? Thought you were there already - it being the prime qualification for a fan-ed.))

Paul's Global trottings remind me of the time I was in London Town. I too had thoughts of going to see what's what therein, but I didn't

even know it was off Fleet Street at the time; looked in the phone book only to see a few hundred thousand Globes, and gave up the idea. Like you I threaten "ah, but next time!" Isn't it always so.... Which inspires me to a suggestion. Why don't we all make an attempt and organise something like this, and I really mean organise!

((Humour, yet. Was that aimed at Pete Presford or y'sen??))

By train, with Cas (naturally) and Brian with whoever he's in orbit with at the moment.....

((?))

.....and anyone else who might think this a good idea. What think you lot?

((It poses problems. Like Cas and Skel and Pete and I and possible others all getting that particular day....no, two days off work.))

The zine on the whole was, as usual, one of the best in the mailing, and outstanding artistically.

((With all this lavish praise being heaped on his frail shoulders, I can see why Skel threw this letter at me in such a bemused state. Now, though, he criticises my comments as being nasty. Or summat like that. This is evidently not my week.))

ROB (Heart-On-Sleeve) HOLDSTOCK 15 Highbury Grange, London N5.

Pity about the cover of HELL-5 - following that neat, original, characterful and beautiful cover of HELL-4. It's....fannish. Best things in HELL-5.....layout of contents page...

@@@Gee thanks.....@@@

.....(mind you, you take a great deal of care with the layout of the whole zine and I find this very commendable. Pity it's just an ordinary fanzine.), Skel illustration on page 8, very enjoyable, and the Guide To HELL Reading. I like it. I don't like these hack pop-music articles.

@@@We haven't run any POP-music articles!@@@

Prefer Melody Maker and Rolling Stone. Anyway, Andy Northern covers this

aspect of Fantasy in Arc, and covers it very well. Con report and Globe thing mildly amusing, certainly very palatable. What? No picture of me? Finishes short LoC with disgusted expression on face.

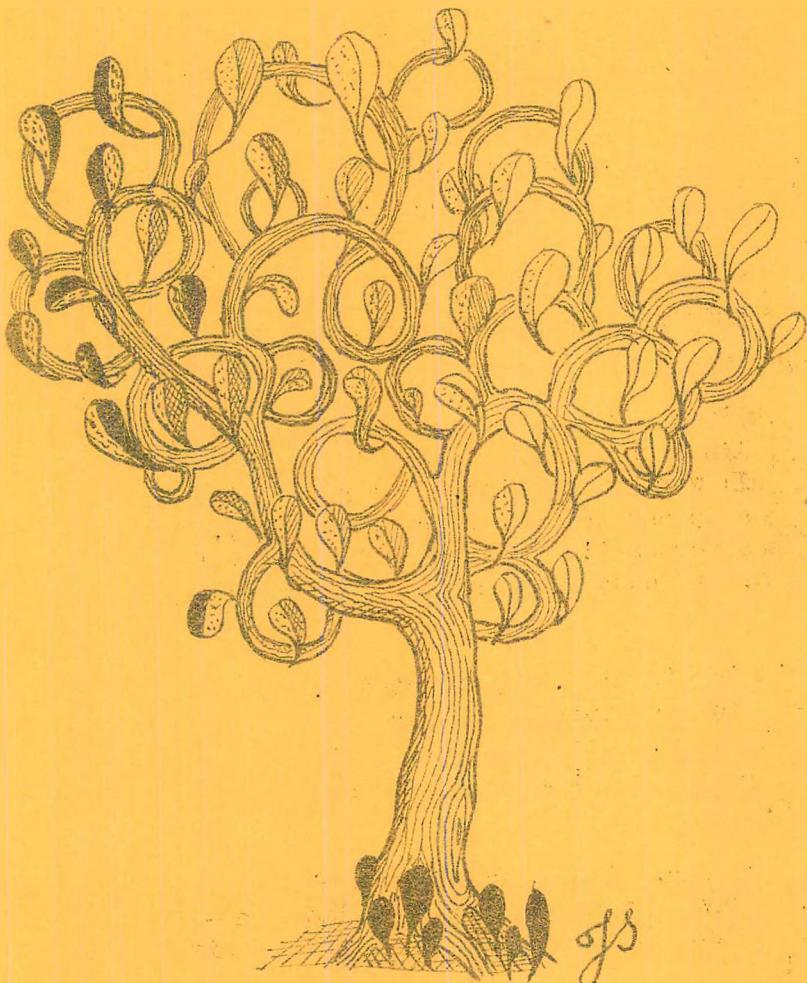
@@@Whatever happened to the flowing phrases of the Holdstock we all used to know and love.....? Maybe if I wore a wig and wiggled a bit.....@@@

MEARA'S FAMOUS OLDE ARTICULATED LAWNMOWER
AND PLASTIC EUPHONIUM REFURBISHING EMPORIUM, 5 Kedleston Road, Derby DE3 1FL.

Have you noticed that 'Kedleston' is an anagram of 'Skeltoned'? Do you think that there could be some significance in that...? No, you're probably right. However, enough of this rubbish, and on to some other rubbish, namely the cover of HELL-5. For one of the best zines in Britfandom you certainly

have some cruddy covers. Out of five issues the only good cover has been that for no.2. This particular devil looks positively angelic, and whilst I approve of the F.F.F.F. (First Full Frontal on a Fanzine) his..er..vital organ does have a somewhat Kentish appearance..In case you don't understand that reference, I'll explain:-

There was a young fellow from Kent,
Whose prick in the middle was bent.
Said he 'It's no trouble'
As he stuffed it in double,
But instead of coming,
he went.



Look again - you'll see what I mean. The back cover, now, if far better - a brilliant idea. If only the pile of horse shit didn't look like a nearly-out camp fire.

