

Science

Fiction

Digest.

18

Stories by:

Sturgeon

Kuttner

Ellison

Laumer

Tiptree

Oliver

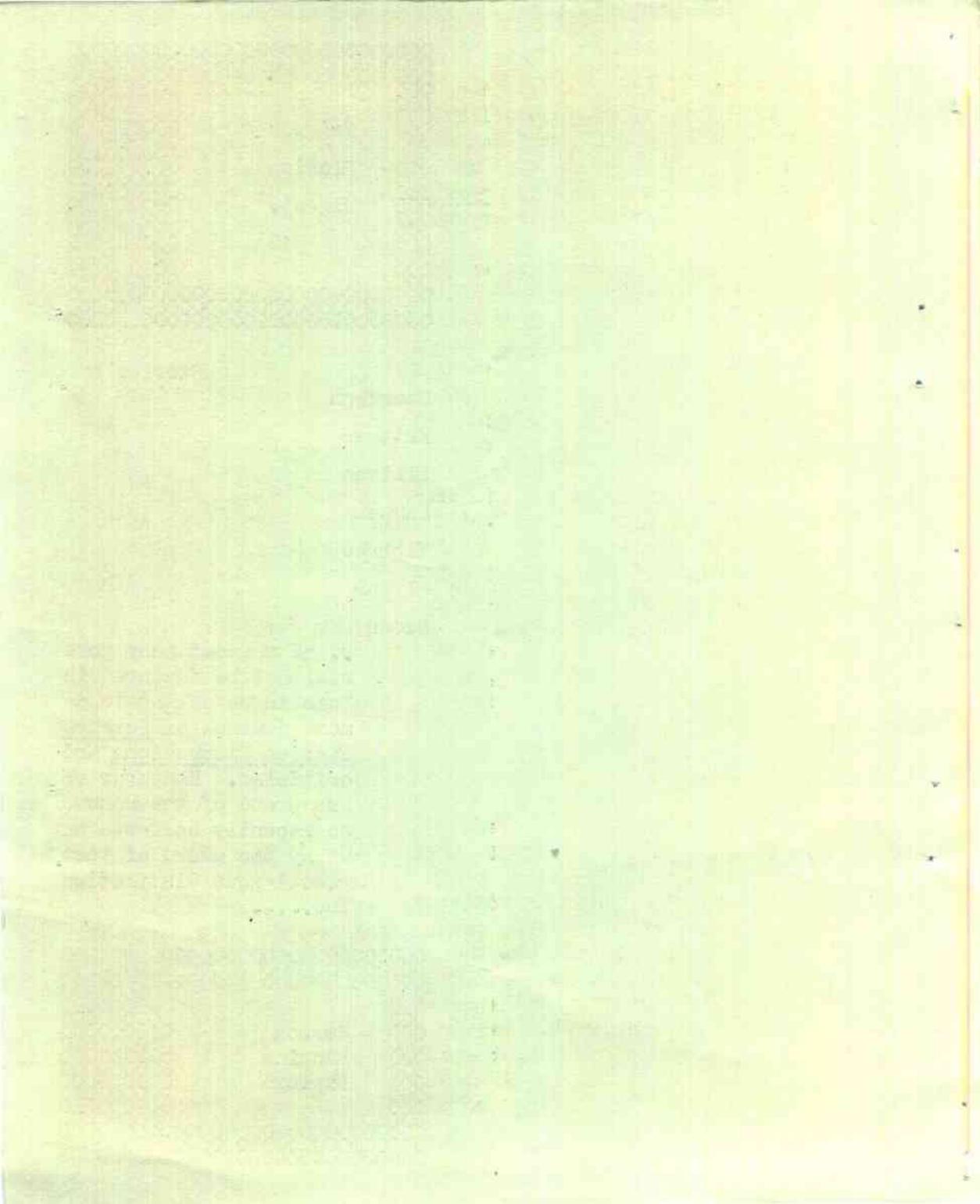
Niven

..and a great many more will not be featured in this issue of the foremost journal of Science Fiction Discussions and criticism. Remember we are proud of the honour so recently bestowed on us by the award of that prestigious distinction the.....

Sercon

Fanzine

Diploma



I'm well again and it feels just great. They were shaking their heads and writing me off but I've shown them. I've had a roller transplant and now I can type just like I used to when I was much newer. See, my 'O's no longer drop out, nor do the tops of my 'e's and even my underlining IS NO LONGER AN EMBARRASSMENT! Gosh, this feels great! Yippety-shit!

Oh, oh! I suppose that this means HE'LL start feeling his 'urges' again. He'll run his grubby fingers over my keyboard once more, jabbing and poking at my private little places, fingering my knobs and caressing my carriage-return. Again I will be violated to satisfy his base desires. Ohmigawd, here he comes now, the slimy bastard. "Go Away! I hate you! You don't really care about me. You just want to use me...and the worst of it is, you sod, you know I always get turned on!"

Hello, what's this stencil doing in the typer then? Oh, Typewriter's-Lib, eh? Well, we'll soon kick that into touch, you ungrateful little twerp. Who's just splashed out £8.50 to have you sent to a specialist? Aha, you've no answer to that, have you? So just stop snivelling you lousy little ingrate and let me get on with the matter at hand. Said 'matter' being SMALL FRIENDLY DOG 18 from Skel and Cas of 25 Bowland Close, Offerton, Stockport, Cheshire, SK2 5NW, here in the lil ol' Yew-Kay...and yes, I know it isn't a year since the last ish. Die of shock, nurds!

15 February 1980 (Skel) .

Yes, over the last six weeks or so I've sent out all the copies of SFD 17, run off WALDO 5 for Eric and I still can't wait to get right into this. Could SFD be making a return to the old quarterly schedule? Don't be stupid! However, the frequency could well improve, gaining impetus from my improved equipment. Yes, not only has the skeltyper been fettled up but I've also upgraded the duper. I've slung the knackered black drum in the bin, converted the green drum to black (see page 3 of SFD 17) and finally I've replaced the felt pad on same with the old ink-filtering silk screen. The only fly on the repro front is the unsuitable ink I now have in the drum. So, having done all this, if these first couple of pages don't turn out OK

Reading p20 again, it strikes me that one of Mike's great talents lies in making his own imperfections seem not only perfectly right and reasonable but even downright praiseworthy. The brutal fact is that I obviously don't care a shit about, say, the starving millions in Cambodia, despite the graphic depictions of their plight on the TV news almost every night, otherwise I would be donating £5 a month out of my salary to the appropriate charity aid organisation. If I can't care in this situation, where a small and easily-affordable amount of money is all that is asked of me, how can I care for those individuals, much closer to home, whose demands on me are likely to be much greater? Personally, I don't find it easy to rationalise the fact that I'm a callous uncaring bastard. The fact that there are many others who act (or fail to act) likewise doesn't make it any easier.

