



HANSEN '01

TAPPEN

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"Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
Of that colossal rectum, boundless of bear  
The lone and level sands stretch far away."

- Shelley, "Ozymandias"

Which can only mean it's

### TAPPEN 3

a fanzine edited and produced by Malcolm Edwards, 28 Duckett Road, London N4 1EW, U.K. (Tel: 01-340 9983) Available by editorial whim (my little known Dutch assistant). This finger-poppin' toe-tappen' third issue was commenced on 19th October 1981, at about 7.45pm, the editor having lost patience with this week's episode of BLAKE'S SEVEN.

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### FRONT PAGE DRIVE-IN NEWS

A funny thing has been happening apropos of this fanzine, and as its editor I have to say that I do not approve. The thing that has been happening is that in several quarters it seems to have ceased to be merely an example, and has instead become an Example, a totem of old-style (i.e. pre-Seacon) British fanzine fandom renascent. Whether or not this is a good thing depends on the ideology of the individual concerned: either it's a sign of the Golden Age returning, a sign and a lesson to the poor benighted young fans languishing in ignorance of how things ought to be; or it's a lamentable and reactionary dinosaur, unwelcome and irrelevant in the thrusting and restlessly experimental new British fandom of the 1980s.

Either way, I tend to feel that this is a lot of fucking bullshit.

A great deal of what it appears to boil down to is, absurdly enough, format, as is made explicit by Abi Frost's comments in the latest NEW RIVER BLUES. Abi makes reference to "this strange new wave of fanzines-on-coloured-quarto-paper-with-illustrations-restricted-to-Hansen-covers" -- by which she means TAPPEN, EPSILON and STOP BREAKING DOWN (though the latter has a Harry Bell cover), and contrasts this with the variousness of format of post-Seacon format. She goes on to worry that:

"...when we have half a dozen good fanzines (most better than the others around) in the old pattern about, new faneds will simply imitate them, and not try to find their own way; and that they will be encouraged in this by the old guard editors. And we will be back where, to get approval, fame, and votes in the ANSIBLE poll, you have to use one type of paper, one type of layout, run articles by twenty or so approved authors, have a cover by one of four approved artists..."

Daft as this is, it does seem to get close to the heart of the matter: the idea that there is an entrenched wisdom in established fannish fandom about the Right and Wrong way of doing things, and that TAPPEN and co represent some

subtly fascist attempt to reassert the Right way.

I would like to assert that this is not so.

Firstly, this format was never that standard. It may resemble to a degree the format of WRINKLED SHREW and STOP BREAKING DOWN (as it happens the two best British fanzines of the 1970s, though hardly the only good ones) and one or two others, but it doesn't resemble Rob Jackson's MAYA, or TWLL DDU (to name but two; nor, except in paper size, does it resemble TRUE RAT, whose combination of good content and lousy production make it, if anything, the precursor of NEW RIVER BLUES.... And this is to say nothing of the various peculiar pre-Season fanzines of Dave Bridges, which were certainly far more innovative in production (not always successfully, but always adventurously) than anything I've seen since.

Nor, it will be clear from the above, was adoption of a format similar to this one ever a pre-requisite for success in fan polls. (This hardly needs to be pointed out.) Nor is there any evidence that I'm aware of of old guard fans trying to encourage some kind of standardization. Nor, in fact, is there any evidence of anything other than two or three people who haven't published a fanzine for a while deciding it was about bloody time they did so, the simultaneity of the things perhaps being because they meet in the same pub every Sunday and tend to egg each other on.

Let's spell it out really boringly. I use quarto because I happen to like it. A quarto stencil doesn't take as long to type as an A4 stencil, so you feel you're getting somewhere faster (this kind of thing counts with me). I duplicate the thing rather than having it Xeroxed or printed because it's the cheapest method available to me, and because I actually enjoy the process of production (however much I curse when things go wrong). I don't use illustrations because I know from past experience that I'm rotten at pasting in bits of electrostencil, though since Alexis Gilliland has sent a couple of cartoons I like I shall doubtless break this rule next time. Rob Hansen has done the covers so far because he's able, obliging, fast-working, and I see him every week. And if there's a restricted circle of contributors -- so far -- it's probably because I have a restricted circle of friends to lean on. Also, one of my intentions was to lure back into fanwriting a number of people whom I know and whose work I like. Several have so far resisted temptation, but I'm working on them.

TAPPEN's official position on diversity in fanzines is that we're all for it. Okay, everybody? The main problem with British fandom today is that there are too few fanzines, and those that there are appear too infrequently. People have made noises to the effect that TAPPEN 2 appeared so soon after no.1 that they didn't have time to think about responding to the first. Nonsense! TAPPEN is (so far) bi-monthly, which once upon a time was fairly average for healthy fanzines. I know times is hard -- I am not unaffected by austerity -- but fanzines do need to appear frequently for the enthusiasm they can engender to become self-sustaining.

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I hardly seem to have been at home lately. At the end of August I went to Rotterdam for Beneluxcon, where I discovered that quite a few European fans are (though they don't always know it) fannish too. Chris went instead to Silicon (which D. West was commissioned to cover for TAPPEN, but didn't). I was going to write a Beneluxcon report, but my note-taking failed early, and now of course I remember very little. The most vivid recollection is somewhat embarrassing: a long political argument with Norma Vance (wife of some sf writer) and Gerry Webb, both of somewhat conservative views, in the course of which I detached myself sufficiently from what was going on to observe, with some amazement, my mouth advancing an argument propounding the general preferability of Nixon to Reagan. Nixon may be dishonest, it went, but at least he isn't stupid. This may indeed be so, but Mussolini was probably nicer than Hitler, and so what? Beware the awful consequences of arguing with Reaganites.

After the various conventions, Chris and I rendezvoused in Amsterdam, from whence we returned just in time for me to rush off to Unicon, about which I need say no more because I've got Chris Evans to say it all for me....

#### THE BODY IN QUESTION: AN ANATOMY OF UNICON 2

by Chris Evans

I had problems with practically every part of my body at Unicon 2.

The first bodily organ to upset me was my heart, and this occurred some hours before I'd even reached Keele. I was in a car travelling up the M1 on Friday afternoon, sitting next to Andy Richards, who was driving, and talking to Malcolm Edwards and Leroy Kettle, who were sitting in the back. Suddenly Malcolm's face took on an alarmed expression. For a moment I thought it might have been something I'd said, but then I detected an untoward sideways movement of the car and decided that I would be advised to look around. Doing so, I saw that we were negotiating a sharp bend in an elevated section of the motorway at a rather high speed. Andy was doing his best to get the car to follow a nice curving trajectory in the same direction as the road, but the car seemed to want to veer off at a tangent into the crash barrier and quite conceivably straight through it and thence on into space. Several heart stopping seconds followed before the argument was decided in Andy's favour, though it was several minutes before I began to feel well again. But Andy is a calm and very sensible person and quickly persuaded me that he hadn't really been trying to kill the four of us.

The next part of my body to start acting up was my bowel, which began generating large amounts of gas as we arrived at Keele. My body was quite vehement in ridding itself of this and I would have to move discreetly away from groups of people before farting. On the first discharge (seconds after we got out of the car) Leroy and Malcolm suggested an immediate change of underpants, but this wasn't really necessary as the farts' barks were worse than

their bites. Unfortunately Roy and Malcolm seemed to find it necessary to warn anyone within earshot of my condition, especially persons of the female persuasion during the opening ceremony. This went on until I was too drunk to notice it — about an hour later.

Naturally enough it was inevitable that I would sooner or later have problems with my brain at the convention. This became obvious some time after two o'clock that night at a room party. I was mixing punch with my lager and eating slices of cucumber when I realized that I had finally attained a state of non-functional drunkenness. People were trying to talk to me and I wanted them to go away. Eventually I decided to go away myself. My legs weren't too happy about this, but luckily I only had to haul myself up one flight of stairs to my room, something which could be accomplished in a mere half-hour.

The next day my head felt as if the Warsaw Pact armies had been conducting manoeuvres inside it. Once upon a time I used to be quite adept at vomiting when I'd drunk too much but these days my hangovers tend to be concentrated above the neck. My cranial cavity seemed to have shrunk overnight, compressing my brain to at least half its normal size. My entire skull was consumed with a pain which managed to combine a pervasive dull pulsating quality with sharper, more specific spasms which originated at the base of my head and rapidly surged upwards and over towards both eyes. I kept having to go back to bed after peeing, gulping water, swallowing a vitamin C tablet, drinking coffee, and so on. It was after one o'clock before I emerged and went over to the Chancellor's Building, where the main programme was taking place. A panel I was to have spoken on that morning had been cancelled. I had been going to argue that alcohol was not necessary at conventions. This was supposed to have been a joke, but if I'd been forced to participate that morning I'd have insisted that it should be banned altogether.

Saturday remains something of a blur to me, which is my usual experience at conventions. I tend to go berserk on the first evening, with the result that I feel awful all the next day. Someone once told me that I sometimes look aloof and full of myself at conventions. This isn't how I feel inside at all. Inside I feel as if my digestive tract has been centrifuged, its contents being deposited in considerable quantity and density in my lower intestine and urging immediate expulsion from my body every fifteen minutes or so. I operate on automatic, walking around, conducting conversations, lifting pints to my mouth, all the while secretly wishing I could die. The aloof expression probably comes from the conviction that my head is about to float off into space. As for feeling full of myself, my excretory system does everything in its power to counteract that.

But what I dislike most about hangovers are the mental effects. My nerves become frayed and my sense of paranoia mounts. I suffer from sensory overload and the psychological equivalent of having a huge pimple on the end of my nose. When I talk to people I quickly become convinced that I'm being boring, overbearing or downright stupid. At Unicon 2 I became more or less positive that Bob Shaw thinks I'm a loudmouth. As my persecution mania mounts, I withdraw to the periphery of conversations, feeling as if my brain is making a concerted effort to convert itself into tapioca pudding.

When I'm in this state I try to spend as much time as possible with people I know well. Younger fans often complain about the cliquishness of older fans at conventions. It isn't really cliquishness at all, but merely the instinct for self-preservation. When you're knackered and strung out you naturally gravitate to old friends, in whose company you can quietly vegetate and feel under no obligation to perform. There's nothing worse than being expected to be articulate, witty or abrasive when you're feeling like death warmed up. If the same names keep cropping up in this account (and they will) it's because their activities loom largest in my memory. If everything's excessively focused on my activities and impressions, I can't help that either: this is the way I experience a convention.

Another side-effect of a bad hangover is that I tend to forget people's names. This can be distinctly unsettling when someone comes up to you and starts greeting you like a long-lost buddy and you don't know who the hell they are. Convention badges are a positive nuisance in this respect since you have an immediate urge to look at them while at the same time knowing that it's impossible to do so without embarrassing yourself and the person whose name you can't remember. I tend to bluff, and make a mental note of their faces with a view to sneaking a look at their badge some time later when they're off guard. On Saturday afternoon I spent a full five minutes talking to someone before I remembered that it was Rob Holdstock, newly returned from the Low Countries.

There were three Space Invader machines in the main concourse. If I was Prime Minister I'd wipe out unemployment overnight by organizing all the people out of work into bands of guerillas whose job it would be to sneak out at night and do grievous bodily harm to these machines. In my zomboid Saturday state I spent a lot of time peering over people's shoulders at a machine called Vanguard, chiefly because it had lots of pretty colours and a voice which said "Rainbow Zone" in a tone which managed to be at once chatty and moronic. However its main distinguishing characteristic was the little signature tune which it played incessantly. This reminded me of the theme music to "The Big Match" and can be best (if inadequately) represented by the words POM POM, PIDDLEY POM, PIDDLEY POM, PIDDLEY POM POM. The point about this is that the tune tended to stick in your head like glue. Through most of Saturday it was about the only intelligible thing anyone could get out of me.

The ballon race in which I was supposed to be competing that evening was cancelled. I did not reveal my disappointment at this. There was another room party that night, and this one was even more convenient, being just along the corridor from my room. That evening I had been studiously regulating my drinking so that I would not proceed beyond a functional drunkenness. It's not that I have anything against non-functional drunkenness: it's the associated paranoia which tends to follow it that I can only take in small doses. Earlier that day I'd even got annoyed with Malcolm, whom everyone knows is as sweet-natured as Mary Poppins,\* so I'd decided that moderation was the order of the day if I wasn't to start tearing out what little hair I have left.

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\*Be careful, Evans, unless you fancy an enema with a spoonful of sugar. (Ed.)

Unfortunately this meant that I ended up standing in the corridor cradling a can of lager until its contents reached blood temperature and its taste resembled a solution of Alka-Seltzer in urine. My stomach was starting to protest at this when Jim Barker stuffed half a loaf of bread in a plastic bag down my trouser front -- just the sort of diversion I needed. Rochelle Dorey was reluctantly persuaded to fondle this lump in my groin, something which I didn't object to in the slightest. Unfortunately several other people whom I didn't know saw this and eagerly began lining up to try their hands. All of them were male and I don't think they saw it as a joke. I moved faster than I'd done all day in extracting the loaf from my trousers and flinging it at them. Picking my way through the cigarette ends, I went off to bed.