The contents are much more reassuring - all

good fannish stuff in fact, except for my own piece which sticks out like a broken guitar string. Still, it does balance the other items I suppose. Once again you've boxed unclever with the contents page, but I must admit it looks a lot better than the previous abortion. A couple of excellent editorials, despite what John Piggott says about Skel's sense of humour. We could do with a lot more of this type of thing - why don't you 2 have a go at a more lengthy piece.....that doesn't sound quite right, does it, still you know what I mean. 'Pete's MAD thingy was quite interesting, but rather obviously padded from three pages to four by ye eds. Cy Chauvin's poem was interesting, even for an old time poetry-hater like me, but it was rather out of place in this issue, and too obviously from the Central Contributors Pool. Come on, lads, I think you've got past the stage of needing CCP material, except perhaps some art to supplement your own.

@@@Beats me how any mate of mine can talk such shit. If the poem is good - and this one was - then surely it doesn't matter where it comes from. True, we no longer need CCP material, so most of the stuff we received was returned virgo-intacta. All we kept was what we thought worth using.....two poems by Cy..misc artwork. Yet Cy says he wishes he'd recalled that poem.@@@

Superb mailing comments as usual, in which you both once again come smashing through the personality barrier. Likewise superb, searing, scathing Skel in Gripe Water.

@@@True, true, only the Superb, Searing, Scathing Skel In Gripe Water happened to be BRIAN!.....@@@

A Programmed Guide was novel and interesting - wonder just who made it up? If you say the name all in one breath it comes out as "Imogene Used To Snog". Hmmm. Lisa really excels at this short-short fiction, and this is one of her best, though the ending somehow didn't seem quite right, I dunno...

A pity that the photo pages didn't do justice to the original montages I saw when you visited us. The cut lines show rather badly in places too - still, a creditable first effort, well worth repeating. I can well imagine that the session which inspired pages 45 and 46 was hilariously funny, but unfortunately the humour rarely comes across (!) in print - in fact it's completely incomprehensible at times. I shudder to think what Piggott will think of it.

@@@Well, if he says it in his zine, maybe nothing. THE TURNING WORM seems to have turned too far and vanished from whence it came. Good job his foot wasn't too big or it might have dislodged a couple of his teeth going in.@@@

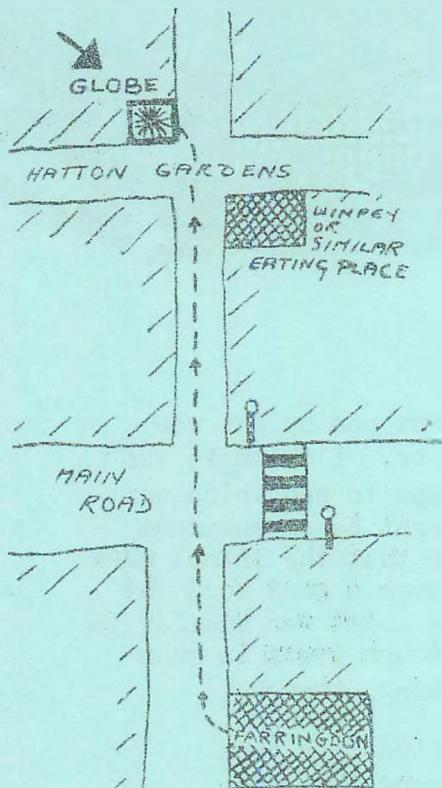
To sum up then: the best issue so far, with a quantity of fannish writing which isn't, unfortunately, always matched by quality, but nonetheless a healthy sign for fandom. I must thank you for providing me with the idea for my next editorial. Ta!

MARY LEGG 20 Woodstock Close, Oxford.

First, I think HELL is developing its own...what's the right word.....air? aura? One gets the impression of the various characters behind it, and this is a Good Thing. It makes the zine seem more alive - not to mention more interesting. That's just a general comment, now down to brass tacks. First your artwork. Not quite the best bunch to be seen in fnz these days, but I liked Cy's elephant, and the front cover was good - and appropriate - I also thought the heading for the MAD Group was good. In style it reminded me of some artwork I've seen in (coincidentally) BAD Group mags. I forget the artist, but probably the Mercers or Rabbit could tell you.

((I confess a great ignorance, as the name 'Rabbit' doesn't mean a damn thing to me, though it maybe should. No doubt someone will shed light.)))