Maybe I'm the exception that proves Tony Strelkov's rule. I consider that I have an understanding and sympathy for feminism, yet I find cats tedious at best and downright annoying at worst. Give me a large friendly dog anyway. Dogs have more sense than to stalk and chase birds that they can't catch; dogs don't get stuck up trees; dogs don't spend the whole night in the back garden yowling at each other; dogs don't sit for hours on your doorstep, having totally failed to realise that it is the wrong house.

16 February 1980 (Skel)

It's now many issues since I last published a list of members of the SFD club. Here then, Abou, is a list of the guys in the white hats as of last issue:-

Agree: Andrushack: Arthurs: Bangsund: Bankier: Barker: Bartucci:
Barycz: Beatty: Bell: Bellis: Bennet: Bennett: Bentcliffe: Berry:
Birkhead: Boal: Boardman: Boston: Bowers: Bracken: Brazier: Breiding:
Bridges: Brooks: Brown: Brown: Brummer: Burbee: Bushyager: Cagle:
Campbell: Canfield: Chamberlain: Charnox: Clarke: Coad: Cockfield:
Cohen: Collick: Connor: Coulson: Curtis: Cvetko: Dalgaard: D'ammassa:
Danielson: Danner: Day: Denton: Digre: Dorey: Easterbrook: Easthope:
Edmonds: Eisensteins: Engholm: England: Farber: Fein: Fitch: Fortey:
FOKT: Gaier: Geis: George: Gillespie: Gilliland: Glicksohn: Glycer:

Hamilton:Hanner:Hansen:Harveys:Hawkins:Herman:Higgins:Hirsh:
Hlavaty:Hoare:Holdom:Hubbard:Hughes:Hull:Jacksons:Jeeves:
Kaufman:Kettle:Kincaid:Langford:Lawrence:Lien:Lindsay:Lindsay:
Locke:Longs:Lutrell:Lutrell:McCormick:McDonald:MacDonald:Marion:
Maules:Mayers:Meadows:Mearae:Miller:MinnStfs:Mueller:Nicholas:
Ortlieb:Palmer:Pardoes:Pederson:Peek:Felz:Poole:Roberts:Rotsler:
Rowe:Salomon:Scrivner:Sharpes:Shaw:Shiffman:Sjolander:Smith:
Sneary:Stephenson-Payne:Stoelting:Stopa:Strelkovs:Tackett:
Tepper:Thompkins:Thompson:Thornhill:Vayne:Walker:Ward:Weinstein:
White:Wild:Williams:Williams:Wind:Wood:

Thanks to my colour-coded file cards it is the work of but a few hours to flip through my records, spill them on the floor, bend down and bang my head on the table, reel backwards and knock my drink of beer over onto the debris, collapse with heart trouble owing to the excitement and get rushed off to hospital. If none of that happens though it's a snip to quickly discover that of the 149 copies of SFD17 the vast majority (73) went to the USA, eleven went to Australia, ten to Canada, three to Sweden and one each to Argentina, Denmark, South Africa and the West Indies. Forty-eight little piggies stayed home and ate roast beef (greedy little sods). I put that in in case there are any frustrated statisticians among you. God but my arse isn't half itching! (Telling it like it is again, eh Skelton?)

However, I feel like a challenge. Something really difficult. Perhaps I should come up with a system for finding prime numbers or maybe even an easy to understand guide to VAT. No, I need something really difficult. Aha! I've got it, I'll try running Glicksohn's LoC and editing out all references to alcohol. Wow, can it be done?

MIKE GLICKSOHN 141 High Park Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, M6P 2S3.

17 February 1980 (Skel)

Phew! And they said it couldn't be done. I need a drink after that and then I'll give you some deep, insightful criticism of some of the stuff I've read of late, starting with John Glasby's 'Project Jove'. This is a crock of shit. The other

half of the ace double is Ken Bulmer's 'The Hunters Of Jundagai' which is fair action/adventure stuff of the type done slightly better in Tubb's 'Dumarest' series. Fritz Leiber's 'The Worlds Of...' is a disappointing collection full of very ordinary stories. There's no 'Sex Pirates Of The Blood Asteroid' here (Langford, how could you?), but there's nothing really worth reading either. Margaret St. Clair's 'The Dancers Of Noyo' is also adequate for dulling the mind whilst pouring beer down you neck at lunchtime. Better still is Piers Anthony's 'Vicinity Cluster' which is considerably better than the second book in the series which I mentioned last issue. Ed McBain's 'Where There's Smoke' looks like kicking off a viable series (I'm sure I read somewhere that there was to be a new ITV series of that name...coincidence?) although this initial offering was somewhat obvious. Bob Shaw's 'Ship Of Strangers' reworks ground covered so much better by Van Vogt ('Voyage Of The Space Beagle') and Eric Frank Russell ('The Great Explosion') but is still a good read. The main character in this seems pretty competent so it was probably written by the other Bob Shaw, unless Bob had just had a large plateful of greasy chips and was feeling mellow at the time. The best thing I've read recently has been Alfred Coppel's 'The Dragon' which is an excellent political/espionage thriller of the modern school, although the espionage is strictly secondary (yes, it's of the secondary-modern school, although the grammar is quite comprehensive). At nearly 400 pages for 95pence this book is great value and I can definitely rate it in the 'Read-until-three-a.m.-in-order-to-finish-it-then-go-to-work-knackered-the-next-day' category. Meanwhile, I suspect it really is time for a LoC from Superglick.....

MIKE GLICKSOHN 141 High Park Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, M6P 2S3.

In your excellent analysis of SEACON you've put your finger on many of the drawbacks of having a massive great worldcon close enough to attend. What you didn't really emphasize, though, were the one or two aspects of the worldcon that make tolerating all the negative things almost worthwhile.