My nose needed attention the following morning, being filled with the kind of congealed rubbery snot which urgently demands extraction. I lay there on my bed, thoroughly enjoying rolling it into little balls and flicking them at the window. It was a sunny morning, the fields and trees of the Keele campus looking radiant under a blue and white sky. I felt much better than I had done the previous morning. I'd heard Malcolm and Leroy going off to bed just before dawn, making drunken injunctions to wake one another in time for breakfast. Waking was not a good idea in Roy's case. He ate breakfast in the refectory, then promptly deposited it on the grass outside. I felt rather smug that someone else was having trouble with their bodies rather than me. Finally Roy admitted defeat and went off to lie down again. He looked like a man who had just sat through a forty-eight hour lecture by Gerry Webb.

I had managed to avoid participating in any programme items up to now, but I couldn't get out of being a contestant in "Blankety Blank" that afternoon. Despite a performance of stunning ineptitude and lack of wit I reached the final, whereupon I was resoundingly defeated by Zoltan's Keeper. This was probably just as well, since I might have had to be kissed by Jim Barker if I'd won.

There was a buffet that evening. For those of you who don't know what a buffet is, it consists of forming a fifty-person scrum and then assaulting a table on which a variety of cold foods have lovingly been laid out. The plates are made of paper to increase the challenge of squeezing them through the mass of bodies and flailing arms without losing or squashing the contents. When you've finished playing hunt the plastic knife and fork, you're allowed to sit down and eat your radish and sprig of parsley. I got in early and fled with a lump of chicken and several other goodies before the melee formed.

I'm a little confused about the sequence of events after this. I think I played some pool with Sue Barker (there being no tennis racquets to hand) and was then called upon to take my part in Jim Barker's "Captive" play. Leroy and Rob Holdstock were also involved, Roy actually having a line of dialogue to say. Rob simply stood there, looking as if he wished he was invisible, while Roy adopted the offhand, Brandoesque style of acting which derives from developing an utter lack of interest in the proceedings from the start. I hovered over Jim Barker, trying not to make any smart alec remarks. He gave me an elbow in the balls for my pains when I did. Despite all our efforts, the audience laughed at the play.

We went back to play some more pool. Unfortunately an aggressive drunk had occupied the table, and he started abusing me the moment I walked into the pool room. He was a weedy type, so I told him to look at me when he was talking to me. But he was utterly immune to this sub-James Cagney routine, being more interested in haranguing whoever happened to be in earshot while slopping beer over the table and generally making a nuisance of himself. Eventually Leroy was induced to play a game with him and did the wrong thing by winning. The drunk swept his cue across the table, sending the remaining balls flying — a shot as futile as it was unorthodox. The trouble with aggressive drunks is that they tend to bring out the worst in other people: the more he impinged himself on my consciousness the more attractive became the idea of tearing his limbs off one by one. We decided to pretend that he didn't exist and finally he went away, telling us that he'd left the cues crossed on the table. I still haven't been able to work out the significance of this.

And so to the room party. Several of us congaed into this, though I don't know how we actually managed to get inside the room since it was filled to bursting point with people, all talking, swaying and pouring alcoholic liquids into their mouths. These activities seemed thoroughly appropriate and we quickly joined in. Muted music was issuing from a corner of the room and some of us managed to do a short dance — a considerable technical feat under the circumstances.

I suppose it was my eyes that gave me trouble next, though at the time there didn't seem to be anything wrong with them. I went outside for a breath of air and saw a fat bright moon above the treetops. Or rather, looking more closely, two fat bright moons so near to one another they almost overlapped. No one else seemed impressed by this remarkable phenomenon when I told them about it; there were even a few cases of outright scepticism. I remember trying to convince both John Sladeks but neither of them would believe me.

When I finally went back to my room I was accompanied by Roy and Jim Barker. Roy slumped on the floor, looking as if he was anticipating another forty-eight hour lecture by Gerry Webb. But the Mad Fanartist from Falkirk was full of the joys of spring. He promptly savaged a loaf of bread which was lying around and started hurling chunks of it at me while I huddled on the bed. I think he ought to seek medical advice about this sudden fixation with loaves. I wouldn't have minded if it had been only bread, but several pieces had butter on them, which left suspicious-looking smears on the sheets. Having expelled Barker and Kettle and got into bed, I had to adopt a sleeping position which would have done credit to a contortionist to prevent myself from getting a greasy arse, a difficulty Roy later summed up as a "bread and buttocks" problem.

In the morning a cleaner burst into my room at 9.30 without so much as a "Pardon Me". After some difficulty, I got her to go away. When I emerged into the corridor a few minutes later I saw that she and others of her ilk had invaded everybody else's room like a swarm of KGB agents descending on a samizdat centre. I think it was Malcolm who stumbled off to the toilet and returned to find that his bed had been stripped of its sheets. Considerations of privacy were totally lacking in these people, and I now understand why Keele University has such a high suicide rate: it's the only way the students can

get a decent rest.

We lingered for an hour or two in the Chancellor's Building, then finally faced up to the awful prospect of returning to the real world. To me the worst thing about conventions is That Post-Convention Feeling, which immediately descends as soon as I arrive home. This takes the form of a vague feeling of anxiety, a general feeling of extreme knackeredness and a distinct reluctance to spend more than five minutes on my own. I crave more company and in particular more booze. But best of all the symptoms are the crazied frenzied dreams which I always get on the first night after a con. Unicon 2 produced a really good one about encountering a demented child who clamped his arms around my waist and tried to bite my genitals off. No kidding. These dreams are undoubtedly my body's final revenge for the abuse I've done it, and there's a direct correlation between their awfulness and the success of a convention. On this basis Unicon 2 scores pretty well; it was a relatively relaxed, quietly efficient convention in a very nice setting and it was thoroughly bad for my physical and mental health. One of these days I'll enjoy myself so much at a con I'll drive myself insane.

--- Chris Evans

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While I was typing the bit on the previous page where Chris talks about "having expelled Barker ... and got into bed" it occurred to me that he had unknowingly coined a wonderful new euphemism for farting. But then I thought it would be unfair to Jim to make such a notion public, so do forget you ever read this paragraph.

Generally, Unicon went a long way towards banishing the fear and loathing of campus conventions which had resided in my mind, at least, since Mancon. I still prefer hotels, primarily for the private bathroom which I regard not as a luxury but as a necessity when my digestive tract starts playing up (as it invariably does at conventions). And I think a campus convention will inevitably be a bit miserable if it rains all weekend. Luckily it only rained on the first evening at Unicon, and then only a light drizzle: unluckily this was the night I got lost. Knowing that I'd have difficulty finding my way back to the hall of residence from the convention site I'd carefully memorized the route. Then I proceeded to get excessively drunk and stoned, till I reached the point where I realized I had nothing to contribute to the proceedings (others had doubtless realized this hours previously). So I walked slowly and carefully from the building and followed my pre-programmed route. After about five minutes' walking I found myself up against a brick wall. This was very puzzling. I thought about it long and hard (while getting steadily wetter) and eventually found the explanation. The route I had memorized started from the Chancellor's Building, where the daytime programme was held, but at some point in the evening the entire convention had decamped from there to the Students' Union, where the late bars were. I had followed the herd, but I had no idea where the Union was in relation to any other part of the campus.

I couldn't even retrace my steps. It was a long time before I got to bed; indeed, when I did eventually find the hall of residence I discovered quite a number of the people I'd left behind in the Student's Union enjoying a room party there.

I didn't see Chris Evans's room on the final morning, though I did hear him coming back there with Jim Barker and Roy Kettle in the early hours of Monday morning (Chris somehow fails to mention the loud and raucous choruses of "The Bucket of Water Song" which accompanied their return). I also heard the cleaner calling her colleagues along to witness the appalling carnage she discovered within. One of them was unimpressed. "That's nothing," she said. "You should see this room up here. This one's really disgusting." They disappeared to the far end of the corridor, to re-emerge, ashen and shaking, some minutes later. I never did discover whose room it was, but a process of elimination yields the likely suspects. There were four rooms there, and I'd been in Jim Barker's and Peter Roberts's and seen nothing untoward. Then there was Tony Berry's. Well, it could have been his, I suppose, but he seems such a quiet and clean lad that it's unlikely (though his appearance may be a mere facade to hide the appalling bestial perversities he practises in private). This leaves only the room occupied by newlywed Paul Oldroyd and Chris "Zoltan's Keeper" Donaldson, not to mention the feral hound itself. Investigations into what was found in the room are still proceeding.

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Time for another little bijou article, I think, and time for TAPPEN to resurrect yet another Name from the Past, the name in question (or one version of it) being Dick Howett. Dick was one of the first people I ever met in fandom, but he was drifting out even as I was drifting in, and aside from attending one convention in 1975 his fan activity during the last decade has been entirely limited to fanzines produced by the Charnox, Chris Priest and myself.

I'd been out of touch with Dick for nearly three years, until I met him unexpectedly last December. This was at the great Marvel Comics and Film Convention and Rip-Off, at which several thousand people paid a lot of money to come to an event where the combined seating for the two simultaneous programmes was about 200. If it had been an sf convention the organizers' blood would have been shed at an early stage, but the poor comics fans seemed resigned to the idea of paying £5 to spend six hours in an immobile queue.

The convention was partly sponsored by STARBURST, and as a contributor to said magazine I had free entry and access to the hospitality suite, where the chic and famous disported themselves out of sight of the vulgar masses. Fellow STARBURST hack John Brosnan was there, as were Kettle and Rob Hansen, who don't write for STARBURST but know the right people (i.e. John and me). I launched a sustained and generally successful assault on the whisky and the smoked salmon sandwiches (moving on to the asparagus sandwiches when the salmon was exhausted. In mid-afternoon, who should walk in but a fit-looking young man strongly resembling a youthful Dick Howett. After a few more minutes I

realized the resemblance was more than coincidental: it actually was Dick, miraculously having grown younger with the passing years. Obviously a man who reads too much J.G. Ballard.

It turned out that Dick's burgeoning cartooning career had led him into drawing strips for various Marvel publications whose names I don't know. Now, inevitably, he's joined the roster of fans who contribute to STARBURST, with a strip that began in the current issue. It's called FLICKERS, which the lads at Jadwin House think is pretty daring (the way it's typeset, you see, the L and the I together look not unlike a U -- the original suggested title, they told me, was CLINT THE FLICKER). All we need now is for Leroy Kettle to start contributing, and we can retitile it WRINKLED SHREW or EGG and take it from there....

### LAST EXIT TO GATWICK

by Dick (Dicky) Howett

I really must sort out what to call myself. I used to be Richard. My mother calls me Richard (I hate it) and my wife, in moments of matrimonial tension, uses it as a psychological sideswipe. I use my fist, which is much more satisfying. And then there's DICK Howett, which sounds rude, and DICKY Howett, which sounds poofy, and R.D. Howett, with which I sign cheques, mail off for pornographic video cassettes etc. I was actually VICKY Howett for half an hour last year. The deaf and dumb at BBC Television Centre had got it wrong again and had pinned that name to my dressing-room door.

Oh yes, didn't I mention that I was lured back (much against my better judgment -- see DEADLOSS 2) to repeat my outstanding performance as "WonderDick the Lightning Pen" on television? Whatever one may say about the dearth of suitable material to fill a jolly hour (a true statement), such considerations were swept aside by the editors of MULTICOLOURED SWAP SHOP and I was booked on the strength of submitting a few tear-sheets of "I was Adolf's Double", a witty strip cartoon of mine. And Tim Quinn's. Tim is my strip cartoon partner and scriptwriter. Tim has all the Good Ideas and, you've guessed it, it was his to appear on MCSS. I was in full agreement (the old kamikaze cartoonist that I am) and for weeks prior to the show I rehearsed myself rigid in an effort to appear spontaneous. Subsequent viewing of the video cassette proved that my efforts had been in vain, although I was pleased to note that my cockney twang had faded and I didn't sniff once. I uttered the same old verbal bollocks, though, and Tim and I managed to advertise the name of a Marvel magazine no less than five times throughout the programme (the joys of live TV!). Other programme guests included Jan Leeming (a sweet and really attractive lady) and Sebastian Coe, who had his Olympic medals with him for us to fondle. I had always imagined these medlas to be a dazzling golden hue. In reality they resemble gold tinfoil-covered chocolate pennies. However, it probably took more than a quick sprint down to the tuck shop to win them, I'll

be bound.

Another of my more recent media appearances was on the Robbie Vincent (or Robbay, as most of his listeners persist in addressing him) Telephone Programme. Actually, when I say appear I was, of course, only on the end of my own telephone. A useful experience, nonetheless, as it is not generally realized that one is kept literally hanging on for at least half an hour before the opportunity to speak arises. By the time your name is cued into the discussion you have lost all track of the programme, due mainly to the appalling cost of a peak-time call to London. With this thought uppermost in my mind I manfully battled into my argument.

On this occasion the studio guest was the Distribution Manager for Rank Cinemas, a man with the intellectual capacity of Pooh Bear, and the native wit of Idi Amin. I congratulated this gentleman on his successful campaign to reduce cinema audiences by littering first-run feature programmes with tatty filler films ("Look at Death" lives on!), and I gave as an example a highly imaginative little item entitled "Greenock: Gateway to the North!" Very suitable for Chelmsford, this (even "Terry Wogan at Windsor Wildlife Park" paled beside Greenock's attempt to entice snug suburbanites up to the hairy north). A true cinematic disaster.

Mr Distribution Manager whined in reply that his patrons expected a full evening's entertainment (an old Music Hall philosophy this, rather out of keeping with zippy computerized space adventures of the nineteen eighties). I tried to argue that his so-called "evening's entertainment" seemed to consist of material one normally found on television -- and, indeed, instantly switched off! A simple luxury denied the cinemagoer who, entrapped in the expensive urine-soaked upholstery of the average picture-palace, had no access to the projection room.