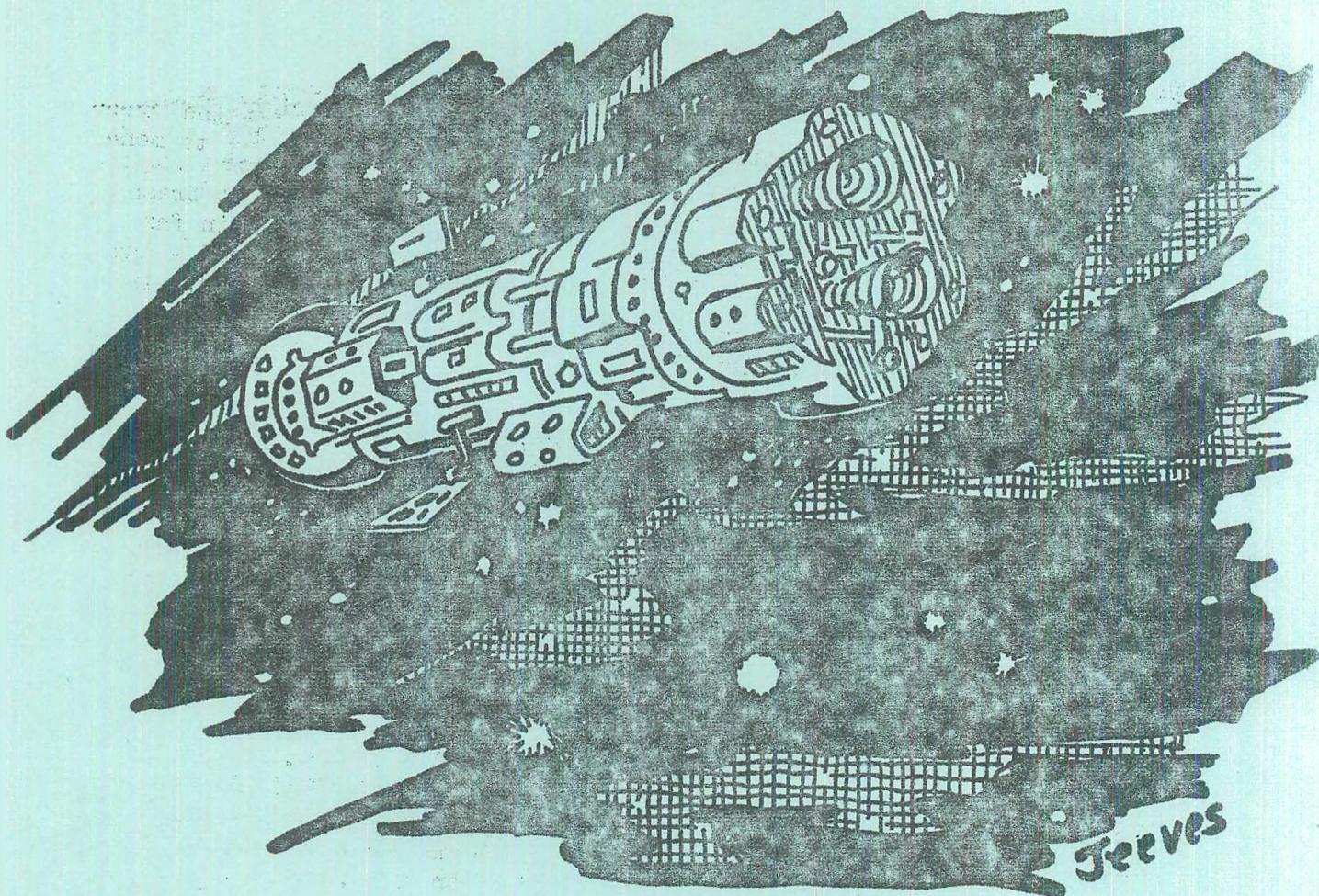
Thingytorial tends to reinforce my arguement for giving new-to-the-Globe fen a map - as I always do. The simplest thing is to get the tube to Farringdon, turn right when you come out, cross the main road and up the hilly street opposite. The Globe is at the top.



((A good idea, Mary. Tho' it was I who told Skel that it was off Fleet Street, I was merely reporting something I'd been told. Dammit, I'd probably get lost mesel'..)))

Happy Birthday to the MAD group. I wonder what you'll be reporting in a years time? I'd heard, from the N.E. end, of your visit so was pleased to see the other side of the ~~ARMSTRONG~~ visit. It's passing strange how fen invariable have cars with character - either rather unusual models or ones which are forever breaking down, crashing or whatever. I suppose my favourite is Keith Bridge's Armstrong Siddeley - now that is a car with character! One is tempted to wonder aloud....are the drawings at the end caricatures of the said MAD Group???

((But naturally!! However, who's who must remain top secret - we've been threatened once so far, and who knows what may happen if we tell all. I can only say that I almost belted Skel over the head with an axe.)))



In my notes for this LoC I have a cryptic comment '..best con so far was Bristol'. To what I'm replying I forget, but there it is. I think it was the best con I've been to. Be an interesting idea perhaps to see which con other folk thought best, and why - the reasons given might be of enormous help to future con organisers. GRIPE WATER...one fears that the infant OMPA won't last long on this sour diet. I don't think I've seen a good word yet for the mag. Was it really that bad? The HELL Reading chart was similar in idea to a drinking chart we had in Crab a while ago, though yours is much more complicated and with more ramifications (!!). Amusing, though.

((Agree with what you say about cons. I've only been to two, and both had very bad points among the good. A poll might be worth considering, if only enough people would pull out their fingers long enough to reply. Yes, the Combozine was every bit as bad as I said, or possibly even worse. Unless something startling happens we might as well forget it next year. We had a chart for avoiding buying booze in a pub, but after seeing it in a recent rag mag, we ditched it.)))

ARCHIE MERCER 21 Trenethick Park, Helston, Cornwall.

The bacover is subtle. I should worry - I don't play chess. Your two thingytorials continue to confuse me - I still don't know which of you is which, or indeed, if either of you is (or are). Furthermore, I am if possible confused to an even greater extent by Cas. Now I'm prejudiced, I may say, in Cas's favour - she seems to be (a) good-hearted and (b) useful -- which makes her an excellent type to have around. However, I can't for the life of me determine precisely which of you she's married to, or living with, or the non-resident but ever-present girl-friend of. In fact you all have my permission to consider yourselves a conglomerate, no less.

@@@See announcement elsewhere in this issue.@@@

Re part two of the Jazz Guitar, I notice mention made of Teddy Bunn. His music, though probably not his name, is best known to the multitude - or what there is left of it these days - in his capacity as the forth member of the Milt Herth Trio, or the man who sometimes squared said trio off into a quartet. He seems to have had some special arrangement with Herth's drummer, O'Neil Spencer, because the two of them frequently appear together on various sessions without Milt's front line. (If memory, disclaims he hastily, serves)!

@@@Mike will no doubt tell us if you're wrong!@@@

I think I understood "A Man - 's Mind Made Up". I know I didn't like it. If James White was to use a pseudonym, it is generally understood that it would be Paddy O'Halloran. If Paddy O'Halloran hasn't written anything yet, then James White probably still hasn't written cwt pseudonymously. I like your photo-supplement, and your method of identifying who's who is highly commended indeed.

DAVE SEALE Computer Input Office, Whitbread (West-Pennine) Ltd.....or..
13 Rylands Street, Gorton, Manchester M18 8GD.