Primarily, the chance to meet/see/talk to (however briefly) a great many people one otherwise wouldn't see, along with a

chance to participate in something that's going to end up being a larger part of fanhistory and tradition than any smaller (and much more enjoyable) regional or local convention. The first mentioned advantage is the one that attracts most people: the chance to listen to or talk to well-known fans and famous writers is a major attraction of any worldcon. The second aspect is a much more personal one, I guess. To a certain extent, I go to worldcons because I've been to all the ones in the previous x number of years and I don't want to break that tradition. I also like the feeling of knowing that I was actually there for the birth of the JLAS, that I actually saw Cas sliding down a stairwell on a tray, that it was me who lost our only wicket in the sea-shore cricket game, that I listened in to the incredible way Geis's Hugo was handled, etc, etc, etc. I didn't read about all these things in fanzines months after they happened; I was there and I was part of it all. Maybe that's a silly reason for attending a con but I'd be lying if I said it didn't have something to do with my being at thirteen of the last fourteen worldcons...

Have to agree that even I was amazed at the money the Swedes had to throw around (and at how obnoxious they could inadvertently be -- I say "inadvertently" because I'm sure they were too smashed to realize they weren't projecting the "good buddy" image they thought they were) but I must point out that it was I who bought the run of FOULER. It is a telling commentary that not even drunken, filthy-rich Swedes wanted to bid on that particular item.

Your reaction to what happened to the Geis Hugo only makes sense if you continue to believe that the fan Hugos have any relevance to what is "best" in the realm of fan creativity. Having watched a hell of a lot of fan Hugos go to people that I couldn't feel any sort of admiration/respect for, I must admit that even though I continue to vote in the awards in the vain hope that by doing so I can help an educated voter base influence a significant award, I simply can't take them seriously enough to stop thinking that what happened to the Geis Hugo was sheer delight. I fully and completely agree with you that it requires a worldcon committee with the balls to declare certain professionally oriented magazines ineligible for the fanzine

award, but lacking that, I loved seeing a very obvious and clear statement from some quite important members of fandom as to their feelings about SFR and its eligibility. And when you get down to it, it was really Geis's fault anyway, for not setting up someone to pick up his Hugo if he won. If the man cares so little about the award after winning so many of them that he can't be bothered to ask someone to stand in for him, then I'm not going to worry too much about how the presentation of the award is handled. Maybe he'll eventually get the message and let someone who deserves the award have a chance at it that Geis's mammoth distribution makes impossible.

It may amuse you to know that the only time I have ever taken a motion to the worldcon business meeting it was to have a statement printed on the Hugo ballot to the effect that "If you are unfamiliar with a majority of the nominees in a given category it is suggested that you refrain from voting in that category." The motion was defeated. And that was 6 years ago.

If it makes you feel better to know that you are not alone, I enjoyed the days I spent visiting with you and Cas in Stockport more than I enjoyed the worldcon. Like you, I can't handle vast numbers of people, especially new people. Like you, I tend to clam up, listen a lot, and generally give the impression of not being able to articulate a coherent sentence until after I've had at least three double whiskeys.

Skel Ah SHIT, missed it! *Skel*

I never did really get to talk to Chris Priest or Joe Nicholas or Mike Dickinson or Jim Barker. I tended to stick with the people I was already comfortable with, as a defense mechanism. Sigh...we sure put the boot to the theory that Fans are Slans, don't we?

If Rick Sneary ever wondered exactly what about you was different, Paul, he ought to have been able to figure it out almost immediately after re-reading his own comments when he came to the section where you were sitting with "crusted port in one hand and a duck leg in the other" while typing stencils! It isn't every fan who can go around saying "on the other hand

...a couple of spare hands."

GOOD GOD, CAN IT BE...THE STEPFORD FANS?

Look, that's you and Mike and I. Statistically 100% of of all the fans who've responded to this point. With you off in a corner feeling comfortable with Brian Burgess, me in my room reading a Dumarest novel and Mike Meara doing his Home Guard coast-watch impersonation...if we extrapolate this 100% record to the rest of fandom...just who were all those ~~people~~ entities in there apparently enjoying themselves?

Since last issue Glick has died. Apparently from the same causes as the others, though at least she hung on long enough to be taken to the vets with some sort of breathing disorder. We think it was caused by them living outside in damp conditions. The two that are left have never been outside and they seem OK. We have however changed their names in order to make a clean break with the past. No longer E2 and G2 they are now Zaphod and Zarnyhoop.

Last November Cas came up with a peachy-keen idea for an inexpensive christmas gift for an un-named hairy canadian gentleman. The idea was to take copies of our recordings of 'The Hitch-Hiker's Guide To The Galaxy', put them inside one of those dummy-books, lettraset "Don't Panic" onto the front and mail it off in time for chrimble. Some ointments are 99.9% fly. First off, seeing as how she'd had the idea, my task (should I decide to accept it) was to actually do it. First pick up two C120s. No trouble so far and only a couple of quid. The book was a bit trickier but I remembered having seen some elegantly bound books full of blank paper in a Manchester bookshop. Of course, I'd have to cut the middle out but that did not look like being too much of a problem. The price of nearly three quid was more than I'd hoped but as the whole thing was just on the good side of a fiver I figured I couldn't complain.

So, I cut two cassette-sized holes in the pages of the book and off we went. I placed the two blank cassettes down in front of the music-centre and fetched my two tapes down from upstairs and placed them next to the blank ones. The only

thing I had to watch out for was mixing up the tapes as they were all the same make with nothing written on them other than the side numbers. I don't punch out the little safety lugs as I have never inadvertently recorded over something I wanted to keep. I recorded a sample and played it back...perfect so I set to and recorded the whole thing. About four hours later, I tested the final copy and discovered, eventually that the music-centre had malfunctioned about 10 minutes after I'd started recording. Needless to say there was a long delay, a waiting list to have it fixed. However, returned it was, in the fullness of time.

So, I recorded them all again, but this time I mixed up the tapes, recording parts 1-4 onto my copy of parts 5-7, thus leaving myself without a complete recording and unable to finish the job. Fortunately Mike Meara was able to fill in the gaps for me so I copied his tape once for myself and again for the 'project'. Alas the tape I recorded it onto appeared slightly short, missing off the end of the sixth episode so I had to do it yet again. This tape too was short...or was it? It finally dawned on me that whilst fixing the music-centre the engineer had somehow slightly altered the playing speed of the tape deck so my two decks were no longer running at quite the same rate. The difference was very small of course but one tape was bound to run out before the other and I had been recording from the slow deck onto the fast one. So, I recorded episodes 5 and fucking 6 one more time, the right way this time. Great! All I had to do now was Letraset the words "Don't Panic" onto the cover, preferably in gold said Cas.