"Then stay at home!" was my opponent's snappy reply.

I love this kind of enlightened outlook. A whole new dimension in customer relations. Another example, far worse in my estimation (and as it turned out a yawning chasm into which Mr Rank Manager plunged), concerned the Odeon Leicester Square and "The Empire Strikes Back". I had on this occasion booked good seats in anticipation of a lively movie, a sharp picture, and full-blast stereophonic sound. At the appointed hour the movie began, but "The Empire Strikes Back"? Unfortunately not. It was a sharp picture all right, but entitled "Rank Strikes Back", in the form of a silly playlet about a warrior who rescues a fairy from a river.

"Is this Daft Vader?" my small daughter enquired. I had to confess to her that this was not what we had paid and waited to see. My point exactly.

Mr Daft Vader from Rank denied that we had ever seen such a filler. He was quite adamant that his company had not included in the "Empire Strikes Back" screening anything other than the usual commercials for curry houses or wedding photographs for people wearing Italian suits and out-of-date haircuts.

The Odeon Leicester Square, one must remind oneself, is Rank's premier London first-run movie house, and not some hick joint with home-made penicillin growing on the lavatory walls. Indeed, our friendly Rank person asserted that his company never runs second features at Leicester Square.

"You're just wrong," he blazed. "I should know!"

I felt that such overpowering confidence deserved no reply. The next time I visit a Rank cinema and sit calmly through ninety minutes of Hot Dogs in the Foyer, Our Next Screen Presentation, Datsun Cars at Your Local Showroom Ten Minutes From This Cinema and Happy Haunts in the Himalayas, I shall remind myself that it's all an illusion and that all I have to do is switch myself off!

--- Nick Howett

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In between the last stencil and this one a weekend has passed. I had hoped to make some progress on this thing during that weekend, but overindulgence in various noxious substances precluded that and I spent most of yesterday doing my well-known impersonation of a zombie.

Saturday was ruled out for another reason: the CND march and rally in London. When you expect 100,000 people and a quarter of a million turn up, then it's fair to say you have a burgeoning mass media.\* (The question of attendance at such events is always vexed, but having been in quite a few large open-air crowds in my time -- in Hyde Park and elsewhere -- I'm inclined to credit the organizers' guess rather than the police estimate of 150,000.)

The proceedings were given a certain additional flavour by Ronnie Reagan's off-the-cuff remarks on tactical nuclear war in Europe, and the subsequent attempts of his advisors to deny that he had said what he had, in fact, said. The old German joke is that the definition of a "tactical" nuclear missile is that it's one which lands on Germany. One can plausibly extend that to include most of Europe today.

The rally was, naturally enough, emotional and fervent, with several speakers ringing changes on the theme of No One Can Stop Us Now. My usual reaction to this is a defeatist and cynical "Oh yes?" but I have to admit I'm feeling a little more optimistic. This is because in addition to the obviously growing support for nuclear disarmament in Europe, there are signs now that more people are beginning to pursue the argument in terms of rational defence policy, which I've always thought the only line of argument likely to carry the day. For a fraction of the cost of maintaining a nuclear force (the equivalent of voluntarily entering a game of Russian roulette) you can have a conventional army of sufficient power to deter all but the most insanely expansionist of aggressors -- and whatever the DAILY TELEGRAPH would have us believe, postwar history seems to me to show that the USSR wants secure borders rather than enlarged hegemony.

The day a faction in the Tory Party starts calling for nuclear disarmament will, of course, be the day the battle is won. I have to report though, having watched the defence debate at their party conference on TV, that that day is still some way off. The most depressing part was not the jingoistic savagery of some of the speakers, but the fact that those were the speakers most enthusiastically applauded by our Prime Minister.

\* Mass movement, I mean. Maybe my brain isn't back in gear yet.

Enough of this, however. There's a lot to fit into this issue, and the pages are piling up. Time for the next installment of the feature which causes a significant percentage of the TAPPEN readership to tear their hair and shriek and wail. Yes, it's another "Desert Island Discs".

I can't see what all the fuss is about, myself. I think most of the readers are getting hold of the wrong end of the proverbial stick. Of course, if you've no interest whatever in rock music then you may find the whole feature somewhat dispensable. But I'm always fascinated by what other people like and why they like it. Nor is familiarity essential: both Greg Pickersgill and Colin Greenland included several records I'd never heard, but this didn't diminish my enjoyment of what they said. However, to make it easier on you, TAPPEN's most regular resident contributor has done a list in which she hardly talks about the music at all. I hope this makes it simpler for some of you.

### DESERT ISLAND DISCO

by Chris Atkinson

Let's get this straight. Here I am on this desert island, right? The weather's perfect -- couldn't ask for better. The sunstroke's coming on a treat. The sea is an unbroken stretch of azure, and I'm getting ready to enjoy my diet of sharkfin soup with coconut. I've found that the packing-case on which I floated to safety contains a complete stereo system specially designed for buoyancy, but what strikes me as really peculiar is how the electric socket got into the base of the palm tree....

This morning, as the intense tropical heat roused me from my dreams, I found a letter, pinned to the sand by a cuttlefish bone. Funny, that -- I hadn't noticed any cuttlefish. But there are stranger things at sea, as my old granny used to say until they put her away. The letter promised to send me eight records of my choice, which was a great relief, as I'd been feeling a bit conscience-stricken about having an expensive stereo system and letting it go to waste.

It seems to me that I'm going to be on this island for some time. That makes my choice of records especially important -- I mean, they'll have to be things I don't tire of too easily. When I was about twelve years old I used to collect Bobby Vee records. Thank God I didn't get shipwrecked then, or I'm sure I'd have fed myself to the sharks by now to escape the jolly sound of "Rubber Ball".... Now the main problem with desert islands, apart from the primitive sanitation system and the irregularity of the mail, is the lack of other people. Many people, I must admit, I could do without, but there are probably about a dozen whom I like to see from time to time, because they make me feel good. Unfortunately the letter didn't offer to bring me my eight favourite people, so I guess I'll have to choose records that make me feel good instead.

When I say "feel good" I suppose I really mean just "feel", because even being bloody miserable can be enjoyable if you're in a wallowing mood. My first

record is absolutely guaranteed to make me happily depressed, so whenever I'm feeling masochistic I can give it a spin.

### 1. ROY ORBISON: "It's Over"

The first layer of memories this tear-jerker brings to mind are unrequited adolescent crushes — I'd "see lonely sunsets after all" because pimply Tony preferred to grope my friend Min. The first thrilling bars bring all those desperate feelings rushing back. What did I do wrong? Was my tentative effort at eye make-up too heavy-handed, or perhaps too subtle? Perhaps a Teen-form Bra would help ... except, of course, that I'd Never Love Again.

There is a second layer of emotion attached to this record, however. Conventions (good ones, at any rate) always give me a hefty shot in the emotional arm and Seacon, being so vast and so long and so truly wonderful, almost gave me an overdose. On the very last day of Seacon, when many goodbyes had been said and I was feeling pretty strung out with Post Convention Blues, I went for a walk around the Regency Square. Suddenly, out of the window of a closed cafe came the familiar strains of "It's Over". It was. I brushed a tear from my eye, gulped a few times, and went back to the hotel to pack books into boxes.

### 2. THE MIRACLES: "Going to a Go-Go"

It was difficult to decide whether to have this one or "You've Lost That Lovin' Feeling" by the Righteous Brothers. Both of these records remind me of the same time in my life. I was sixteen, and intent on having a good time, whilst trying to persuade my parents that I was at the church youth club. In the centre of Bradford, my home town, there was a neglected little back street which was the home of the one and only Beat Club — "The Little Fat Black Pussy Cat", or "The Cat" to people in the know. Every Wednesday and Saturday I would queue for hours before I finally gained admittance to a dank stone tunnel which had the main city sewer going across the ceiling. At the end of the tunnel was a primitive stage where an assortment of tangle-haired bands would blast out soundwaves. When the band was resting, the "in crowd" would dance to records in their regular spot just in front of the stage, their jaws working and eyes wide open with all the amphetamines they'd put away. I would hang around the periphery of this group, almost content with the reflected glory but at the same time longing to be completely accepted ... or at the very least to be offered some of those interesting blue pills.

### 3. CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL: "I Heard It Through the Grapevine"

This record never fails to send me into a sort of sexual frenzy when it's played at parties. I remember one party at Malcolm Edwards' flat in Harrow where I abandoned myself completely to its compulsive rhythms, twisting and writhing all over the dance area with my eyes closed in ecstasy. When the record finally ended (it's very long) I opened my eyes to find that Greg Pickersgill had been watching my gyrations as if hypnotized, his mouth hanging open in amazement.

"I could swear you were having an orgasm then," he said enviously, and went over to play the record again, just to make sure. It never fails. If my first two choices bring to mind glorious misery and nostalgia for lost youth, this one evokes pure and uncomplicated lust.

#### 4. ROBERTA FLACK: "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face"

Again, I found it hard to decide whether to include this one or "You Are Everything" by Diana Ross and Marvin Gaye. If nothing else, indecision gets me two records mentioned in the space for one.

There are times when I think I sound incredibly cynical about relationships, especially those with men. It's not true. Underneath I'm incredibly romantic and, like all true Romantics, I'm never so happy as when I'm in love. Both these records are for being in love to -- long misty fantasies beginning with "Our eyes met..." and ending up with either a tasteful fadeout into the sunset or a torrid sexual encounter, depending on how heavy the traffic is. (I tend to do most of my fantasizing on motorways.) I shouldn't think there will be too much traffic on my desert island, so I guess the Roberta Flack is the better choice, being much more passionate and therefore more able to compensate for the lack of concrete, tarmac and speed.

#### 5. LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN: "Ninth Symphony"

Yes, I know this sounds poncey, but it's more effective for making me feel triumphantly happy than anything I know. It's also longer than the other stuff I've chosen, so I get more emotion for my money.

As a bonus, Beethoven's Ninth brings with it associations of my time at Keele, hardly a period of happiness and triumph (I hated it), but certainly quite an interesting two years. The course I was doing at Keele was professional training for social workers, and although many of the students had been in social work before the course, a number had had very different careers. Maureen, for instance, had been a Beauty Consultant, and spent hours telling us how to draw "beauty spots" on our cheeks. Dave was an ex-policeman who still hadn't quite got out of the habit of standing with his hands loosely clasped at the base of his spine (I've often wondered if policemen are specially trained to stand with their hands like that, or whether they catch it from each other, like V.D.). The oddest member of our course, however, was Joe, who had had to give up mining when his lung collapsed with pneumoconiosis. Joe was obsessed with Nazis. He always dressed in black leather, and had a tendency to break into a goose-step when he thought no one was looking. The swastika flag he draped on the wall of his bedsit caused a shudder which was only excelled by the discovery that he kept a dead tarantula in a box on the mantelpiece.

Joe was especially interested in Nazi war atrocities and he would regale us with particularly nasty bits, a slightly demented gleam in his eye. His thirst for Germanic savagery came to a peak when he saw the film A CLOCKWORK ORANGE, with its combination of Beethoven and "ultra-violence". After this he was lost forever. Whenever we went to visit him he would play Beethoven's Ninth over and over, while muttering about kicking people's brains in and raping them with giant plaster penises. Then when the record got to the choral bit he would click his heels together, do a Nazi salute, and sing along with the music in a deep Teutonic bass.

Joe is now a senior social worker in Camden, specializing in Mental Health.

#### 6. QUICKSILVER MESSENGER SERVICE: "Who Do You Love?"

I'm quickly coming to the end of my selection and am only too aware of the vast number of records I'd love to include for all sorts of reasons, but haven't got the space for. This is one I really must include, though, both because I think it's a good record, and because it makes me feel that life is at its most exhilarating when you take just a few risks....

Very few people seem to have heard of HAPPY TRAILS (of which this track forms the entire first side) which is surprising, as it's an excellent record. I'm not even sure how I came by it myself, as my musical taste is formed more by listening to other people's favourites than by original research. The comparative rarity of this record (I'm sorry, I can't stand the word "album": it reminds me of holiday snaps) made it all the more strange to discover that Malcolm Edwards had also acquired a copy some time in his distant past. This was surely conclusive proof that we were totally compatible. The trouble is, I've now discovered that Graham James has a copy too. Perhaps we three were made for each other....

#### 7. JEFFERSON AIRPLANE: "Wooden Ships"

I had a fixation on Grace Slick for about ten years. There was something about her voice ... I much prefer female vocalists to male ones, on the whole, and the power of the sound she made really got me going. I used to collect Jefferson Airplane/Starship records avidly and admired them uncritically, and it makes me very sad to think that there are few tracks I would now want to preserve for posterity. One of the reasons for this is, I think, that my attachment to Jefferson Airplane was very much a part of the hippie dream, forever linked in my mind with endless dope-filled days in the park, poster-bedecked bedsit rooms, and a naive belief that the Age of Aquarius was at hand and real soon now my friends and I would inherit the Earth and fill it with peace, love and lotsa free drugs. There are still Airplane tracks I quite like, but they do tend nowadays to make me feel uncomfortably aware of the absurdity of my youthful preoccupations.

"Wooden Ships" has survived, however, as a track I can enjoy without waves of embarrassment. Firstly, I like the romantic idea of surviving the holocaust with a few compatible people, even though in real life you'd find me rushing to ground zero as soon as the four-minute warning sounded. Secondly, as people who read TAPPEN 2 might have noticed, this track was associated with an intense spiritual (or crazy) experience I had when I was about 21, and it still retains a few shreds of the emotions I was feeling at that time. It's a pity Grace Slick isn't the vocalist, but maybe my contact in the land of the spirits didn't share my taste for female singers.