One of the good things in this issue is the artwork. I'm glad to see there are a lot of Skeltoons inside. Skel is the best cartoonist in all the six fanzines I get, so let's have more. Now, speaking of drawings, I think I'll probably end up in hot water here, but I must say it...."I don't like Jeeves artwork". It does nothing for me. The eyeballs on page 37 are great. I'm not going to ask what the significance of the back cover is -- probably something to do with chess at Chester.

((Now listen, creep, just cos I tell you certain things
there's no need to advertise the fact all over the damn
place. You trying maybe to get me in trouble??)))

As I said to LURK only the other day, your photo-identification method is superior. Mike Meara (No.2) looks as if he's being taken by the cops

to the Oz trial. Many thanks for the mention of the birth - there's no truth at all in the rumour that Cammell Laird built the pram. The editorial was orally brilliant as usual, but written down??? As Brain has moved office, I don't see as much of him as I used to. Now the phone line between the Brewers' Office and Input fairly sizzle with words of wisdom. Is it true that Whitbreads have offered you the use of the boardroom for the next MAD meeting??

((Don't talk of MAD meets! I declined to go in May, June and July, on the grounds that I had better things to do, and when I decide to go in August, we have a party the week before and go and cancel the meeting. Not only has the move in offices moved me away from nice people like Dave, it's isolated me from several nasties I prefer not to work with.)))

At last, your second piece of fiction. It doesn't quite make a novella, but at least it's fiction. The style is good, but I didn't get the point of it right away. A poem, as well. One per issue should prove sufficient. I started reading the HELL guide, but must have got lost somewhere as I finished up in the Colophon!!

PETE COLLEY Pink Floydian Significancies, Manchester. @@@Oh Boy@@@

My opinion of HELL is increasingly worse, along with most other fanzines at present. Your editorials weren't worth reading and you've managed to botch up the foto's. I hate articles on jazz, which is not your fault and the article might be good but after trying to read the last installment I didn't bother with this one. No interest.

Lisa's story seemed far below her usual standard. The OMPAazine (Combozine, that is) that I got, apart from being crap in all the ways you say in Gripe Water, also seems to have had a few pages missing, like approx 16 if your copy was 32 pages long.. The covers were both god-awful...maybe it was the really bad colours of paper you used for them that made them look worse. Archie talks bullshit yet again. I agree about the regulation of ink flow sometimes necessary for electros, but does he seriously believe that the electrodes allow an artist to take less trouble. If an artist is making proper use of an electro, using its extra versatility, he certainly will not be taking less trouble. Some of my full page artwork takes five or six hours to do, and the extra versatility causes as much, if not more trouble, getting the drawing done without smudges and slips made with the drawing ink when going over the pencil drawing, and with getting even areas of black. Limiting the amount of black areas in the drawing is also necessary as too much will spoil it. Also, many electroed drawings are much more intricate than hand-cutting would allow. Try doing some art with electros, Archie, making use of its extra versatility and you might see how hard it is.

@@@You know, Pete, what really blows my synapses is that you said you only did this LoC to make certain of gettin No.6@@

KEITH FREEMAN
17 Fairford Road,
Tilehurst, Reading,
RG3 6QP.

Who's turn is it
to completely forget
my letter this time?
(Which is one way of
showing I did receive
HELL 4.....apologies
for no LoC) I am re-
straining myself from
making the obvious
comments about the
cover of HELL 5.
This time no-one can
get confused and think
it's Lisa.....can
they? Ghod,
nearly half-
way down the
page and I've
run out of
things to
say. Oh
yes, just
realised
there's a
whole zine
behind that
cover. But,
as I tear it
from my wife's
hands I realise
there are two
fives...can you
supply me with
the back numbers
5 to 54 inclus-
ive at a spec-
ial discount
rate? Are
you now run-
ning out of
pieces wri-
ten and
given



to you for Hell, or are people now writing specifically for HELL? Whichever it is there seems to be a sense of uniformity now that was lacking in the first few issues. Also things editorial seem less frenetic and more relaxed - and HELL is all the better for this.

Can someone explain what page 30 is, please?

Bacover I liked - but thought the chess piece was supposed to be a horse, not a dog? Pawns, in future, will presumably carry little buckets and spades?

@@@That was what Brian was supposed to do. I sketched the idea very hastily but didn't like the Doggy appearance of the knight, so passed it to Creephead, magnanimously offering him equal credit if he would 'Horsify' the knight. The swine just inked the whole thing as it stood.....@@@

JOAN SHARPE 145 Dunmow Court, Offerton, Stockport, Cheshire.

CAS FOR EDITOR

@@@Obviously this is going to be a real lowbrow letter, what with comments like that, I mean. @@@

Firstly I think I'd better make it clear, as this is my first LoC, that I am not quite sure what OMPA is. I've read a few old OMPAzines, but the only recent ones I've read are copies of HELL, which doesn't give me much chance of comparison. But, like the man once said, "I don't understand it, but I know what I like."

What I don't understand is why, out of 46 pages, 20 are devoted to your opinions of other peoples zines, and other peoples opinions of yours. I just don't get OMPA's obsession with itself. I know it's nice to be complemented and they say that criticism is good for the soul, but 20 pages? Almost half of the zine seems a bit much to me.

@@@Like we keep on pointing out, OMPA reviews are for OMPA. If you don't like 'em, don't read the damn things. True, we could do the same as Fred Hemmings and put a special supplement of reviews into OMPA, but this is an OMPAzine; and so they belong in here.....@@@

I think one of the weaknesses of HELL is it's lack of good articles. 'The Jazz Guitar' is well written but suffers, as do so many of HELL'S articles, from being too confined, too specialised to be entertaining as well as interesting. 'The Year Of MADness' read more like a year of oblivion. I mean, you MAD lot did get up to what amounts to a big fat zero, didn't you? Which is just what the article amounted to.