Now whenever I've used that type of lettering I've used Blick Dry Lettering at about 70p a small sheet. Unfortunately they no longer make gold lettering but fortunately Letraset still did. Nearly £3 a large sheet! "I only want nine letters. Don't they do smaller sheets?" They don't do smaller sheets. Nearly £8 spent so far on this 'inexpensive' gift and I'm beginning to suspect this project to have been entered into rashly.

The BBC broadcasts the second series every night for a week. Cas reckons it would be a good idea to include this as part of the set. I pick up another C120 (£9) and re-cut the book to hold all three. Nothing goes wrong. Did you get that?

Nothing. Everything works like a charm.

The GPO puts up the postage rates before Cas can post it. It has to go airmail because it is so late, £6.64! Nearly £16 for an 'inexpensive' gift, not to mention n+1 hours messing around...and if I never hear parts 5 and 6 again it will be too bloody soon. Oh, oh...Cas has just said she's had another good idea. Hang on whilst I go and ram her head up her arsehole!

MARK BENNET 67 Austin Drive, Didsbury, Manchester.

I enjoyed SFD 17, with reservations.....ie., can I reserve myself a copy of number 18?

Concerning the extinction of the dinosaurs, constipation is an interesting theory, although the climactic change explanation seems more likely. I read somewhere that the prehistoric climate may have changed because of fluctuations in the ozone layer of the upper atmosphere. It is known that the chemicals in aerosol cans can cause this (although it is now known to be less dangerous than was once believed). It therefore seems obvious to me that in order to affect their climate that much, the dinosaurs must have used one hell of a lot of aerosol deoderant. This stands to reason when you consider their size...they must have gotten extremely hot and sweaty.

I assume you listened to the second series of 'The Hitch-Hiker's Guide To The Galaxy'. I must admit to being slightly disappointed with it. I enjoyed the first series more. However I am still trying to work out why.

WE CAN WORK IT OUT

Cas and I expected to be terribly disappointed by the second series so we were pleasantly surprised to be only slightly disappointed. One aspect of deterioration I noticed was in the use of Peter Jones. Whereas in the first series he merely (merely?) played the book (yes Mike, a 12-string book, I believe) and gave a brief summary at the beginning and end of each episode, in the second series this was restricted whilst he was used as a narrator to move the story-line along.

This change destroyed the perfect balance that the first series had achieved, with the humour there coming in approximately equal parts from the story-line and the 'quotes'. In the second series the humour came almost entirely from the characters and the plot situations. The disappointment therefore stems from the fact that one expected to laugh whenever Peter Jones came on as an excerpt from the book, but one rarely did.

PETER CAMPBELL 80 Royal Terrace, Thurso, Caithness, Scotland.

I sympathise with your shyness. I'm gut-achingly shy as well. Strange, but it's an impression I get from the large majority of fen, something borne out when I met my first (and only) true fan. We both stood there like a couple of demented pricks saying things like:-

Ellison's my favourite author at the moment/Yes, he's good/Yeah, he is/Yeah/Yeah... There follows a ten-minute silence as we search for something to say.

PAMELA BOAL 4 Westfield Way, Charlton Heights, Wantage, Oxon.

Shyness! A most painful affliction and one, believe it or not, I suffer from myself. But... when it got to the point (in my twenties) where I was actually vomiting at the thought of meeting people, I simply had to invent a cure. Simply never, never let a thought into your mind concerning what the other person is thinking about you (at least not until later, when it all comes flooding back but with decreasing horror as you practice). Always concentrate on what you are thinking about them. What an attractive...interesting...unusual person this is. He/she has a point worth thinking about here... he/she has something to say that is new to me. What a dismal person this is... what a ridiculous statement...I must make a point of avoiding him/her in future. I remember our first meeting well and you did not strike me as dumb, whether from shyness or any other reason...perhaps a little quieter than you write though.

I SUPPOSE IT'S NOT SURPRISING REALLY FOR...

Fandom in this country has always been a long-range type

of activity, ideally suited to people of a shy, reserved nature. It is only relatively recently that cons have proliferated to the extent that it is now quite possible to have convention fans in this country like there are in the States.

I recently mentioned to Eric Bentcliffe that I considered that this change would have the most profound effect on both UK fandom as a whole and on UK fanzine fandom, for until recently the prime movers in fandom had to be heavily involved in fanzine activity for (with the exception of the Brum group) members of local groups who did not have any fanzine involvement tended to be largely peripheral members of what were mainly social gatherings.

As I said, this has now changed and it will not be too long before the effects of that change begin to be noticed. Even now convention fans are in the majority (although active convention fans are not...but give it time) and therefore the prime movers will more and more be drawn from their ranks. What will the effects of this change be? Let us speculate....

There will always be certain filthy rich nurds from places like Derby who can afford to go to every convention in the known universe. We can ignore these (they are usually drunk anyway and make little sense). Many fans will have to exercise some selectivity regarding which conventions they attend, especially as there is talk of still more conventions in the offing. Also fanzine fans will no longer feel obliged to stage enormous conventions of a type they personally have little enthusiasm for. Already a putative alternative to the eastercon has been seriously mooted, although as yet the time has not seemed ripe for more than one convention on any particular date. It is certainly significant though that the first such proposed 'clash' should involve the largest and most traditional UK con.

It seems to me that it is quite possible that most fans could gravitate to the smaller regional conventions where the accent is more on the social aspects of fandom, attending the eastercon only when it is particularly convenient and eventually ignoring it altogether. This tendency would be exacerbated by the ever increasing cost of large conventions with exorbitant

room-rates and unbelievable bar prices. For instance we can get ourselves and the kids into a family room at Silicon this year, with full english breakfast, for only marginally more than the single rate (with continental breakfast) at Seacon.

Since typing the above I've heard from Mike and Pat Meara that very few fannish fans are expected to attend Albacon (although they had this information at umpteenth-hand) and also from Gerald Lawrence who'll be coming to see us this easter instead of making it to the con...ostensibly because he, a single man working in computers for e*n*o*r*m*u*s sum*s, can't afford it. Personally I suspect that Gerald too is privy to the same information as the mearae and that this has ~~coloured~~ ~~his~~ coloured his thinking somewhat.

This situation is sort of tangential to another topic that has been surfacing in various zines of late, regarding the suitability of certain TAFF delegates. Mike Glicksohn, for it is he, is of the opinion that the TAFF delegate should have some significant involvement in the fandom with whom he hopes to visit. This is, I believe, a naive belief even though it is an obvious ideal. It seems to me though that this situation will generally take care of itself.