#### 8. JONI MITCHELL: "Marcie"

I first came across Joni Mitchell when my then closest friend and flat-mate Pauline left me to get married, and gave me CLOUDS as a going-away present. I was very sad when Pauline went, especially as her new husband was one of these types who is into home-made beer and thinks a woman's place is hoovering the wallpaper.

Joni Mitchell, of course, often sings very sad songs. I have chosen this particular one both because of a feeling of empathy with the woman who is the subject of the song (and is waiting vainly for a man to fulfil his promise and return to her), and also because it makes me feel quite angry at the way women often seem to become physically and emotionally dependent on men. This song just wouldn't work if you changed the sex of the subject. My ex-flatmate now has two children and has lost so much confidence in herself that she is afraid to go out and get a job, despite being an intelligent and interesting person. Why do we get ourselves into these situations? Maybe it comes from listening to too much Roberta Flack....

I've tried to evoke as many emotions as possible in my choice of records. Living on my own like this, with only the sharks for company, I'm going to need this sort of stimulation or my responses might atrophy. Nothing is as good as a record for giving you a good old thump in the emotional guts every now and again. By the way, if there's room in the case perhaps I could have a Dunlopillo pillow and a copy of THE UNLIMITED DREAM COMPANY? Thanks ever so. Now all I've got to do is find an empty bottle to put this letter in....

--- Chris Atkinson

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One is learning all the time in the fanzine publishing business. Of late, for instance, I've been discovering the use of "comment hooks". It seems that certain cunning fanzine editors insert material into their publications for the explicit purpose of eliciting a response. The argument is that if you deal in anecdotal material -- as most fannish fanzines do, and this one certainly does -- it's very difficult for the recipients to respond other than with vague grunts of (dis)approval or with anecdotes of their own. But if you insert something controversial everybody can leap to the typewriter and set to with a will. Bloody ingenious, eh?

While the advantage of this practice is that you get more letters of comment, the disadvantage may be that they are, on the whole, out of key with the overall tone of your fanzine (the latest issue of EPSILON is, I feel, an example of this). So perhaps it's as well that my own unwitting ploy in this direction failed. I refer, of course, to my bit about the Hugo Awards in the first issue of this fanzine. I put this in mainly because I was intrigued by the irony I pointed out of the same complaints being made vis-a-vis the professional awards that the fans had made over the fan Hugos. Arnold Akien tells me this was my comment hook, and that I chickened out of the debate by neglecting to print his letter assailing the entire Hugo system. But I don't want a huge debate about the Hugos in these pages, and if I got dozens of letters about them I wouldn't print them anyway. All I want to do is pass the odd perceptive comment with which you will all instantly agree.

You'll notice, however, that I was dead right. While proposing what should become famed as the Edwards Amendment (that the final ballot in any category be

expanded to include any items outside the first five receiving more than 50 nominations) I suggested that this would probably have got TIMESCAPE on to the ballot. The latest LOCUS has figures on nominations, and sure enough, TIME-SCAPE got 65 -- enough to lead the ballot in five other categories, but only enough to secure 8th place among novels. If my suggestion were adopted the novel ballot would have had 8 titles (the others being Gene Wolfe's SHADOW OF THE TORTURER -- another positive gain -- and Robert L. Forward's DRAGON'S EGG (you can't win 'em all)). Best Editor would have been expanded to embrace Dave Hartwell and Ben Bova; other categories would have remained unchanged. How long can this obvious reform be resisted???

The other Hugo results were generally as dull as could be imagined, with Gordon Dickson winning several for stories I'd never heard of, and Clifford Simak getting the traditional Guest of Honour rocket. Otherwise the main point of interest is that the Hugo for Best Fan Writer went to Susan Wood.

This is not altogether an easy subject to approach, but I think something ought to be said, and I think I'm fairly well positioned to say it, as I don't believe my motives can fairly be questioned.

Look, I'm sure that all the people who voted to give Susan Wood a comfortable victory over the other contenders did so from the best of motives. She had been a very good, if infrequent fan writer during the latter part of the 1970s (though how many of the voters were on the mailing list for AMOR and thus in a position to judge I don't know). Her sudden death, and the mess into which she'd previously got her life, were very upsetting to many people. But these are not reasons for giving someone a Hugo; indeed, they are worse reasons than the previous worst reasons I can think of -- the Hugo that Asimov got for THE GODS THEMSELVES, not because it was any good but because it was a new Asimov novel after all those years.

So what was an award supposed to accomplish? It's certainly of no aid or comfort to her. Nor is it a case of belatedly recognizing an underappreciated lost talent, since she had won two Fan Writer Hugos previously. It certainly can't be justified in terms of the subject of the award, because as far as I'm aware Susan published no fan writing of any consequence in 1980. The only reason I can think of apart from simple misplaced sentimentality is that it might make a few people feel obscurely better about the whole business. Whatever the reason, the end result is an award which, however well intended, serves no purpose, drags the Hugos further into disrepute (though some would claim that's impossible) and insults the other nominees -- Dick Geis, Mike Glyer, Arthur Hlavaty and Dave Langford -- who might reasonably have expected to have had the award judged according to some criteria associated with fan writing.

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Speaking of Hugo-nominated deaf fan writer D. Langford, I think it's time for a contribution from the great man: a segment of his TAFF report, no less. The appearance of this document is itself something of a cause for wonder: it's well on the way to being the first completed TAFF report from a European since I don't know when, and the first of any kind since 1973.

TAFF itself has been the subject of some debate in British fanzines of

late, so perhaps it's time for TAPPEN to make its editorial position absolutely clear. As may be obvious from the fact that I'm one of his nominators, TAPPEN supports Rog Peyton for TAFF, and expects you all to do the same.

Some funny things have been said about TAFF in recent weeks, in fanzines and in private conversation. A lot of them seem to be based on untenable hypotheses. People have said that Kevin Smith is not a plausible candidate. This is not so, in my view: he's a perfectly plausible candidate, but not, at this stage of his fannish career, an entirely plausible winner. What he's done in fandom has mostly been good, but he hasn't done quite enough of it yet. Another thing people have said is that TAFF candidates have to be active in fanzines. This seems to me to be an unsupportably elitist view (and I use the term elitist, which is bandied around far too much these days for my liking, after due consideration). TAFF, at least on this side of the Atlantic, has depended on the support of far more fans than the relatively tiny number who make up the active fanwriters and fan publishers of a given time. Thus the implicit message in such an attitude is that these other supporters can give money and donate to auctions and vote, but they can't by God be candidates. Oh no. That privilege only goes to us fanzine activists.

This won't wash. Fandom is a many-sided thing, and though I'd be the last to downgrade the importance of fanzines I also couldn't maintain that they're the only thing that counts when it comes to the internationalist fannish spirit which TAFF is supposed to embody. Hence my support for Rog Peyton, who though he hasn't published a fanzine for years (though when he was editing VECTOR he did it very well) has probably put more work into British fandom in the last decade than anyone else I can think of -- serving on convention committees, auctioning endlessly, and so on. Not to mention being a sociable fellow whose bar bills are the stuff of legend. People say that the Americans won't know him because he doesn't have articles in TAPPEN (or wherever); I riposte that an insignificant number of people at any worldcon know any British TAFF winner, but that if they are interested they will get to know him anyway because he's the TAFF winner. And on that score, being a gregarious sort, Rog will represent us well.

American readers take note.

Now on with Langford....

### THE TRANSATLANTIC HEARING AID

by Dave Langford

#### Fifth Bit: "Running Down"

THE STORY SO FAR: Unwearied by his trip to Boston, undaunted by the impact of 7000 Americans (often all in the same lift), undismayed by his third failure to win a fan Hugo, unshattered by subsequent frivolity, sorrow-drownings and snubs, our hero leaps lithely and with sparkling eyes from his untroubled sleep, ready to scintillate as never before on this final day of Noreascon. Only one disturbing thought troubles the limpid clarity of his mind: the realization that

his "story so far" paragraph is invariably a pack of lies....

Monday 1st September 1980

"Ohhh," I moaned as I studied breakfast. Breakfast, I had austere-ly decided, would be a mere sip of orange juice: but this was America, land of plenty, and something over a pint of glistening and vitamin-crammed gunge had arrived. (Little did I know that scant days later, Harry Bell would expound to an un-believing Dan Steffan the details of Bell's Health Principle, whereby you sink much orange juice at breakfast time, have a good puke, and thus cleanse out your system to face the rigours of the day. I myself lack the dedication for this regime.) The orange juice rippled its vitamins derisively at me. Some fiend had frosted my eyeballs overnight, and strange ringings filled my ears.

"Listen," said Hazel, with her head on one side. "The Muzak here is exactly the same as it is at home.

"Ohhh," I commented.

My personal and entirely unoriginal theory is that the fannish metabolism alters when you reach a big convention. Con conditioning takes over; an unspecified selection of glands start trickling overtime; the need for sleep mysteriously dwindles; fatigue poisons are discreetly stowed away, to be either purged by Bell's Health Principle or spewed into your bloodstream in a single loathsome cataract when the biological alarm clock sounds "Con Onver". Thus my Eastercon Monday reflexes had gone sproing or possibly even spung, converting me at the twitch of a gland into a fully paid-up member of the walking dead. And because this was America, Land of Plenty, there was still a day's convention-ing to go.

"I'll finish your orange juice if you like," said Hazel.

Afterwards she steered in the general direction of the Sheraton, where Noreascon was still so implausibly happening: past the DONT WALK signs which made me long for small, luminous and self-adhesive apostrophes, through the maze of glass corridors which confusingly linked the ground floors of all the buildings near the Sheraton, around and into various Americans. Had I been less numb-brained I might well have hauled out that Isherwood quote: "I am a camera with its shutter open, quite passive, recording, not thinking." It seemed to cover the situation. But then, if I'd been in a condition to disinter that line I'd have gone on to pass critical remarks on my lens (thick and murky, with little flaws in it that kept moving about), exposure meter (needle wrapped hard around the peg) and aperture (damn this funny foreign food).

At the hotel we met people like Malcolm Edwards and Avedon Carol, not that there are people like them, who ascribed their unnatural gaiety and sparkle to having avoided the deleterious practice of going to bed. I tried to sneer at them, but they appeared not to notice. Oh well. It was time for the Monday morning routine of recording-not-thinking, the time when you hear all the exotic, quintessentially fannish and forever memorable things which have happened over the weekend to every single convention member but yourself. Avedon had succeeded either in encompassing the rite of the Astral Pole or in bribing

Malcolm and Chris to say she had, all this at some ghastly hour about dawn. A "Galactic Mercenary", apprehended while forcing the swimming pool doors after hours for skinny-dipping purposes, had done wonders for hotel relations by breaking a security man's arm. Other soi-disant fans had improved the shining hour by hurling rocks from windows on the twenty-somethingth floor. The committee was struggling to keep such facts dark, and had already suppressed two Alexis Gilliland cartoons intended for Mike Glycer's daily newsletter LOBSTER TALES. One concerned Kate Wilhelm (aliens in UFO: "We took the GoH in the middle of her speech -- and got a standing ovation! Fans are strange."): her speech had followed the anti-science party line and was later described by Mike Glycer as "bumper-sticker cliches". The suppression of the other was still less explicable, the caption being merely, approximately, "Tell Harlan Ellison stories ... the crowd is going to sleep!" Committees are strange.... Martin Hoare was saying, to anyone who would listen, "Katy told me to enjoy myself and sample US women -- so I've screwed a different one every night." Bob Shaw had been not wholly enthralled when rung out of bed at 3 a.m. to hear about his fanwriter Hugo. ("Hello ... Bob?" "Nmmnggg?" "Bob, you've won the Hugo!" "Urrrrr." "Well, congrats and goodbye!" "Gaaaaah.") Peter Nicholls, on the other hand, was said to have waited up all night, pacing restlessly, spraying nibbled fingernail fragments like machine-gun fire, endlessly rereading the ENCYCLOPEDIA to convince himself of its worth. And Jackie Lichtenberg....

The Jacqueline Lichtenberg Appreciation Society's spies had been exchanging data all weekend, many of them going badgeless and incognito in order not to excite the envy of disadvantaged American Jackiefans (or Jakkies). Malcolm had sent Rachel Holmen of LOCUS fame to have his review copy of UNTO ZEOR, FOREVER autographed by Jackie herself, and later recited the inscription at unexpected moments ("...hope you will enjoy reading and rereading this wonderful book many, many more times for the remainder of your natural existence ... Live long and prosper!"), not to mention misquoting the scintillant opening line ("Before him, the track narrowed out of sight in both directions"). Roz Kaveney had fearlessly penetrated a meeting of Lichtenberg/Lorrah/Bradley fandom, to discover these authors outspokenly admiring one another's work before a packed audience of eight devotees. Jean Lorrah, we learnt, was a professor of English at a midwestern university and had achieved tenure by writing on, and with, Jackie Lichtenberg. This shows the ineffable superiority of America's educational system. Where in effete Oxford or limpwristed Cambridge would you find a Regius Professor of R.L. Fanthorpe? ...But here was JLAS pioneer Chris Priest with a new, evangelistic gleam in his eye. "I'm not a Jackie fan any more," he said. "I'm a Marion Zimmer Bradley fan now. And I'm a Barry B. Bongyear fan. He's important."