ROGER WADDINGTON

4 Commercial Street, Norton, Malton, YORKSHIRE.

Though I can't vouch for the rest of us erring mortals, that you haven't heard from me is due to the fact that I've been in a semi-comatose state of gaffia, searching through all my other interests (which might politely be described as wine, women and song...) trying to see if there was something that would replace fandom; and much to my surprise, I couldn't find anything. So after the long loud silence that greeted HELL 4, have a burst of static from me!

Though first looking at the front cover, dare you admit who posed for that?

@@@....Well, Williams had to put that zine down sometime.@@@

And with the rise and rise of MadFandom, don't you think it was strange that Lisa Conesa just happened to be there at the right time, for help and encouragement? Look back through All Our Yesterdays, see if you can spot a strange female figure who was instrumental in helping fandom on its way in the early days, when SF was something you hid under the bed? And if you go to the British Museum and ask to see the Egyptian wall friezes (yes, they had refrigerators in those days as well!) notice who that figure is in the background leaning over the generals as they map out their plan of campaign...Not that I'm suggesting anything really, but you see how it is...? But it certainly shows just what a hive of fannish activity really means; Iseult, Zimri, Malfunction, Madcap and even HELL; hadn't you better turn down the machine before it blows up altogether?

The piece on the Jazz Guitar didn't stir my sense of wonder this time round, but I certainly want to see the next part...Django Reinhardt has always seemed to me to be on a level with that demon violinist (I keep thinking of Pagliacci, but that can't be right!) the Flying Dutchman, and others of that ilk; sort of legends in their own lifetime. I read recently that Stephane Grappelli was playing at Ronnie Scott's, and it seemed to come across with such force as if someone who had known Queen Victoria had been reminiscing about his life and times, the same sense of history...Now, substitute the folk guitar, and that might turn me on!

Still, those two photo pages were very informative; now I know what I'll be up against at next year's Con! But tell me, was there such an air of Stygian gloom that it spilled over into the photos? Or did the gremlins get into the developer...?

@@@Have a care Roger, the photos are still a very touchy point. Somewhere along the line at Orion Press, communications went adrift, and we didn't get quite the bromides we asked for. Nothing like, in fact. Couple this with our own inexperience and the end result was a great dissapointment. Acceptable though. And who says Spec's photos are all that's allowed.@@

It was kind of you to print my artwork and poem in HELL, though I sort of wished I had recalled the latter instead of letting it drift around for three or four years. I enjoyed the photo-pages a lot; it gave me a chance to see what a lot of British fans I am acquainted with look like (i.e. Lisa Conesa, Jim Goddard, Mike Meara, etc.etc). You British fan have the advantage of being small in numbers, so it's fairly easy to become familiar with your names. US fandom isn't so lucky; there're always scores of new fan popping up, like weeds! And it's unfortunately impossible to get to know them all. That's really one of the problems with American society - everything gets so big that it loses all of its personality. In a small village you can get to know all your neighbours, but in a big apartment building people are always moving in and out, with never a chance to form close ties.

((True, though Skel or Cas should really be the ones to react to what you say - living on the eighteenth floor of one of Stockports monstrosities. For my own environment, you could probably count the number of people under 40 on the fingers of one hand. How you form close ties in that kind of area is a puzzle - I don't think I know a single person within walking distance.)))

I also enjoyed Skel's artwork very much, especially the pieces on pps 8, 11 and 21. He has an interesting style, and would be popular with American fans, I suspect, if he appeared in US zines. The thing I like about his drawings is the fine intricate detail that they contain; it gives the quaint beasts he pictures a 'real' quality, like they weren't something he fuzzily imagined, but actually saw (hmmm, does Skel drink a lot?). Sort of Tim Kirk-like.

((My ghod - we'll never hear the last of this: no-one ever compared him to Tim Kirk before. But his stuff is getting better and better - as witness two full page drawings that as yet haven't seen print. He took a step forward when he splurged out on a couple of Rotring pens. Even I can do better than usual with these things, so where Skel will finish up, heaven only knows. As for drink, he can down a fair amount when he tries, yet I wouldn't exactly describe him as overly-alcoholic.)))

You say that "90% of t.v. programmes...are a waste of viewers' money and an insult to their intelligence". Have you read any current fanzines and compared them to t.v? Are most really any better? Will anything in HELL be worth reading five years from now? One year from now? Can you imagine anyone reprinting anything but the artwork from it? I hope I've aroused you - then possibly you might trade HELL for the better, and the

world might find itself with one more readable fanzine. If you can't get enough good material to fill your fanzine, had you thought about publishing some reprints? Some old time fan like Ethel Lindsay or Terry eeves might look through their piles of old zines for something for you, if you prodded them hard enough. Of course, due to APA rules you can't fill the whole zine with reprints, but it would certainly improve your standard. Your OMPAZINE reviews - you use up a lot of spacehere, yet the results are meaningless to the outside reader. Why not review OMPAZINES like you would ordinary genzines? Really sock it to the editors - one way of getting them to improve standards. And why all those dots and dashes between paragraphs?...that gives the worst sort of impression, like you were trying to stretch out your material to fill a given number of pages. Why waste the space and money - you could spend it more profitably on booze.

((Frankly, I don't think you can reasonably compare fanzines with t.v. Reprints are something we want to stay away from if at all possible. Not that there isn't good stuff available for reprinting - we simply prefer original material. I've been talking to Skel about ignoring the two and three page "zines" in OMPA - perhaps your suggestion on reviewing is worth thinking of. No, the dots etc aren't space fillers - they help to separate successive items.)))