There are obviously, apart from the relative merits of the candidates themselves, two main AND SEPARATE reasons for picking a TAFF-winner: Who you want to send or who you want to bring. Despite the relative affluence of modern fans it is still true that UK fans' awareness of US fans is based almost exclusively on the fanzines they read. Thus the fans with a high zine involvement with the recipient country will obviously be favoured in that country's voting. This was I feel exemplified in the last TAFF race, a race which was a close-run thing in the states so I'm told. However, the reaction of UK voters seemed to be "Terry Hughes and...who?" Terry was a shoo-in in the minds of the fans over here who were more likely to vote (the fanzine fans). This is not to disparage the other contestants. Fred Haskell might be the greatest guy who ever lived...but I don't know that. Suzle is nice to talk with, but I didn't know that. All I knew was what I read and from what I read it was no contest. The same held true, I think, for the other UK fans.

However, one has only to mutter "Madle and Eney" to demolish the theory that the recipient country will always tip the scales in favour of the candidate it prefers. I accept this. I accept that, if the US vote is so overwhelming in favour of one fan that it virtually discounts the UK vote, then probably somebody knows something I don't.

It could be argued that if only the fans in the country to be visited were allowed to vote it would automatically make the winner a person who'd recieved his votes for being a more international fan. However, a person in the flesh need not be quite what one might expect after 'knowing' that person only from his or her fanzine personality. Just think...back in the past we over here might have thought that Sam Moskowitz would've been a really groovy guy to have over and to listen to. P*H*E*W! I for one am glad that we have the safety factor of the 'sending' fans voting on possibly a totally different set of criteria.

HARRY ANDRUSCHAK 6933 N. Rosemead Blvd., 31, San Gabriel, CA91775.

I'm going into the genzine business and the first issue of INTERMEDIATE VECTOR BOSONS will be published at the end of February...maybe. Anyhow, I hope to get some good, libelous lim-eriks out of God. I already have two pages from Burbee and am looking forward to some material from Poul and Karen Anderson, Bjo Trimble, Forry Ackerman and a few others...should be a bouncy first issue.

I have a few corrections to make regarding my letter about beer last issue. First, to hell with 'Dos Equis'. They have sold out to the USA. One of the more shameful things about the USA beer scene is an abortion known as "light beer". This is a light, mostly tasteless lager that has a lower alcohol content. Yuch! Of course it is growing in both popularity and sales... and 'Dos Equis' has responded by 1) Lightening its regular beer to appeal more to the Gringo's taste, and 2) Selling a 'Dos Equis Light'! Fucking wetbacks can't do anything right anymore except ...hats off to one Mexican beer with integrity, 'Indios'. This is a dark beer and as such it wasn't selling too well in the USA. Rather than sell out like 'Dos Equis', they are stopping the importation of the beer. I'll miss that beer. I also notice that

I forgot to mention 'Ballantine's Ale'. I did this because I thought it was out of business. No, it is still around but like all really good beers over here it has low sales and has had trouble finding a distributor. It is very good and will stand comparison to most UK ales.

As for the pictures of Saturn...don't expect them. I was stabbed in the back by George Jumper, former OC of APA-L and now President of LASFS. He wrote, or inspired someone else to write, a letter to JFL about my salvaging techniques in getting NASA pictures to fans. I have been reprimanded and the supply cut off. Sorry, but you know these fan feuds.

2 March 1980 (Skel)

Fans as Slans is really getting a hammering these days, it seems. Odd, but it never occurred to me that you were 'liberating' those photographs. I assumed it was a deliberate policy to send them to anyone who was interested to stimulate interest in the US space-program. I would like your advice in this case though. I really want those photos of Saturn. Who should I write to and how should I ~~mis~~represent myself in order to get them to send me a set officially?

Over here there seem to be two conflicting trends on the beer front. On the one hand we have the trend away from pasteurised fizz to R*E*A*L A*L*E. This is a trend which even the major breweries are realising they can't beat for they too are switching from their nationally available keg brands back to the local brews which they took over and killed off. Then there's the bad news. There is also a trend, particularly among the younger drinkers, away from the traditional, more flavoursome brews and towards the much blander lager. Not even specifically towards the better lagers but just to any old diluted-cabbage-water, locally brewed muck. Here in Stockport Frederic Robinsons have been brewing fine traditional ales since bacon was 3d-a-pig. They don't know lager from a bucket of gnu's vomit but if they don't brew lager and offer it for sale in their public houses then they will lose a lot of trade and if they stop going into Robinsons' pubs now it might be difficult to get them back into the habit when they get older and their tastes hopefully change.

But what if they don't change? What if the major breweries once again try to switch to mass-market muck? With a beer-drinking public raised on bland beer (bleer?) they will probably pull it off.

In this country there are two types of 'light' beer. There is a 'low-alcohol' variety which is pushed at the consumer on the basis that he can drink it and still drive his car home without contravening the drunk-driving laws. The other form is 'lite' lager which is sold as being low in carbohydrates and thus OK for weight-watching guzzlers.

THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS IS NOT DEAD...

...for when the mearae were here recently I showed them the original of the classified advertisement on page four. Pat was quick to spot that the magazine was in fact a special christmas edition and we were left to ponder the christmassy ramifications of such a sex-mag. Christmas carols were an obvious area for specialisation. After 'Have It Away In A Manger' there might follow '47 Times In Royal David's City' not forgetting 'Oh Come All Ye Faithful' or worse, 'Oh Come, Oh Come Emanuelle'. This is even without such old favourites as 'We Three Kinks...' or, if she had a headache, 'The First Hell No!' Just a thought.

In keeping with the christmas atmosphere we gave Mike and Pat a present. A vibrator...but perhaps I should start this story at the beginning.