All this JLAS gossip reminded me of the approaching Dave Langford Appreciation Society meeting. Noreascon, you see, had provided two semi-formal ways to chat with sf luminaries. Really famous authors with fanclubs were granted "Special Interest Group Meetings", the only living authors qualifying for this accolade apparently being the Lichtenberg/Lorrah/Bradley trinity. Lesser talents were permitted to fill in a printed notice saying what subjects they (as omniscient authors) cared to talk about, whereupon an ad hoc discussion group would happen if there was sufficient interest. Drunkenly I had put my name down as willing to discourse on TAFF, UK fandom and the JLAS (I crossed that last bit out in a fit of cowardice, mind you); now I drifted round to the

relevant part of the gigantic registrations complex, eager to see what massive audience had been lured. Well, yes, you guessed it. Practised apologies washed over me: "Don't think we publicized this scheme enough ... scheduled too early in the day ... too late in the convention ... rival attractions ... noticeboard badly sited maybe..." Brooding on the rather, er, round number of people wishing to hear of TAFF and UK fandom, I decided firmly that real fans simply didn't study noticeboards devoted to professional egotripping. The DLAS was an idea whose time had not yet come.

Perceiving that I still had all the joie de vivre of a slug overdosed with valium, more and yet more people were hideously hearty at me. Mark Digre announced that, "As a legal point, Massachusetts is not a state, it's a commonwealth." I wrote this down in hope that it might make sense later on. Rochelle Reynolds was handing out peaches she'd bought at a dollar a hundredweight or some such typical US price; glumly we reminded her that all this would have to stop when she moved to Britain, where peaches are sold individually at Sotheby's. Through grim jaws she cried, "I'll give up anything, except some things!" A passing Carey Handfield added the last straw to my bag -- a stack of Australia in '83 flyers weighing rather more than our air luggage allowance. "Hand 'em out in Britain!" he shouted over his shoulder as he made a quick escape.

"It's people like that that made me resign from the A in 83 committee," confided Keith Curtis. "Carey is so pushy."

I groped for analogies. "The Peter Weston of Aussie fandom?"

"Exactly," said Keith, a huge smile spreading over his face.

The vast mass of propaganda was eventually dumped on Terry Hughes -- a victim as always of his own niceness -- who sent it on by post.

All around us the convention was slowly running down, a table cleared here, a noticeboard stripped there, displays going one by one into eclipse, a gradual thinning out of the "real" fans. "Change and decay in all around I see," your hero said to Hazel, wondering whether the faint aroma of dissolution had anything to do with the clean clothes he'd forgotten to put on that morning. Hazel, perceptive as ever, guided me to the fast-food counter, where for the last time I made the not very taxing decision between Beer and Large Beer.

This necessary fuel was for another snappily titled panel: "Time-Binding V: In Which Jophan Discovers Sex, Drugs and Ro k and Roll; Fandom in the 1970s and Beyond". One gathered that someone hadn't been too clear about the difference between the 70s and the 60s.... Another bare room off the Lower Exhibit Hall, another audience outnumbered if not by the panellists then by the words in the panel title, another set of idiosyncratic introductions (Linda Bushyager, for example, getting an immense build-up not as a fan but as a celebrated sf novelist). The first thing that happened was that the panel junked the 70s in favour of predicting the 80s: "...electronic computerized fanzines ... packaged convention kits with a videotape of Harlan, 400 empty beercans and a plastic clip-on hangover -- you stay awake for 48 hours and then open the package." The second exciting incident, for me, was too much like an extended metaphor to be true: my battery ran down. The one in my hearing aid, that is; for the next fifty minutes I confined myself to wise noddings at Mike Glycer's or Bruce Pelz's profoundly argued inaudibilities. Eventually our very own Greg

Pickersgill rose up from among the audience and shouted his way through this stupor, demanding that future Worldcon attendance be limited by such means as denying facilities to nerds, "special interest groups", non-trufans... "Why should we let these cretins swamp our conventions?"

Answer: the worldcon is a juggernaut which no one can stop, least of all "us". Those who follow the traditions of fanzine fandom are nicely treated and given their own programme track to play with, bread and circuses at a safe distance from the real programme(s); the controls are in the hands of ever more ambitious sci-fi groups devoted to bigger and better conventions. Though there are exceptions, the most obvious being the fannish-fan power structure of Seacon '79, today's worldcons tend to consider traditional fandom as another tiresome and marginal "special interest group" incomprehensible to the committee and requiring a skilled interpreter. Noreascon seemingly drafted Moshe Feder for just this purpose. (The Denver committee, I see, had never even heard of that obscure yet somehow Hugo-nominated fannish fan Walt Willis.) Barring a financial crash or the dying away of the sci-fi (as opposed to sf) boom, we can extrapolate US con-running fandom as an expanding Irresistible Force hell-bent on collision with the Immovable Object represented by the last and largest convention facilities in the USA.

Which is what I would doubtless have said at that panel had my hearing aid been working. It mightn't have merited Greg's subsequent, cheering comment as I changed the batteries afterwards: "You were the only one there who knew anything about fandom in the 70s and you didn't bloody say anything."

Hazel guided the walking corpse away from the shambles of the panel. "It's all so unreal," she was saying. "We only hear all those concentrated American accents on TV ... they're associated with unreality. I can't believe in these people."

So, for a bracing shot of home-grown speech, we nipped into one of Noreascon's perpetual film theatres and once again watched MONTY PYTHON AND THE HOLY GRAIL. On every side Americans were laughing themselves into meltdown and having to be scooped up with asbestos shovels. "It makes you proud to be British," said Hazel.

That was our last Noreascon programme item. The rest of the afternoon was passed in such dissipations as lying down in the Copley Plaza Hotel staring vacantly at the ceiling; having numerous baths and showers in a vain attempt at post-convention decontamination; poking through the mounds of books and fanzines that had appeared everywhere in our room ("Funny, I don't remember buying that---"). Slightly revitalized, we ventured out into the warm dusk in search of food: and found Boylston, the eatery-packed street running by the con hotel, jumping with activity. Medium-sized crowds, street musicians and even singers bawling their high notes into passing ears, shop windows all blazing, sense of numerous people having a good time: gad, how un-English. Even the bookshops were open, displaying such priceless treasures from far Cathay as the first novels of Messrs Holdstock and Stephenson, in British editions yet.... Hazel had been fascinated by my Hogarthesque account of last night's sleazy pizza place: we found it, boldly ordered a large one with trimmings, and selected the finest Imitation Grape Soda the automated cellar could provide.

The meal arrived and the gourmets sat aghast. "We'll never get through

this," Hazel predicted. "Shall I measure it?" She measured it. Fifteen inches across, one-third of an inch thick. "Pi R squared," I mumbled, "no, pizza R squared ... good grief. We are about to eat fifty-nine cubic inches of best junk food, not counting the trimmings.

We started the epic struggle. Formica table tops all around were littered with past failures, pizzas whose invaders had landed boldly and ravaged far inland with fire and the sword before ultimately failing to conquer the central massif. This was the American Way of Life. In the end we awarded ourselves a victory on points, and made our greenish exit.

Hazel fancied some more sleep, while I was all for a final sip at the dregs of Noreascon ... but when I arrived the con had been chopped off short. All the flyers and free literature had been swept from the foyer; no signs or placards remained; little demolition groups were closing down the film theatres; rare and occasional fans scurried along the corridors as though aware that a frightful fiend did close behind them tread.

Long search disclosed a Bushyager party of the dead-dog persuasion, high up in one of the Sheraton towers and jampacked with silent fans. The room was afflicted with a dismal periodic Sssshhhh! whenever an entrance or exit was made. Stu Shiffman beamed at me silently. Anne Laurie Logan mentioned in an undertone that Taral had "bee snotty to too many people". Not to be outdone, Alyson Abramowitz complained inaudibly about Rob Jackson's standoffishness when last they met. Moshe Feder pressed a microphone to my lips and in a whisper asked if he might tape the true pronunciation of TWLL-DDU.

"Twll-Ddu," I said with all the clarity I could muster.

"Sssssshhhhhh!" said everyone, but it was too late. The forces of final disruption had got their fix on this party now. The door burst open. Framed in the opening stood a convention security man, as unmistakable an agent of fascist repression as an Imperial Storm Trooper, hung about with beepers and walkie-talkie equipment. Only the Mace spray was missing. It was Martin Hoare.

"Hello," I said wonderingly.

"Could you please keep the noise down in here," he barked. "Hotel security is getting very uptight and they're now threatening to throw out anyone found without a Sheraton room key." Grimly he surveyed the trembling fans, and stalked out. Martin appeared to be in his element.

(Later I quizzed him about this transformation. "Well, I was working for C&C, Communications and Coordination, but the Security lot didn't seem to be doing their job properly so we took over and did that for them. I really got them organized, just like the way I ran Albacon ... stopped fights ... patrolled stairwells and fire escapes ... made sure the hotel security didn't get uptight...")

("But," I said. "On Monday night they were uptight, nasty word, and threatening to throw out anyone found without a Sheraton room key.")

("Oh, we exaggerated a bit to make sure we kept the parties under control.")

Not knowing at the time that the eviction threat was but a paper tiger, I grovellingly begged for an escort to the incredibly secret TAFF/DUFF party which

was next on my agenda: Ken Fletcher and Linda Lounsbury of DUFF fame obliged. It turned out that we had to evict ourselves, the event being back in the dread Copley Plaza, where Keith Curtis had assembled more Heineken than I'd seen together in one place at Noreascon: a few dozen cans, say. Everyone was comulsorily permitted to inspect the Jack Chalker book which Harlan Ellison had inscribed for DUFF auction. "Jack Chalker is probably the finest writer in the USA -- of titles. But the books are no good. Chalker wrote "Dance Band On The Titanic"; brilliant title, I had to read the story, and it's shit!" No doubt.

The party went on as parties do -- without the elegiac feel of a convention closing down, since that mood had been exhausted during the day. My magical aura of incapability returned to me. Ken tried to explain the astral significance of the apa-name Vootie. I took some ineffectual notes of the Curtis Dicta: "Jerry Pournelle is even worse than they say, he goes round bursting into other people's conversations and dominating them..." (Why couldn't I think of any huge names to drop, I wondered.) "It takes a fine mind to know just how far to bend a banana." (Now what was the context of that one?) Charlie Brown is creepy ... he puts the wind up me." (It doesn't say here whether he meant PEANUTS or LOCUS, but one can guess.) "Hey, Dave, I shadowed you back from the Sheraton after the Saturday night, and you were sort of lurching about and bouncing off things...."

"I'm not writing that down," I said with dignity, and abandoned my notebook for the night. Presently I made my final excuses and left, aiming very carefully for the doorway. I did not bounce off it, though the jamb took a bit of a beating. Noreascon had had some good moments, I hazily decided, but there was a certain relief in knowing that, at last, it was all over.

--- Dave Langford

Don't miss instalment 6, "After Noreascon--What?". Previous bits appeared or will appear in TWLL-DDU 19 from Dave Langford, BOONFARK 5 from Dan Steffan, NABU 11 from Ian and Janice Maule, and WARHOON 30 from Richard Bergeron. Future bits will appear somewhere, I have no notion where, and the whole clotted mass will ultimately be issued in one-volume format in good time for the millennium, I do not specify which millennium. (DRL)

\* \* \* \* \*

Despite the backing of TAPPEN, D.M. Thomas's THE WHITE HOTEL failed to carry off the Booker Prize, which went instead to MIDNIGHT'S CHILDREN by Salman Rushdie, whose first novel GRIMUS was an entry for the Gollancz/Sunday Times SF Competition back in 1973/4. (I had the thankless task of being first reader for the said competition, which involved reading about 75 sf novels in less than three months and destroyed my appetite for masses of sf at a stroke; GRIMUS was the novel I rated most highly among those 75, and Gollancz eventually published it -- though not on their sf list -- to almost unanimous critical incomp- rehension and hostility. It didn't win the sf competition, though.) I haven't read MIDNIGHT'S CHILDREN, but if it's better than THE WHITE HOTEL it must be

pretty fucking good. Though it isn't as simple as that, of course. The word at Gollancz (possibly false) was that three of the five Booker judges were strongly pro THE WHITE HOTEL but two were equally strongly anti -- a situation in which it would be hard for it to win in anything other than a straight first-past-the-post contest.

Brian Aldiss, of course, got himself into a certain amount of trouble for publishing the deliberations leading to the formulation of the shortlist for the Booker in a long GUARDIAN article -- well worth looking up, if you missed it, as it's a well-done and revealing account of the judging process, given flavour by Aldiss's refusal entirely to hide his own preferences. This article also revealed that one of the novels which made the final twelve, but not the final seven, was Chris Priest's THE AFFIRMATION. I had nursed a sneaking hope that with Aldiss among the judges it might make the shortlist, but with the amount of publicity the Booker has had this year, even to be on the shortlist to the shortlist might do some good. Let's hope so.

This is another subtle lead-in, you'll be noticing, to another Priest article, relating part of the story of an unpublished novel which, had it appeared, might have altered the course of his subsequent career....

### OH DEAR, WHAT CAN THE MATTER BE...?

by Chris Priest

One fine day in the spring of 1969 I was taking a walk along the Grand Union Canal, where it passes through a village called Harefield. There are some lock gates there, and on a warm afternoon it's a pleasant place to stroll around and watch other people struggling with the sluices. I was doing just this when three extremely fat ladies entered my life.