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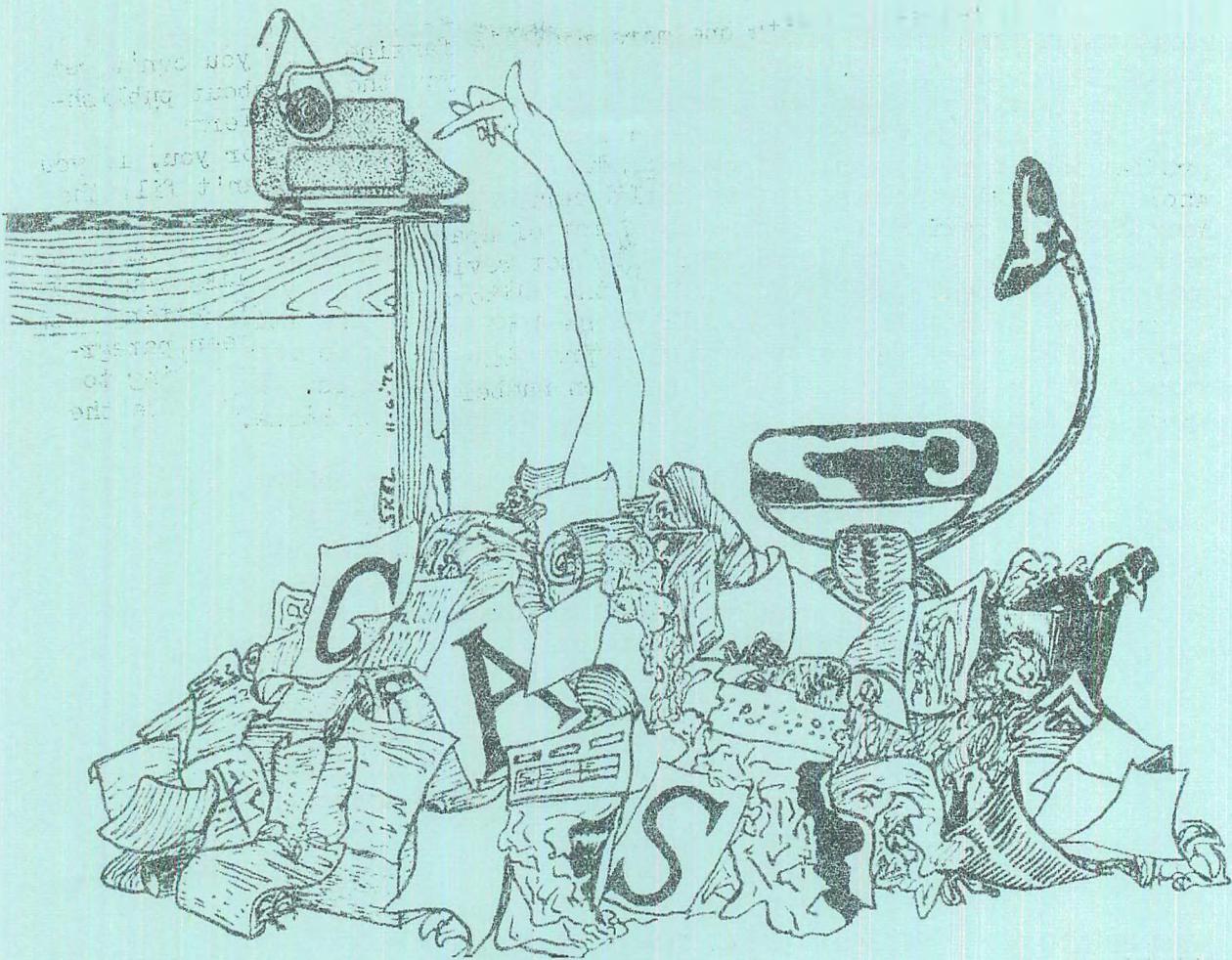
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FRED HEMMINGS 20 Beech Road, Slough, Bucks.

A year of Madness, and more of Hellish activity, prompt me to write a LoC, especially as your fifth issue is such an improvement over recent ones. Fun returning to the fold! MaD group's anniversary is something that deserves an article, and Pete Presford does it well, if briefly. I'm not keen on his final reference to tattiness (he says, showing bias), but the ideas behind the article's ending are very true. I'm sure the individual members of fandom sometimes ask themselves 'where are we going and why?'. To my mind Pete answers both these questions. Though some will doubtless disagree, I maintain that fandom is not meant to achieve anything, except it's own enjoyment and expansion, rather like the one-armed bandits tagged 'For Amusement only'. The difference is that while those machines reap a handsome profit for their owners, fandom is geared to a 100% payout on a strictly proportional basis - the more you put in to it the more you get out. With enjoyment and expansion as the target, how does fandom come out? I think rather well. With a booming Brun SF group, the Gannets flying high, and even the good old Globe turning as swiftly as ever, fandom seems to be on the upsurge. This is quite apart from the smaller and less formal meetings throughout the country such as your own with the Meara's, Gerb, Lisa et al.

WAHFs Richard Cotton; Roger Johnson; Ian Butterworth; Derek Pickles; and Dave Rowe, who complained, amongst other things, about never appearing in print. Write a little more promptly, Dave, and you'll get in first.



"Why don't you write something for HELL?" said Paul.

"Because you'd probably pull it to pieces....and I'm a COWARD!" was my reply.

So here I am, sitting nervously in front of the typer, doing my thing for HELL. BE GENTLE WITH ME, FANDOM.....PLEASE!

HOW I LEARNED TO LIVE, EAT, DRINK AND ~~LOVE~~ LOVE FANDOM.

'Twas August, 1971 when I first heard the words fandom, fen, fanzines, OMPA (and other such obscenities) and thought, "What on earth is he rambling on about?" Me, not knowing anything about you S.F. lot and your ~~stupid~~ hobbies, sat there looking blank (which isn't difficult for me) while all was revealed. Then he started telling me about fandom. Must stop these double meanings or you'll all be thinking that I'm not the sweet, innocent, young thing I claim to be!