Some months back Gerald and Kate were visiting us and I was showing Gerald the copy of Penthouse I'd purchased with Dave Langford's epic 'Sex Pirates Of The Bloody Hemorrhoids' or some-such therein. Flipping on through, as one is wont to do with such magazines (especially if one can flip away from a Langford story) Gerald chanced upon a full page advertisement for certain strange and r*u*d*e devices and remarked to the effect that he'd always cherished a secret urge...to have a vibrator engraved and to present it in public to Celia Parsons in an attempt to gain revenge for certain unmentionable embarrassments she had caused him in the past. Cas was taking great delight in reading aloud the descriptive blurb for each device and I mentioned that I'd

often considered getting one for Cas as she has the annoying habit of feeling randy when she gets drunk whereas, when drunk, all I feel is asleep. "You never told me this," she said, studying the advert much more closely. I then noticed that if we ordered two it would take us above a certain cash figure whereupon we would be entitled to F*R*E*E G*I*F*T*S. That was it. A typical yorkshireman, I cannot resist a free gift. There and then we filled out the order form and Gerald payed us his share. Kate didn't seem too keen, but I put this down to the fact that she wasn't getting one, coupled with the fact that perhaps she viewed Gerald's scheme as a sort of mechanical infidelity.

We posted Gerald's off to him in time for Fancon but I understand that it didn't go ~~up~~ down too well. Still, you don't often get the chance to satisfy a life-long ambition.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, Cas had fallen instantly in love with the free gift, all ten inches of it which put the mockers on my plan to give it to the Mearae as part of their christmas present next year (Isn't it difficult trying to think of gifts for people who have everything?). Magnanimously she said we could let them have the little (8") super-deluxe job we had originally intended to keep.

Have you ever had a close look at one of these things? This one comes complete with several interchangeable heads for massaging all of ones body...and every single attachment is for places like the neck, the face, or the legs. Nowhere in the instructions does it mention...you know...that bit. True, there were some rubber sheaths as part of the free gift, some of which were decidedly realistic although one looked like a cross between a chimney-sweep's brush and an undernourished sea-anemone. Pat insists that in future she will only go to sleep fully clothed. "Well, look at him," she said, gesturing it in Mike's direction. "Would you let him near you with one of these, in his state?" I saw her point...which she quickly slipped into her bag. Drunk In Charge Of A Sex-Aid, is a serious charge. "Would you mind blowing into this, sir?"

"You must be kidding, I've only just thrown it out of the window, officer."

THE CURSE OF THE GUINEA-PIG'S TOMB STRIKES AGAIN.

When we awoke this morning Zarnyhoop was dead. If Zaphod goes the same way I think we'll call it a day. We don't seem to be much good at keeping guinea-pigs, live ones at any rate. We are at a loss to explain this latest death. Zarnyhoop was laid very flat in the sawdust of his cage, looking for all the world like he'd been run over by a steamroller. Perhaps there is some malignant alien entity buried beneath this house, an entity which exists by drinking the life-force of guinea-pigs...I don't know. Certainly Zarnyhoop can't have taken a chill.

I have discovered, incidentally, that Bob Tucker is really William Shatner in disguise. A well-kept secret this, but one I sussed out from constant references to them "both" constantly getting "Beamed-up". See what you can learn if you keep your eyes open and learn to put two and two together.

Hopefully certain of you have already looked with utter amazement upon this issue and said, "Christ! He has gotten back onto a quarterly schedule again." Perhaps you will now be thinking that as I no longer appear to be obsessed with our music-centre, having now allowed it to adopt merely its rightful place rather than the centre-stage it usurped because of its novelty...perhaps I can now get my priorities right and get my fanac back into a pre-eminent position. What now could possibly prevent this zine from going from strength to strength?

Needless to say, there is just such a "what". I have finally succumbed and splurged on a colour television. However, having held out for so long I decided that I might as well go the whole hog, so for the next six months I shall be in debt to the bank to pay for our 26" Grundig Supercolor. Already I know of one series we shall be watching that we wouldn't otherwise have seen again. David Attenborough's splendid 'Life On Earth' which we've only seen so far in black and white. We wouldn't have watched the repeat in black and white but this is one series where the added dimension of colour will make it like watching a totally different programme, so this is several hours that will now be lost to fanac. So I really want to get this issue out for the end of the month. It'll probably be my last

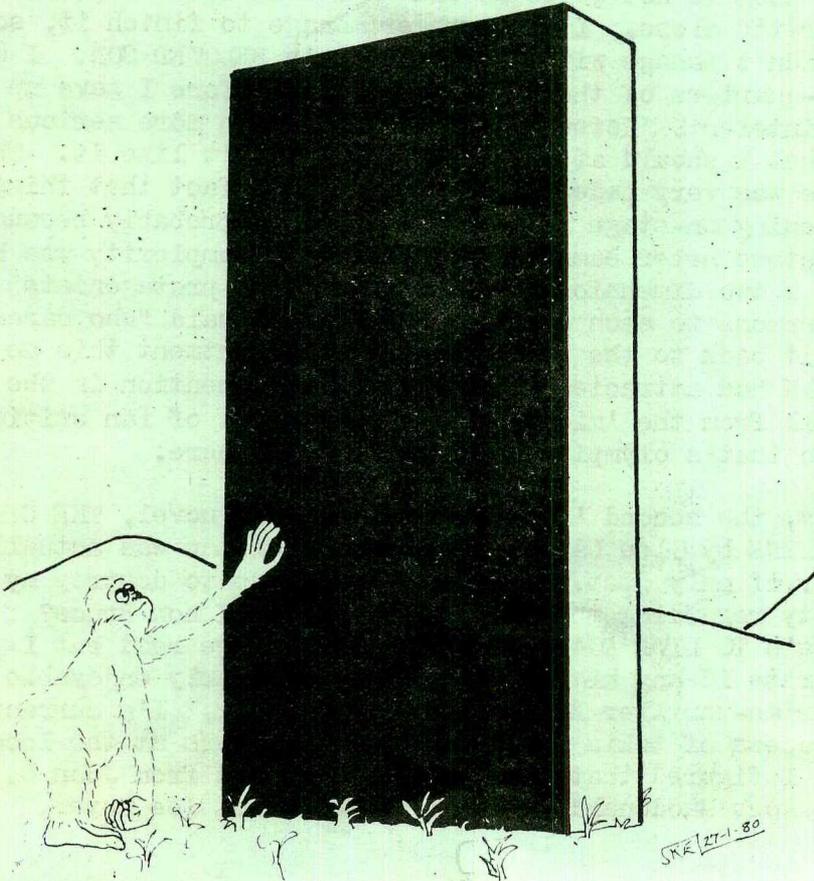
and best shot at 'quarterly' for a while at least. Then again, maybe not...who knows?

THE BOOKWORM TURNS...

So far though I seem to have the TV situation pretty much under control, with only one case of watching a programme I'd otherwise have sneered at...watching it just because it was pretty and like that. In fact I still seem to be doing a fair bit of reading.