They were on a cabin cruiser going through the lock, and the extent of thier obesity was underlined by two unavoidable facts. In the first place, all three of them were wearing bikinis, and because this was the late '60s the bikinis were very small and tight fitting. One of the women, indeed, appeared to have gone to considerable trouble to find the worst-fitting bikini in the world: the two wisps of cloth cut like string round a parcel, but concealed almost nothing. Secondly, the boat they were on was remarkably small, and the women were squatting on it like monkeys on a log, and it kept bobbing and dipping in a most alarming top-heavy way.

With them on the boat was a fourth person: a rather thin young man who was doing all the work with the lock gates. One of the women was telling him what to do in a bossy voice. The other two women on the boat were not only ignoring this, but ostentatiously ignoring each other too. A row had obviously just ended, or begun. The lady with the very tight bikini was reading a love-story magazine. Eventually, the young man finished the business with the lock gates, and the dangerously overloaded cabin cruiser wobbled away in the general direction of Rickmansworth.

Hard-up writers waste nothing, and a few weeks later I tried to write a short story about these four people ... but it never came alive, and after a few days I abandoned it. That should have been that: the three fat ladies would have gone out of my life as easily as they entered it, wobbling away in the general direction of the past, along with all those other bits and pieces that for a time seem to start a story but which turn out not to be able to finish one.

What I didn't expect was to meet Norman Spinrad. Norman came breezing into London that summer, full of himself and full of the vigour of working in a bull market for writers. Markets had never been better, he vowed, informing me of the sort of advances American writers like him were getting. But the biggest market of all, according to Norman, was for pornography. He showed me some of the American product: a book with photographs of split beavers, and text describing, er, beavers, and what should be done with them.

"You gotta be doity, really doity," said Norman. "You gotta think of the doitiest thing in the world ... then make it doitier, and get in real close."

He slammed open another of the beaver magazines, and I reeled away. That was close.

"But dat book's a year old," said Norman. "What they doin' now, they doin' the beaver with old wimmin, but not just old, you dig? Ugly old wimmin." He paused, and wiped his upper lip. "Diseased ugly old wimmin."

"Dead ugly old wimmin?" I said, catching the drift.

"Dat's next year," said Norman, and wrote it down in his notebook.

The next day he returned to the US, and I suddenly remembered my three fat ladies. Of course, they'd be British and basically rather nice, and not in any sense diseased, but just suppose they were on this boat and the man they were with happened to be a sexual athlete and had a thing about fat women but the boat was very cramped and the bunks kept collapsing and the lavatory was blocked and the boat started to sink and at that very moment they were...?

It didn't take long to write a chapter of straightforward filth, setting it on the boat and introducing one of the three fat ladies as a narrator. I made it real close, sharp focus. I added a brief plot synopsis (which basically involved a list of who was doing what with which to whom) and sent the whole thing air mail to the publisher whose praises had been most sung by Norman: Essex House, in California. Within a remarkably short time I got the verdict: Great stuff, go ahead, here's our contract.

Actually, the advance was a fraction of the amount Norman had claimed he and the other American authors regularly earned, but I was broke and glad of anything. You don't often sell books as quickly or as apparently easily as that. I signed the contract straight away, returned it to the publisher through my US literary agent, and in due course I received the part of the advance payable on signature. The completed novel had to be delivered within six months.

You might wonder, incidentally, why such an uncomplicated deal as this should be conducted through an agent who, until this moment, has had nothing to

do with it. As things turned out, I did come to wonder myself, because my agent was soon to loom large in the order of things. However, at the particular instant, I was remembering that a good agent does more for a writer than just offer manuscripts and take ten per cent of the proceeds. There are, for instance, complications involving exemption from double taxation ... and a quickie deal for a porno novel runs into these complications just like any other deal. It wasn't long before I regretted involving the agent, though.

But that was to come. For the time being I was at home busily writing my abominable novel. And abominable it was; I always bore in mind what Norman had said, and made it my principal concern to write as filthily as possible. At every conceivable opportunity, I put in something vulgar, obscene or disgusting.

What I didn't know in those days was that if you write like that, if you concentrate singlemindedly on some obsessive theme (whether it is obscenity or anything else), what you write takes on a life of its own, and soars away into something else. This happened with the saga of my three fat ladies. In no time at all it was out of control, and I became the bemused intermediary who obediently typed the words as they presented themselves. This can sound pretentious to anyone who hasn't experienced it ... but it really does happen, and in this case what started as a thoroughly nauseating catalogue of farting, wanking, sucking, pissing, belching, etc, soon metamorphosed into comedy as broad as it was high.

I'm not trying to excuse the book, or make claims for it, or pretend it had qualities it shouldn't have had. It was what it was intended to be, a dirty book quickly written, but it was also a comedy of bad manners, a fable about people misunderstanding things. My first wife thought it was the best thing I'd ever written, although the one or two other people who saw it weren't convinced I should write a sequel.

My agent in America, however, thought it was great. So good, indeed, that it would be "wasted" on Essex House. In spite of my gulps of protest, she sent it to another publisher. I had heard that Essex House were proposing to go out of porno publishing, and I was anxious to collect the remainder of the advance due on delivery, but my agent knew better. The deadline came nearer, and the second publisher was still sitting on my manuscript. I needed the delivery money. The date arrived, and then it passed. The book was still with the other publisher, but ... Good news! They made up their minds, and rejected it. ("Don't these Limeys know we're into dead fat women...?") Somewhat belatedly the manuscript went to the place that had commissioned it, the place that a few weeks before would have paid delivery money. But the contract had expired, and so I got nothing for it and the book was never published. Essex House returned it to the agent.

This was the first thing the agent did that brought me no good at all. The second was yet to come.

I was naturally annoyed that I hadn't received the bulk of the money for the book, but I must have been more forgiving than I am now because I don't recall doing anything more than writing a mild admonishment to the agent. It was, after all, a down-market book quickly written. I was short of cash as a

consequence, but in the end all was well. I gather that for a few more months the agent tried the novel around, but got nowhere with it. The social climate was changing in the US, and porno was returning to the gutter whence it had briefly come.

Time passed. I wrote other things, I changed my US agent, I changed my first wife, I got older. I forgot about my three obscenely fat ladies.

Several years later, the agent did the second thing that brought me no good at all.

The first I knew of it was one sunny morning in June 1975, at around 7.00 a.m. That is the time the mail arrives in Harrow, and that is therefore the time when my doorbell rang. Clutching my dressing-gown about my person, I eased the door open and squinted into the brilliant sunlight. The postman thrust a large cardboard box into my hands, and left.

The cardboard box appeared to be empty, the reason for this being that one end of it had been opened and re-sealed. I shook it a couple of times, and a slip of paper fell out.

From the label I discovered that the cardboard box had been mailed to me by my former agent. Next to the address was a customs declaration, which the agent had filled out in block capitals. What she had written was: CONTENTS -- BOOK MANUSCRIPT, and she followed this with the book's title. (I shall spare you this, but you can take it that it was the sort of title which to someone with an open mind, or to someone with a deeply suspicious mind, was fraught with hints and promises.) Helpful enough, one would have thought, in drawing attention to the contents of the cardboard box, but the agent had not finished. Underneath, entirely unprompted by any official form, she had added: MAY BE OPENED FOR INSPECTION.

Who would have needed any further encouragement to open the package?

I looked at the slip of paper, which had become the box's only contents. I was not feeling optimistic. This is what it said:

"The contents of this package have been impounded and will be destroyed. You are in breach of Post Office regulations and the Customs Consolidation Act 1876. H.M. Customs & Excise."

All this placed me in a bit of a quandary. I'm actually a law-abiding citizen, paying my taxes, etc etc, and it struck me above all else that the novel deserved to be impounded. Looking at it objectively, if the Customs & Excise are there to stop indecent or obscene material entering the country, then I could hardly complain. Nor could I in all honesty claim that my novel was a work of underground literature, a TROPIC OF CANCER or a ULYSSES or a LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER. It was a dirty book, written for money.

On the other hand ... I didn't want the manuscript destroyed, and I wasn't keen on the possibility of criminal prosecution, which it seemed likely might follow if someone in authority considered I was guilty of something. This was not long after the OZ obscenity trial. And losing the manuscript was unwelcome, too. That copy was the only copy left in existence; the drafts had been thrown away, and the carbon copies were lost. I had no illusions about the novel, but

I had after all written it and some vanity, or some hoarding complex, didn't want it destroyed irrevocably.

I eventually wrote a letter appealing against the seizure. I said that I had written the book many years before, when young and foolish, but that now I was ever so serious and responsible and grown up and literary, and could I have it back please?

I heard nothing for a month, but then I got a letter. It was not a reply.

It went on at considerable length, quoting the Customs & Excise Act, the Customs Consolidation Act, the Vagrancy Act and the Post Office Act. It mentioned a maximum prison sentence of five years. It said that the "typed copy of the book" had now been examined closely, and that it had been found to be beyond argument indecent and obscene. I was given a month in which to appeal. If I failed to appeal, they would destroy the manuscript and then prosecute. If I appealed, they would prosecute and then destroy the manuscript.

Taken as a whole, I would say it is probably the least funny letter I have ever received.

Not seeing that I had much practical choice, I decided to appeal. I had a crumb of hope, which I clamped my teeth around, so to speak: they had referred to it as a "typed copy". I pointed this out to them, explaining that no book existed, that it was merely an unpublished manuscript, written by myself when young and foolish, etc. I promised them the book would never be published, added a few other grovels, then appealed to their sense of reasonableness and asked them to let me have the manuscript back and to drop all charges.

A week passed ... and then success! They said that although they continued to hold the view that my manuscript was an "indecent and obscene thing", they were going to exercise discretion and return the "copy" to me.

A few days later I was duly awakened at 7.00 a.m. by the postman, and given an OHMS parcel. Inside, looking very tired and limp — just like my boatman's organ at the end of the novel — was my manuscript.

I put it away in a drawer, and no one has seen it since.

However, that is not the end of the story. There is a sort of postscript.

I could not leave well alone. All I had wanted was to get my manuscript back, and I had that, and I should have been satisfied. But a subtle contradiction had presented itself. I tried to ignore it, but it would not go away. In the end, I succumbed to evil temptation and wrote a letter about all this to the GUARDIAN.

I briefly recounted what had happened, confessing that my book was a dirty one and that although I didn't dispute that it was illegal to send such stuff through the post, sense had in the end prevailed. But, I pointed out, the only people who had mailed it in this country were the very people who had decided it was an "indecent and obscene thing", and they had mailed it to me. I closed by asking, with false naivete, if the use of an OHMS label made it OK.

The GUARDIAN clearly liked my letter because they printed it a few days later, together with a cartoon. This showed a pimp in a dirty raincoat importuning passers-by. He was holding his raincoat open and hissing: "Psst ... fealthy tax forms?"

I was on holiday when the letter was published, but when I got home I discovered that several friends and relatives had seen it. (The relatives were slightly shocked; the friends weren't.) My new-found acquaintances at HM Customs & Excise had also seen it, I soon found out.

The same day I got home, the telephone rang.

"I wish to speak to Mister Christopher Priest," said a man's voice.

"Speaking," I said.

"Customs and Excise. We don't think that was very funny. You want to watch it in future, chum, that's my advice. We've got our eyes on you."

Then he hung up.

--- Chris Priest

\* \* \* \* \*

Oh God, this fanzine is getting out of hand. This ought to be the last stencil, but I haven't got on to the letters or Kettle's rubbish yet. It's Tuesday morning and the current plan of campaign involves me being round at Hansen's at the crack of dawn on Friday to finish running it off before racing back here and leaping in a car to Birmingham. Maybe the back seat passengers can collate it on the M1. And I just phoned the stationers and they haven't got in the paper yet. And I have a book to finish this week. Oh God.

So I'd better get on with it---

LOC.CIT. (the lettercolumn)

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Rob Hansen's response to the introduction of politics into fandom strikes me, I'm sorry to say, as similar to Doreen Rogers's, although the difference between their respective remarks is probably more one of kind rather than degree, in that where she's trying to keep us free of any particular ideological line, he's trying to keep us free of politics altogether ... and thus revealing an even more reactionary angle of attack. I can't see what he's got against it all, though; certainly, I agree with you that both fandom and politics are parts of the real world, and there's no real reason why they should be segregated from one another -- which might provide some clue to his stance, inasmuch as they've been segregated from one another in the past and he

can't see why that segregation shouldn't continue. Well, bollocks to that: the fact that something has "always" been done in a particular way in the past is no excuse at all -- and is certainly a pretty feeble justification -- for continuing to do that same thing in the same way in the future; it bespeaks of nothing so much as a total failure of nerve, a complete unwillingness (and perhaps also a complete inability) to really think through what you're about. And with that I have absolutely no damn patience at all.

But in many ways, Rob's response to the so-called "politicization" of the Eastercon bespeaks a deeper confusion on his part, and indeed on the part of many other fans. In his response to the third issue of my NAPALM IN THE MORNING, for example, Stephen Mackey complained that the letter column was so serious and gloomy that it could have been lifted intact from an issue of PEACE NEWS; and, reviewing the fourth issue in MATRIX 37, Simon Ounsley remarked that I should perhaps transform it into a genzine so that the humorous contributions of others could serve as a leavening for the serious bits by myself -- which seems to imply some assumption on their part that because this is fandom we shouldn't take anything too seriously and should concentrate more on simply "having fun". Well (again), bollocks to that: if fandom is to consist of nothing more than a bunch of drunkards rolling around laughing at each others' jokes and ignoring everything that happens beyond the confines of the bar then I'd rapidly lose interest in the whole thing -- not to mention the fact that a fanzine which showed no interest in anything else but "having fun" would soon become extremely boring. On top of which, this whole attitude evinces nothing so much as a certain degree of essential infantility, a desire to retreat into a comfortable and undemanding womb-like existence apart from the pressures and mature considerations of the real world, a refusal to actually grow up and face that world -- fandom as a crutch, in other words, and given the sheer brainlessness of some of the people in it it's clear that in certain quarters it is regarded as just that.