What was I talking about?.....
oh yes:- HELL 1 was the first fanzine I'd read and being madly in love with one of it's editors I thought it was great. I think a certain Gray Boak would disagree with me on this point, but then he's not in love with Paul.....you're not are you Gray SWEETIE???? Then I was introduced to ERG, F.H.T.V., 'OT ON THE TRAILS, WHATSIT, BINARY, CYNIC, VIEWPOINT and others too numerous to mention. The names of Fred Hemmings, Terry Jeeves, Gray Boak, Kench, Gerb, the Mearas and Lisa Conesa became a natural part of my vocabulary and I (being out of my tiny mind, although I did not realise it at the time) offered to type stencils for HELL.

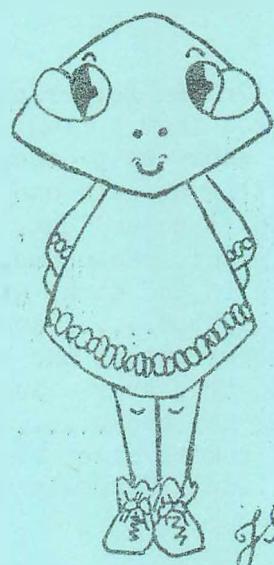
Little did I know what I had let myself in for. It started off with...."Cas darling, could you just type a few stencils for me this week?".....then....."You don't really mind not going out tonight do you, as ~~if~~ you must get these typed before Creep-head comes round.".....until, as he comes in from work.....

"Have you typed all those Effing stencils yet?...and if not why not?"

I've grown accustomed to spending all weekend working on HELL, I don't really mind that Brian has practically moved in with us. Honestly Paul I enjoy being completely ignored whilst you're writing out your editorial etc., even if I am becoming a complete nervous wreck it is all for a good cause.....though I do object to having to kneel and kiss a copy of HELL every morning.... and I'm not all that certain that sacrificing the budgie on Whitbread's Gestetner will make for better repro in the future.

Although I'm not particularly interested in Science Fiction (now please, just stop tearing your hair out and screaming "THE WOMAN'S AN IDIOT" you had to find out sooner or later) I love fandom and fanzines. After reading your zines over the past year I feel as though I know you all, even though I've never met you (cept for Gerb, Lisa, Mike and Pat) in fact I haven't got a clue what most of you look like.... though maybe that's a good thing.....I might not be able to stand the shock.....see you at the OMPACON.

Well Paul lover, you asked for it, and I don't care (sob) if you don't think it's worth printing.....(sniffle)...NOTICE TO ALL FEN: Should you wonder why Paul isn't in the next issue...he'll still be in hospital recovering from giving me his opinion of this little effort. YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!!!! Bye now.....Cas.



It's been a pretty busy period since last time, with some good things happening, and some not so good. It was at the end of July that we were invaded by sundry Gannets, in the unmistakeable shapes of Ians Maule and Williams. They had apparently been threatening to inflict their presence upon us for some time, though for no particular reason. Anyway, Presford and I met them at Victoria, like the true friends we pretend to be. Whilst waiting for their train, which was quite naturally late, a vision of lovliness passed in front of me, and a little voice inside me muttered "I'm sure that I know that ~~bddy~~ face". Sure enough, twas the typist from work. Thinking that she hadn't seen me, I reluctantly turned my attention to the barrier, through which came staggering the abovementioned creatures. Leaving the station, Presford muttered something about some bird that had been staring at me a moment previously. Oh boy, I could just hear her complaints on the following Monday about my ignoring her - a thing which is rather hard to do.

Anyway, off to The House On The Borderland, Chuck Partington and Dave Britton's new bookshop (I promised them a plug somewhere in here!), from whence to the Crown and Anchor, where we proceeded to get slightly pissed, working on the premise that putting up with each other would be a darn sight easier on a diet of alcohol. So it turned out. We held....sory, Presford held a party at his place that night, remembered for certain silly things like Cas and I playing badminton in the dark, with tennis rackets, over a length of pea wire. Other things, toc.....some creep, believed to be Maule, slinging a glassful of water out of the bog window, narr-wly missing Cas.....who then proceeded to trip over a lump in the lawn, which may have been Skelton, near breaking her neck.....Presford upending, with quiet deliberation, a bottle of tomato sauce over Lynda Partington - cue for an obscene Skelcomment.....dear Chucklie whispering something to me which even I daren't repeat here.

So theGannets departed, wondering mightily about fen who refuse to talk about sf. We repaid the compliment the second week in August, hiring a Ford Transit for the occasion, and piddling off to Sunderland in search of....well....something. We almost found it in Leeds, when some unspeakable twat cut across our bow. Ghod alone knows how Presford missed him - we only know that Cas didn't miss the side of the van. I think she still had the bruise three weeks after. Mauler was duly met in Durham, with his 'fiance' no less, aterm thatlater turned outto be a lie. A blissful afternoon, spent mainly soaking up the sun on the riverbank, before scurrying off to Sunderland. Drinks in the Gannet, of course, r'nowned for good looking barmaids and lousy beer, andthen the party at Williams, ostensibly to celebrate his birthday the previous week. Cas took an immediate liking to Tom Penman - he stirs the mother instinct in her.