I re-read Tubb's SPECTRUM OF A FORGOTTEN SUN which confirmed that the 'Dumarest' series seems to be running out of steam. It's not as weak as the more recent books but nothing like as vivid as the earlier stories. Dozois & Effinger's NIGHTMARE BLUE is not quite as bad as a book could be, but it runs it pretty close. I did however manage to finish it, something I didn't manage with George Turner's BELOVED SON. I only got three-quarters of the way through this before I gave up in total disinterest. However, as this is a much more serious novel I feel I should at least say why I didn't like it. The story-line was very pedestrian. Despite the fact that things were happening on-stage it never gripped me, probably because the characters never came alive. Character complexity was hinted at in a two dimensional manner whilst the protagonists deliver sermons to each other. In the end I said "Who cares?" and took it back to the library. A disappointment this as BELOVED SON had attracted so much favourable mention in the fan press. All from the 'middle-management' level of fan critics but even so that's olympian heights from down here.

Oddly, the second 'Battlestar Galactica' novel, THE CYLON DEATH MACHINE by Glen Larson and Robert Thurston was actually readable...if only just. I mention this here to destroy my credibility regarding the above paragraph. OK now Bruce? Silverberg's TO LIVE AGAIN was an above-average read but I wouldn't rate it any higher than that. Similarly enjoyable was the crime-thriller BOLTHOLE by David Craig. I'm currently in the process of taking pot-luck with thrillers at the local library. I figured that the pleasure I've had from John D. McDonald, Ross Macdonald, William P. McGivern, Joe Poyer,





SKR 27-1-80

James Munro (James Mitchell), Ed McBain et al can't be that I've lucked onto, unfailingly, all that's good in this genre. I figure there must be more that I'd like if only I look for it. I really enjoyed the two Jack Vance mysteries I've so far chanced upon.

I've also recently read THE LINDSAY REPORT, kindly loaned by Ethel. I really enjoy reading old trip reports as one gets to be an armchair tourist through both time and space. All the old reports are full of warm feeling and bonhomie of course but I'm not sure that the current trend of brutal honesty would be appropriate in such a report. It seems to me it would be highly discourteous to tell people that Joe McPhan is a big shit and an all round creep after he has put you up for three days. In fact you you couple good manners with the fact that on such a trip one probably feels really good and well-disposed to ones fellow fans, I don't see how one could take any other tone. Of course one can't compare this with a modern TAFF-trip report as they are singularly lacking in existence. I'm really looking forward to yours, Pete. Send me one as soon as it's ready and I'll send the cash by return (they'll probably all be gone by the time an out-of-touch fan like me finds out it's been published).

JOYCE SCRIVNER 2528 15th Ave Sth, Minneapolis, MN 55404, USA.

Odds and messages about Seacon darken your pages. The little I remember about Seacon has seeped out with the beer I drank there (though there was a story about Cas sliding down-stairs on tea-trays but I wasn't there! Ha!). Some of it has seeped onto stencils but the ink and paper haven't gotten there yet. My fanzines come in spurts...

Skel Male fanzines, uh? *Skel*

...not stencils.

When I met you at Seacon you didn't seem painfully shy, only protected by pints of beer (too bad they didn't protect Mike from the attack of Jim Blish's socks!). As for knowing more about Dave Piper, that's easy! Ever since Dave and I

plotted on the floor of the Hugo-Losers party he's been my 'adopted son. We don't send too many christmas cards, but I should be able to tell you enough so that you don't feel that you've never known him (Which trouser leg does he put on first? The one closest. Which side of the bed does he sleep on? The one he gets up on...

Skel He sleeps standing up by the side of his bed? Somehow, Joyce, I'm not too surprised *Skel*

...what happened to his turtle? It escaped and froze...). Queries welcomed. You know how adoring parents like to babble proudly about their children.

The Langford barrier is not too hard either. You simply make sure he's drunk his bottle of whisky and then accuse him of stealing a camera. He stands there stunned and you walk away with the last word. You even have time to search his bag first. I watched exactly that happen one night at Seacon, but lightning doesn't strike twice in the same place. Perhaps you can plot your own scene with a little help from Cas...shouldn't be too hard.

I tend to believe in feminist ideals and argue for them, but I don't have any arguments with you (or Mike) about your position. Nor have I particularly given up on either one of you (though if you get pissed at my "patronising" either of you I'll wash my hands of the lot). Thanks for an enjoyable issue. I liked the bits about Judy Collins and some of the short reviews. I might buy the books some time. The record I have. Take care (especially of the styli).

NO PRIZES ARE OFFERED...

...for guessing which quip, and where, I decided not to interject in Joyce's LoC.

'True 2001 Tales' on pages 22/23 have a bit of a chequered history. In less than two months they have already been rejected by one Huge-Name-Canfan and printed twice. They haven't been published yet, but they have been printed twice...owing to

a cock-up on the skelfather front. The fact is that I buy the paper for SFD at double its finished size and the skelfather (being a director of a printing firm) cuts in half for me with one of his super-guillotines. Also, very occasionally (since I started INFERNO/SFD in July 1973 I hadn't conned him into any printing until EGEO SEXTARIUS last summer) he prints the odd item for me. Now I was stuck with a two-page illo that needed printing. Not to worry, the skelfather had it printed for me and then he had it chopped in half.....or rather he had it chopped not-quite-in-half. One page was $6\frac{3}{4}$ inches wide whilst the other was only $6\frac{1}{4}$ inches wide. *S*H*I*T*. Then it dawned on me that at the same time I'd had all the paper for this issue chopped. *D*O*U*B*L*E*S*H*I*T*. Obviously the larger 'half' could be re-trimmed to the correct size but I still had to buy two more reams of paper and the printing had to be re-done. Six quid up the shoot. Obviously I couldn't accept the skelfathers offer to pay for the extra paper as he'd only been doing me a favour in the first place (and besides, I'd then have been too embarrassed to ask him for future favours). Anyway Mike, I bet you didn't expect to see those illos again so soon, did you?

Last summer Mike said that if I got my publishing frequency back onto a quarterly schedule I might, in a couple of years, make a credible TAFT candidate myself. Since then I've published three fanzines in less than nine months. It's just coincidence, Mike, HONEST!

Getting back to the chop-up cock-up though, I now have 3 reams of very small paper so guess what size my next one-shot will be, in the fullness of time? This should please Terry Jeeves although the words I said when I discovered the mistake probably wouldn't.

TERRY JEEVES 230 Bannerdale Road, Sheffield, S11 9FE.