Which, just to take this discussion off at a tangent, might be why so many of the newer, post-Seacon fans pour so much scorn on our pre-Seacon generation: because the fannish cavortings for which we're so famed and which we uphold as the pinnacle of our endeavours are, in their eyes, pretty bloody childish. You have only to glance at some of their fanzines to see how aware they are of the real world -- with stuff about punk rock, underground journalism, political activism and the like -- and hence, by comparison, how unaware of it our fanzines reveal us to be. Phil Palmer, who is of course a member of this generation, could well have a point when he said of TAPPEN 1 in his THE CHOCOLATES OF LUST that "when (he) read it a sinking feeling gripped (him) in the pit of (his) stomach and (he) could just feel the locker-room institutionalized introspectives (only without the dirty jokes) shutting down on the whole scope of general fanzine writing. I grant you that he does somewhat take it to task for not being what it isn't intended to be, but remember that he's writing out of his own perceptions, out of his own beliefs and ideals, and to him it may well represent something of a throwback to a supposedly "better" earlier age (and indeed the stuff that I produce may well strike him in the same way) -- and who's to say that he may not be right? You and I can only respond to him out of our perceptions, our beliefs and ideals, which are hardly likely to be the same as his. There's something of a generation gap at work here, in other words, and only time can tell whether it will ever be bridged.

\*\*\*\*This is it, huh? The Joseph Nicholas Theory of Fanzines, late 1981 version? My first impulse (despite the fact that you set out to agree with me) is to say "Come off it, Joe" and leave it at that, as I know full well that in six months time you'll be saying something as radically different from this as this is different from what you were saying last time I read one of your fanzine review columns. But still...

- a) You've presumably read Rob Hansen's piece in EPSILON, so you should know that far from saying that fanzines should continue to do just the same things in the future as they've done in the past, he was actually advocating fanzines exploring new ground. He didn't happen to feel that politics constituted a fruitful terrain, and I didn't happen to agree (at least in certain respects), but we could contrive to differ without being fucking condescending and abusive about it.
- b) Simon wasn't, so far as I can see, advocating that you drop the serious stuff from NAPALM, but that it might be more digestible if there was a little light relief for punctuation. This shouldn't be an unfamiliar point: you must remember all those boring, turgid, serious, ponderous US fanzines you were berating not so long ago. Your argument goes as follows: They say my fanzine is too serious and should maybe have some lighter material, therefore they are advocating that fanzines should be entirely filled with trivia, therefore I shall call them infantile. Syllogistically this does not cut the mustard.
- c) Few of us, as far as I'm aware, have held up "fannish cavortings" as "the pinnacle of or endeavours". We would probably maintain that we know how to have a good time, without necessarily insisting that everyone should share our preferences in this regard. As far as I'm concerned the only people incapable of being childish are the ones who have never grown out of being adolescent.
- d) Phil Palmer says a number of interesting and even sensible things in his fanzine, but the bit you quote isn't one of them; rather it belongs right in the middle of the silly conspiracy theory of fannish fandom which I was going on about at the beginning of this issue.
- e) All this generation stuff is nonsense in both fannish and chronological terms. In fannish terms I am part of the class of 70, let's say, you are of the class of 75, and Phil Palmer of the class of 80; in chronological terms Palmer and Rob Hansen, say, are roughly similar ages, and though I'm a few years older than them I'm not as much older than them as they are older than, say, Steve Higgins. This unbridgeable disparity in beliefs and ideals is something I find hard to take seriously, and I suggest that you have been excessively alarmed by Chris Evans's article in NABU 10.

All this without even trying to make sense of your opening sentence which says that two attitudes are both similar and different in kind! Sorry, but this letter won't do. Go to the back of the class and write out 500 times: "I must try to think more clearly and then perhaps I would write more clearly."

Ted White  
1014 N. Tuckahoe St  
Falls Church  
VA 22046  
U.S.A.

TAPPEN, if I haven't said it before (and I have) is a fine fanzine and I have enjoyed both issues cover to cover (and those covers are even better when viewed sequentially, side by side -- kudos to Hansen). You are doing something I regard as Classical Fanac -- the (apparently) extemporaneous composition of a fanzine,

on stencil as it were, complete with a nice balance of outside contributions. This is fanzine-creating as a High Art and I want you to know that I recognize and appreciate it as such. I haven't seen Classical Fanac on this order since the days (actually a little before my time) when Burbee and Laney were putting out WILD HAIR (but I read them -- and reread several recently), ostensibly a series of oneshots, but actually an ongoing series of fanzines published in the late forties and early fifties for FAPA.

\*\*\*\*Gosh. Well, I have to admit I think you're overstating the case here by several degrees of magnitude, but please don't let that stop you. (Burbee? Laney? FAPA? What the fuck's he on about?)

Chris's "Life with the Loonies" is awfully good. Her piece in no.1, while elliptical (and probably more meaningful to those who were there) was fun to read (and made me wish I'd known British fandom better before I went to Seacon). But this piece is genuinely brilliant. Excellently written and fully "professional" in quality, but also solid in what it said. I hope there will be a "Part 2", or, failing that, other contributions from Chris in future issues. She's really an outstanding contributor.

\*\*\*\*I hope so too. "Part 2" is, I'm told, in something of a nongoing situation at present, but I remain optimistic that she'll find the key necessary to unlock it in time for no.4.

\*

Rich Coad  
251 Ashbury St, Apt.4  
San Francisco  
CA 94117  
U.S.A.

You should feel proud of TAPPEN: it's the first fanzine to coax me into doing anything more fan-ish than looking at the mail in over a year, or so it seems ... but don't expect this loc to be too scintillating (Why should I, Rich -- I've met you (Ed)) as I've no notes and rereading for each comment hook tends to be laborious and turn a letter into a dis-

jointed compilation of only loosely connected paragraphs.

\*\*\*\*There follows a disjointed compilation of loosely connected paragraphs, concluding with:

We obviously share a degree of taste in reading matter although I'm going to quibble with your condemnation of Toole's ending for A CONFEDERACY OF DUNCES. How else can an author dispose of an engaging lunatic like Ignatius other than ambiguously? If the character dies or becomes a normal member of society it's going to cast an aura of depression over the entire book which Toole obviously didn't want to do. All in all I thought DUNCES was the best novel I'd read since GRAVITY'S RAINBOW excepting, of course, old classics.

Chris Atkinson's "Life With The Loonies" is nothing short of excellent. It has all the wit and humour of the best fanwriting but, like all too few

others, it actually says something about somebody rather than relying on the stock caricatures of fandom that have become so tedious to read about. If Chris keeps up with this it'll probably turn into a five figure advance from a major publisher with a soon-to-be-made motion picture hovering in the background. Good stuff.

\*\*\*\*Yeah, well, if anyone from 20th Century Fox happens to be reading this, you know where to contact us. On DUNCES: no, I wasn't demanding that Ignatius conform or die; what I missed was any sense of where the changes in his character wrought by the events of the novel were going to lead him.

\*

Linda Pickersgill  
FIS Control Centre  
7A Lawrence Road  
Ealing W5

I especially enjoyed Chris's article, "Life with the Loonies". I think it's an insightful, educational and rather brave thing for her to expose that in herself which so many of us fear and misunderstand: a loss of touch with reality. Chris is right that it may seem mean yet easy to laugh at a predicament such as Hermione's, or even at her own experience, but that laughter comes from one of two sources. It's either a laughter of fear or a laughter of deep understanding. The fear is easy to understand. It seems to me that the British more so than the Americans are concerned with control; the "stiff upper lip" syndrome. Loss of that control in the form of a mental breakdown means loss of dignity, loss of place, loss of stability in the eyes of others. This laughter is often a subconscious act to defuse the fear. Then there's the deep understanding. I'm willing to bet that there are more people reading this who have come close to (if not completely having) a mental collapse than are willing to admit to it. I'm talking about those times of such mental/emotional stress that you just want to quit, to let go and have somebody else (real or imaginary) take responsibility for your actions. If the stress is great enough you do let go. The letting go takes all kinds of forms depending on who you are and what's lurking in your subconscious. For those who have "let go" in some form, even for a very short period of time, it's easy to relate to and sympathize with the comparable experiences of others. The laughter comes from understanding. It's like the jokes and anecdotes that you laugh the loudest at because you've been in the situation yourself.

\*

Steve Green  
11 Fox Green Crescent  
Acocks Green  
Birmingham Green  
B27 Green 7SD

For years now I've slammed the American brand of ego massage most evident in the more appalling apazines: tiresome hacks reciting tiresome stories about their even more tedious lives, exposing their naked psyches with all the flair of an impotent exhibitionist. The kind of fan writing that makes you instantly reach for the phone book and scan for the nearest trappist retreat.

But twice now I've had to admit to a reversal of my principles, and on both occasions the main culprit was Chris Atkinson. First her amusing (and ultimately illuminating) "confessions" piece on sex fantasies in STOP BREAKING DOWN, and

now her revealing (but -- and here's the lesson for those Americans I mentioned -- equally readable) article on mental illness. I've had to deal with quite a few of its victims in the last few years myself (mostly harmless -- if infuriating -- local residents who waltz into my office and demand that I cover totally non-existent news stories for my paper), but this was the first time I'd heard the story from the other side of the fence. Maybe it helps to be a little insane in a mad world, but however you cut it the sheer numbers of people needing urgent medical treatment (and instead finding only imprisonment) make mental disorders a problem that simply cannot be brushed under the carpet. Maybe Chris's piece will serve to remind a few people that despite the rumours fans are only human -- and as open to the frailties of humanity as anyone else. If so, "Life with the Loonies" justified TAPPEN 2 by itself.

\*\*\*\*\*I'm not quite sure what that penultimate sentence is driving at. Are you about to crack up by any chance?

\*

Pete Lyon  
2 New Row  
Old Micklefield  
Leeds LS25 4AJ

You say your spouse is comparatively new to fanzine writing ... well, long may she type. A most enjoyable piece. I always wanted to be an ambulance driver and have lots of interesting, if gory adventures. I would be the bluff, affable, paternalistic, no-nonsense, salt-of-the-earth bloke, unflappable in an emergency, always ready with a kind word, exuding stolid worldliness. Tis a pity it's all a total fantasy! I have had lots (too many) weird, far out (man) acid experiences but luckily haven't entertained any lasting delusions. I remember once getting very upset thinking that all about me must be thinking I was having a bad trip, whereas even though I was raving about demons in the blanket I was enjoying it. All the solicitous offers of downers, orange juice, lots of dexedrine and "total attention" really pissed me off. So I stalked out and everybody knew I was having a bad trip. You can't win, especially if you can't speak.

Where would fannish writing be without silly jobs? Chris Priest's thing was also horribly enthralling. The point is, of course, that the authors must have had interesting work experience and be able to write about it, and I still can't speak.

\*

Mike Glicksohn  
Didn't Put His Address  
On the Letter, And I  
Can't Be Bothered To  
Look It Up  
Canada

I had to look up "tappen" in the OED and that little exercise in self-improvement immeasurably enhanced my appreciation of Rob's cover. I began formulating a variety of comments on the anal retentiveness of the issue but you neatly defused them all by recognizing your peculiarities on the bottom (coff coff) of p.17. Despite your protestations to the contrary, however, I can recall no other fanzine which dwelled so single-mindedly on a bodily orifice as this issue of TAPPEN. One wonders what you can do with future issues or whether you'll have to switch orifices and turn your attention elsewhere. This would somewhat limit your fanzine's life, of course,

as there just aren't that many interesting orifices you can devote an issue to. Perhaps this is your clever master plan and after all sorts of innuendoes about ears, mouths, armpits and other places too disgusting even to think about you'll fold the fanzine and consider the subject exhausted. Along with the editor and most of the readers.

\*\*\*\*\*Yes, well, Mike, old buddy, some day we must get together in some quiet corner at a convention so that you can show me these mysterious orifices you have in your armpits. At the same convention you can buy me several drinks for my efforts to save your fannish reputation by deleting a couple of puns too disgusting even to think about from the preceding paragraph. Note to readers: this is, of course, a letter on TAPPEN 1.

Your description of how you thought a gathering of sf fans would be struck a chord in me as my first contact with other fans was at a worldcon in Cleveland in 1966. I'd only read an announcement about it in a magazine, understand, so I could be forgiven for taking a suit and tie along with me because I had the impression I wouldn't be let into the highly-intellectual discussion groups unless I dressed properly. I never wore those clothes at that con and I've never taken a suit to another con since. I've used the tie a few times, but that's another part of fandom....

The ribbing you took about your long hair from those old-time English fans shows how much more tolerant fandom has become in recent years. Why, I bet if a fan with long hair and a very full beard showed up at an English con nowadays wearing, just to reach for something outrageous, a caftan, English fans wouldn't act in such an asinine way, right...???

\*\*\*\*\*Being half-Welsh it's difficult for me to speak for these English fans, but I think you misunderstood their reaction, which was in fact one of great admiration. If this wasn't clear it must be due to transatlantic cultural differences: you simply don't realize the veneration British fandom feels for Demis Roussos.