Others arrived in due course; Harry Bell and Irene Taylor, Ritchie Smith with a young lady named Lynn who, being non-fannish, was bored to tears by the whole bloody event. She stood no chance. I'm told that Jim Marshall was there too, but by the time he arrived I'd had sufficient alco-

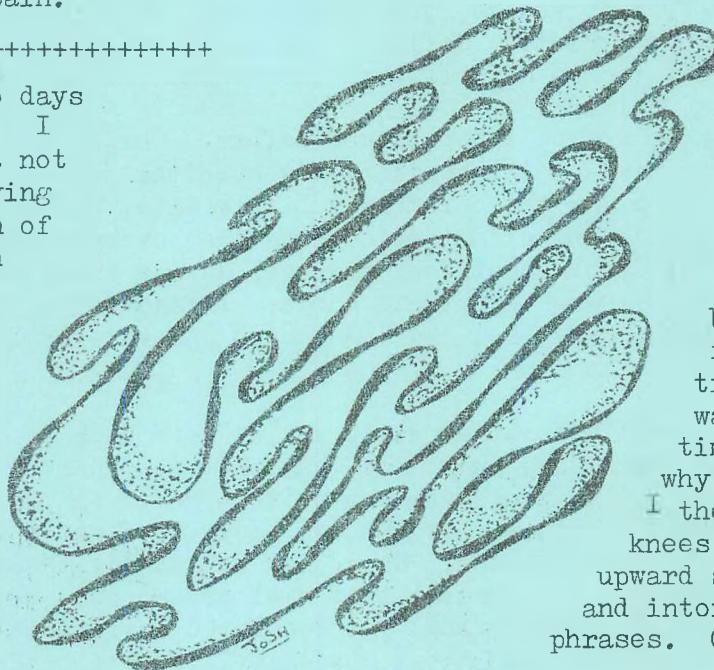
hol to be unsure of names. Ghod alone knows what happened at that do, except that we drank and talked and drank and insulted everyone n.t present.....a typical booze-up. Best part of the whole weekend was a fantastic sleeping session on Tom Penman's front room floor. Banishing Pete Colley to the comfort of the settee, we arrayed ourselves across the floor in line abreast - Cas, Skel, me, Pres, Anita. I objected strongly to this arrangement, and found my fears justified when I awoke with Presford's arm round me. He says it was accidental. Hmmm. But it was a fine weekend, only marred for me by a little pain.

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Pain indeed! Two days before the trip, I attempted a feat not often seen - trying to balance a pan of blazing fat with one hand whilst unlocking the kitchen door with the other. I have this thing about electrical appliances - I leave them on and forget about them.

This time it

was the grill. In the flurry of panicky activity, I upset the lot onto my right foot. Ouch!!!! It's a rotten sight to see a sock utterly vanish before your eyes. It's even worse to be treated by a hospital for over a week with a dressing suitable only for minor cuts and abrasions. They did absolutely nothing to assist healing. What a health service!! I finally turned to the trusty family doctor who accomplished more in three days than they had in eleven. He took one look and muttered "Antibiotics". Now, after a total of almost five weeks,



I'm still off work, nursing a sorely abused foot, and avowed never again to leave the grill on. Some hope!!

To finish off this tale of woe, words of thanks to Pete Presford, who is a truly fine fella and nice chappie. He has graciously ferried me around for the last four weeks in his remarkable van, when riding was so preferable to hobbling.

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TAKE NOTE, GREG PICKERSGILL.....

you are about to receive an apology! this will teach me to check my sources of information.

Nice chappie & fine fella Presford informed me in high glee at Chester that it was YOU who savaged a certain zine before the startled form of it's perpetrator. I think he was pissed at the time, which may be why I took it as gospel. I therefore sink to my knees, gaze respectfully upward so as not to see you and intone the necessary phrases. Okay?

I'll devote this paragraph to you, Greg, rather than write a LoC. You are blethering on yet again about a supposed resemblance between HELL and FOULER. We still cannot sort it out. Come on, for Crissake put your ideas/facts/whatever where your mouth is and enlighten us. Eh? On the subject of our offer to run off FOULER-7, I believe that Skel has already written to you. For the benefit of others, I have to point out that no matter how rotten the two of us can be (when we try), we aren't so bad that we'd try a

gag like that in practise, no matter who it's aimed at. The calculated chances of your acceptance were, to say the least, low, and we languished in the certainty that you would refuse. You did, didn't you. To find that you were touched and impressed was a surprise - we were expecting a letter asking just who the hell we thought was born yesterday. Mark one up to you, Greg, you're human after all. Praise be.

By now you will all have seen the announcement on page nine, or you should have done. Yes, after a year of sinful happiness, Skel and Cas have finally tied the knot and entered into a state of ~~Yaffy~~ wedlock. I for one was never too certain that he'd go through with it, and a rescue operation was planned for the night before. But he steadfastly refused to have anything to do with it, and was in the right place at the right time, namely the flat at three o'clock. No fancy cars and expensive bother for these two - they're from Yorkshire, you understand. We actually trekked across Stockport to the Registry Office - the happy couple, mesel', and Mike and Pat Meara who took a day off work to witness the unbelievable.

I'd never been in one of those places before. Christ. A waiting room that puts you in mind of the dentist, the hospital just across the road for brides who come for the ceremony a little late, and a notice on the wall about marriage being a fantastic thing that everyone should try. The actual official bit took about four minutes, during which time Skelton tells me he didn't know where to put his hands. I fixed my eyes firmly on the Registrar's back. Had Skel and I met each others eyes I'm sure we would both have started laughing.

Anyway, it all went off rather well, and we were back at the flat by four o'clock, having taken Ghod knows how many photos. What Skel doesn't fully realise is that colour shots are expensive - and he's paying for 'em. Back at 185 the serious events began. Enough booze to float a tower block, and food for at least five thousand. Ghod, how we talked, though about just what I'll never know. I do recall that Skel passed out, or something like that, at one point in the evening, yet recovered sufficiently to take part in an animated conversation about obscenity. Parents and sundry relatives disappeared shortly after midnight, leaving the rest of us - the ones with stamina, to carry on. We finally gave up around six a.m. I sprawled out over two air beds, and when Mike Meara returned from reading FOULER in the bog he found that there was nowhere comfortable to kip. Poor sod expired on the floor.

Which just about covers the main events of the last three months, and finishes off this issue. No "Coming Next Time" in here for the simple reason that we don't darn well know what there'll be. I'm reminded by Skelton at this point to inform you that the various interdelineations that appear throughout this issue are quotes from local and recently seen men. We name no names and accept no responsibility for any possible consequences.