Many thanks for SFD 17 which arrived today...and praise GHU, had the naughty bits folded inside. I've said this before...that what a faned puts in his zine is his own business...but once he mails it out, then it also comes within the orbit of its readers. Personally, I don't like all the cuss words in a

fanzine. They serve no useful purpose, add nothing to the text and to me at least are off-putting. I immediately get the impression, right or wrong, that the writer is of limited vocabulary and has to shore up the cracks in his verbiage by bunging cuss words into the gaps.

Now I KNOW this isn't the case with you...but that is the impression I start off with, and it hampers my enjoyment of the zine. I'm not trying to run you down Skel, please don't think that, but why use such language except when a certain effect is needed? I always remember when Pygmalion first hit the news... way back in the good old days when the word 'bloody' was never heard except in the PE changing room...or doctor's surgery. When Eliza Doolittle came out with "Not bloody likely"...that really had impact! It got coverage everywhere...and really made her point at the same time. Now sheer over-use of the word has rendered it about on a par with that other Victorian monstrosity...'nice'...so overused it not only lacks impact it even lacks its original value as a word.

Loved that cover illo...GREAT. Did I tell you I also like the size of SFD? I'd be tempted to steal the idea for ERG except for the fact that it would mar my 21 year run, and would also require much more work either to type sideways or I would have to type the stencils and then re-gunge them for running off. I also liked the letters, the informality, the general rambling style...so please keep it up (without the adjective abuse).

NOTICE THAT TERRY, A TRUE YORKSHIREMAN...

...never even considers the method I use, that of typing each page onto a separate stencil and running it off. Such profligacy is unthinkable. I guess I'm just more lazy than I am Yorkshire.

However, regarding my use of language...I simply do not know what to do. I do not use the language I use in order to shock people. You are correct in saying that such language no longer shocks people, and so I would be wasting my time if I used it for such a purpose. The simple fact is though Terry,

that I am not of your generation and the majority of people I'm talking to aren't of your generation. Such words have been devalued and when I use them I use them in the context of my generation, whereas when you read them you read them in the context of your generation. It seems to me that such words have almost replaced the word 'very' in their usage, but with a degree of emphasis resulting from a memory of their older connotations. "How was it?" "Bloody marvelous!"/"How did the Blues play today?" "Fucking awful!" People nowadays simply do not think in terms of "Oh Gosh, Carruthers...I say, bad show old bean!" I can only ask you Terry to try and appreciate that I am not trying to be obscene when I use such language, that I am not striving to be "...lewd, licentious, ill-omened...". I am indeed sorry if such words spoil your enjoyment of SFD because there is no doubt that my membership in fandom is down to you. ERG was the first zine I ever recieved and you were the first fan with whom I corresponded.

I've been contemplating abandoning SFD. I had the first ten issues bound and when the second ten are done I shall have to decide if the hassle and expense of publishing an SFD-size fanzine are worth it. Damn, but I like the size too, but there is no doubt that quarto would be more economical and less (far less) trouble. I could of course call it LARGE FRIENDLY DOG but then I'd lose the 'SF' out of the title (see cover), a happenstance which has always secretly pleased me. Alternatively I could put SFD on 'hold' and make THE ZINE THAT HAS NO NAME my regular fnz. Hmmm, more mulling is required here....

Apparently my dig at Joseph Nicholas' expense has upset him so much he won't send me a regular LoC anymore (thank god) (A *j*o*k*e* Joseph, a joke) but instead he sent a copy of an article from The Economist on whodunits which was ~~ALSO VERY~~ interesting in parts but somewhat long-winded, taking five pages to make two or three pages-worth of points. What such an article is doing in The Economist anyway is a mystery in itself.

Another mystery is a cassette from Steve McDonald. The mystery here is twofold. Firstly, why will the tape not play properly, insisting in only coming through one speaker and

second and more important...why has he recorded this load of dingo's kidneys in the first place? I suspect the existence of a drunken conversation at Seacon. I do have a vague recollection of saying I'd like to hear some real reggae...but if that is what it is, WHY does it contain 'Eee By Gum' by the Five-penny Piece? They are after all a Stockport based folk group of little standing and less talent. Have mind - will boggle. I think there used to was a letter with this, probably explaining all, but it seems to have gotten separated. I'll have to get back to you later on this Steve after I figure out what it's all about (ie. When I find the letter).

Yet another mystery is a DNQ pocsacr from Gil Gaier. The mystery here is why it's "DNQ". Just why should knowing that you found last issue particularly entertaining plunge the whole of fandom into a final internecine conflict, Gil? Woops, have I lit the spark?

THE SONG NOT THE SINGER

Some time ago I mentioned Judy Collins' version of 'The Moon Is A Harsh Mistress'. She has also recorded 'The Golden Apples Of The Sun'. I'd be interested to know of any other songs with an SF connection in the title. David Matthews has done an LP called 'Dune', inspired by the book and I know that someone (Bo Hansenn?) has done an LP of music inspired by 'Lord Of The Rings' but that's all I know about.(Brian Bennett almost made it with a track called 'Slippery Jim De Grize'). I am of course referring to a connection with written SF. Tracks like 'I Lost My Heart To A Starship Trooper', 'Urban Spaceman' and 'Space Oddity' don't count although I suppose one could tie the first to Heinlein rather than Star Wars.

BBC DISCOVERS TIME WARP

I see from next weeks 'Radio Times' that the BBC is to give us a *quote* "New Series" *unquote*, 'The Outer Limits' "The classic sci-fi series..." kicking off with 'Demon with a Glass Hand' by Harlan Ellison "(Black and white)".

So how come this old black and white TV series is suddenly

"NEW"? It wouldn't be so bad if they simply meant that it hadn't been shown here before, but I've seen it and I've never set foot outside the UK in my life. Have The Beeb wasted Taxpayers' Money on something that ITV bought and screened years ago? Will ITV take them to court?

Mind you, they are also re-showing 'Bilko' although they do not have the temerity to claim that as a new series.

SOMETHING WICKER THIS WAY COMES.

There were a lot of posters at Seacon pushing the film 'The Wicker Man' and I never found out what it was all about. The film has now been screened on TV and I was most impressed. Britt Ekland completely nude was not all its charms, by a long way. An excellent performance from Edward Woodward was supported by the novel approach and the final scene where he was locked inside the wicker man and burned, stark against the horizon, was visual perfection. Make a point of seeing this film on TV if you get the chance.

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