Great minds must think alike or something but a couple of years ago, after seeing a particularly awful Phil Foglio painting in several consecutive Art Shows because no one would meet the minimum \$20 bid I offered to set fire to it if twenty people would each contribute a dollar. We raised even more than the minimum and Phil himself graciously destroyed it in the parking lot to much singing, dancing and swigging of beer.

\*

Michael Ashley  
86 St James Road  
Mitcham  
Surrey CR4 2DB

Ah good. I've been waiting for someone somewhere to mention the topic of coincidences so I can come out with the story of an odd little incident that happened to me recently...

One of the reasons I didn't respond to TAPPEN 1, aside from the fact that I couldn't think of much to say about it, was because I'd taken a time-consuming holiday job working in the wages and salaries department of Charringtons, the brewer. I was officially a junior wages clerk which actually meant that I fetched tea, opened letters, and wrote numbers down on pieces of paper. As there were seven people in the office, excluding myself, I

was kept pretty busy. But the number of people in the office did have one advantage: there was always someone present to answer whichever one of the six phones was ringing. I was grateful for this since firstly I'm not particularly adept on the phone (my usual trick is to nod or shake my head in answering a question while the person at the other end is straining to catch my reply) and secondly people only phoned up the office when something was wrong, i.e. when a fault had to be identified and then cleared up. This was officially my job but personally I didn't want much to do with it, as most of the goings-on in the department were arcane rites into the secrets of which I was not to be initiated during my short stay. My only worry, therefore, would be if all seven people were out of the office and a phone rang. This seemed highly unlikely.

One day after several weeks at Charringtons it was ten to five, nearly knocking off time. Bust straightening paperclips or something, I hadn't noticed that the number of people present had dwindled to two, including me. Some who had started work early had already gone home, others were doing whatever wages and salaries people do. My sole companion, suddenly getting up, said he was off to check something and would be back in a minute. The office was now empty, apart from me and six phones. Even so, the chances of one ringing weren't very high -- at ten to five other departments would be more concerned with packing up than starting enquiries into some problem or other. As the time dragged on I started getting nervy. The office was usually very hectic indeed; now it was like the proverbial graveyard. I'll just pop off to toilet, I thought, and had got my hand on the door handle when, over in the far corner, a phone started to ring. Good grief, what a hassle. Still, duty and all that. Crossing the room I thought how I'd been in this job for several weeks now and yet this was the first time I'd had to answer the phone.

"Um. Hello, wages and salaries, can I help you?"

"Yes. Michael Ashley."

Odd: it was for me, evidently. I gave a nod and what was meant to be an affirmative grunt, and then the caller was off on some problem over wages. I was lost by the first overtime bonus. What had all this to do with me? And how did he know my name? Luckily he ended his spiel just as someone came in the office, so with a quick "Here's someone who can probably help you" I wriggled away. When my friend finally put the phone down I asked who it was.

"Oh," he said, "that was Michael Ashley -- he manages one of our pubs."

It was just a coincidence, of course. Yet it's still strange that this Michael Ashley took the one opportunity in six weeks to phone up when the only person present to take his call was another Michael Ashley. Odd.

What you say about music is correct in theory (quality is quality is quality) but because you've been, as you say, "isolated and alienated from what's going on at present" you've presumably missed the challenging of the concept of what exactly goes to make up "quality" that has gone on in recent years. In particular, because of the reputation of the supergroups, whose music was (supposedly) intellectual and worth pondering about for hours on end (while in fact it was pompous rubbish), there's been a minor revolution (the starting point obviously being punk) with an emphasis on immediacy. This has been superseded by an actual desire for the transient thrill of great pop music, so that the official (get

down and) party line is that something has "quality" if, here and now, you can dance like mad to it -- and who cares about ten years' time? I've got a shrewd idea, though, that it's not just a case of "Viva Ephemerality" as Pete Lyon would have it. These sloppy records recorded by 16 year olds in their bedrooms sounded terrific at the time because of their youth, energy, naivete, freshness, etc, and these are qualities which are all pretty durable. The supposedly throw away pop songs of recent years may well be worth a listen or three for a few more years yet.

\*\*\*\*Well, yes, I'd go along with much of that. I'd even go so far as to propose a maxim: that while it's generally impossible to predict at the time of release what records are going to last, the really great dance records always do. What singles stand up best from the 60s? Tamla Motown (which tended to be taken very much for granted at the time, on the assumption that the production line would always keep turning out the songs), the best of Phil Spector, the Who, the Stones. On the other hand, as Colin Greenland and Chris this issue have testified (and I would echo them) a group like Jefferson Airplane whom we used to venerate have dated badly. Whatever else, I confidently predict that if you, or Phil Palmer, or anyone, goes to a party in ten years' time and towards the end of the evening someone puts on a tape of golden oldies from 1976-81, the memories will come flooding back and your heart will lift.

But I dunno about the revolution starting with punk: it began with pub rock, of which punk was an outgrowth; with Dr Feelgood rather than the Sex Pistols. Nor am I sure that there's anything very new in these arguments vis-a-vis quality, unless the official line is that danceability is the only criterion. Which would be very silly.

Time to start winding up this fanzine, which is already far too long. So it's callously into the WAMP's for: Jimmy Robertson, who made points re music not dissimilar to M. Ashley, liked Chris Priest's article, longed to be savaged by Leroy Kettle, and wanted to know the difference between Chris Evans and a heap of ashes; Moshe Feder, whose long and interesting letter on TAPPEN 1 deserves a better fate than this; David Redd "You and I must have missed meeting each other at Sci-Con 70. That was your first sf convention? Mine too. I intend going to my second real soon now."; Michael Ashley (again), with a letter on TAPPEN 1 he has evidently forgotten writing; Pat Charnock, who blames her offspring on Kath Mitchell; David Redd again "I recently found a cassette which I'd compiled for myself some time in the early 70s ... imagine my incredulous horror when I discovered that the first six tracks were all old Lulu hits"; Greg Benford, who enjoyed it and wrote about the Hugoes; Terry Carr, who agreed with me about fan writing; David "Sivvens" Garnett, who had sold some pornography; Dan Steffan, who was taken aback; Jerry Kaufman, who wanted to know if Dymo tapes were what he thought they were. Yes; Arnold Akien, who marked the best bit of his letter DNQ; Chris Lewis, who is for CND -- or maybe END; Richard Bergeron, who liked it; Robert Runte, who wants to be an honorary Brit; Arthur Hlavaty; Karen Trego; Gene Wolfe, who wants to read "Life with the Loonies Part 2"; Chris Priest, who liked THE WHITE HOTEL; Rick Howett; and Avedon Carol, whose letter got in the wrong file and was only just rediscovered, too late. Aaargh. Now for Big Nose:

OPEN FLIE — the column that doesn't mention the SDP (well, only once)

by Leroy Kettle

Mashter of sharcashm and Narry Norman lookalike John (OOO) Brosnan recently had two further setbacks in what he ironically calls his career. Apparently doomed forever to try to write up to pre-pubescent lobotomized movie-goers (along with his pseudonymous colleague John -- writes from the -- Bowels, whose secret identity is not a million miles from meek, mildmannered, bespectacled fannish reporter Ed Weeds), Mr Brosnan last week became the oldest person in fandom. Older even than Extremely Gray Charnock or Christopher Proust. His birthday party was quietly mourned by a few colleagues and acquaintances dancing on his grave. Who is going to believe that this decaying wreck of a person is in tune with the cinematic tastes of people young enough to know him as Gramps? The second setback was an unsolicited tax demand for several thousand pounds from Ireland, that well-known tax haven for artistes. As the tax authorities don't know his address their demand (your money or your kneecap) reached him by an incredibly circuitous route. OPEN FLIE feels that John would not like to have his tax demands unduly delayed in future, so his current address, 23 Lushington Rd NW10, is even now winging its way to the Emerald Isle's tax collectors (Men With Big Sticks Dept).

\*

Eager to be out of the house when Ma Charnock tells little Jimmy that his Daddy done drunk all the food money, Big Grah has signed up with another gang of layabouts laughingly called musicians and known far and wide as Eric and the Maggots. They'll be on the usual circuit of Farting Galas for the SDP (sorry, twice) and home-made jams at WI hops. You know, exactly the sort of thing he went on record 18 years ago in this very column as saying he wouldn't do again unless it was a choice between that and Pat going on the streets again.

\*

Eager to ensure that drunken fannish orgies continue with only the usual kind of sickness and fallouts, Fans Against the Bomb (but For Cats, Alcohol and Excess In Matters Non-Nuclear) Mal, Chris, Kath, Dave, Rochelle and Lindy-poo, arms in arms (conventional, of course) shuffled through the West End with two others in the biggest gathering of its sort (i.e. the small sort) ever seen. Having sung "Can't You Hear the H-Bombs Thunder" several times and saved the world yet again, the intrepid sextet went and got pissed. OPEN FLIE has nothing against letting in the communist menace by relinquishing our ability to devastate parts of Russia the size of Leighton Buzzard, but really agrees with intellectual MP Bill Pitt in being in favour of unilateral disarmament if everyone else does it too.

\*

Other News: Harry Bell and Jim Barker are sharing a room again at Novacon, so everyone else is safe. Kleenex shares soar. Leroy Kettle is sharing a room with the man who taught Mel Brooks everything he knows about farting, Rob (Hasbeans) Hansen. Joe Nicholas has finally gone round the twist, as exclusively predicted in OPEN FLIE last issue, and Alan and Rochelle Dorey, after inadvisedly making what they coyly refer to as fishpaste sandwiches, are pregnant. (Theodore Dorey? Isadora Dorey? The mind splurges.) STOP PRESS: Eric and the Maggots to play at Channelcon. Membership plummets.

## STOP PRESS

Okay. It's pushing 10.00pm here at Greenleaf Road, home of the Hansen publishing empire. The rest of the fanzine has been duplicated and Rob and Chris are about to embark on collating it. Meanwhile the thought of this page remaining blank through my incompetent misnumbering has become too much to bear, so I've borrowed Rob's clockwork typewriter in order to fill it.

The big news in British fandom is, of course, Leroy Kettle's defection to the SDP. He may deny it, but how else can one rationally explain his anti-CND outburst on the previous page? Meanwhile, fannish warmonger Tony Berry calls for more and bigger nuclear weapons in the latest issue of his fanzine FIREBALLS IN THE SKY.

Despite his unwillingness to march for peace, Mr Kettle may soon find himself trudging the streets anyway -- in search of work. Attempting to consolidate his non-existent reputation as the Ministry of Unemployment's resident wag, Mr Kettle doctored a Dept. film poster so that it advertised the well-known movie RIDE ON ENTEBBIT. Several people were amused, but Leroy's bosses were not among them.

Who is Paul Turner? This question was recently put to TAPPEN's editor by American superfan Ted White, who was surprised recently to be woken at 7.00 am by a transatlantic phone call from the aforesaid Mr T., desperate to get a copy of PONG. "I've never had a transatlantic phone call for a fanzine before," said a baffled and red-eyed Mr White. TAPPEN is equally baffled -- who is Paul Turner? And more importantly, when is he going to buy a drink?

One time BNF Greg Pickersgill has been toppled by a palace revolution. Blocked in the production of the next STOP BREAKING DOWN by the prospect of having to type any of the uniformly cretinous letters he received on the last issue, he found himself confronted by angry contributors Chris Atkinson and Linda Pickersgill, who wanted to see their articles in print while they were still alive. Their fanzine STOP FARTING ABOUT should be out at the same time as this TAPPEN, and Mr Pickersgill was last seen morosely contemplating a contributors' file now entirely comprised of cretinous letters, and working out some way of implying that the whole thing's really all his anyway.

Peter Nicholls has a job! Yes, the former scourge of London's debt-collectors has found more-or-less honest employment as the Deputy Editor of the aptly-named (by Colin Australia) LEGO BOOK OF THE FUTURE, run by porno mafioso Bob Guccione. Peter will soon be contacting all fandom's best writers and making them offers they can't refuse, won't you Peter, eh?

Chris Atkinson and Harry Bell have just discovered how old they are! At last Sunday's Friends in Space meeting it emerged that their first romantic meeting (at Yarcon, 1966) occurred some months before Paul Turner was born. The two events are, of course, totally unconnected.

This really is the end of the real page 41.

This is TAPPEN 3, and it comes to  
you from Malcolm Edwards  
28 Duckett Road  
London N4 1BN  
U.K.



CONTENTS

Front Page Drive-In News/  
(editor's bit).....1

The Body in Question/  
(Chris Evans).....3

Last Exit to Gatwick/  
(Dick Howett).....10

Desert Island Disco/  
(Chris Atkinson).....13

The Transatlantic Hearing Aid/  
(Dave Langford).....19

Oh Dear, What Can The Matter Be?/  
(Chris Priest).....26

Loc.Cit./  
(audience participation).....32

Open Flie/  
(Leroy Kettle).....41

Cover by Rob Hansen.

\* \* \* \* \*

TAPPEN 4 may be out for Christmas,  
and may have something by someone  
called Chris, just for a change.  
Meanwhile, an 'X' in the space below  
is a threat, and an '?' means I'd  
appreciate some indication  
that you're interested: \_\_\_\_\_

Usual thanks to John Harvey and  
Rob Hansen. Last stencil typed  
27th October 1981. The space below  
is reserved for the editors of  
SECOND HAND WAVE to fill in the  
page number:

(NB Owing to a stupid error by the  
editor this fanzine has no p.31 and  
an unnecessarily blank inside back  
cover. Aarrgghh.)

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U.K.

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