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GANNETSCRAPBOOK 2

This rapbook - with a capital C - is a whimsical compilation of articles and thoughts produced by those members and honorary members of Gannet-fandom who over a period of two years could actually find it in themselves to inflict such a thing on the unsuspecting recipients.

This issue, and maybe even the next, are available for trades, letters and Gannet contributions. Such objets d' art should be aimed at:

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Cover and loccol heading by Harry Bell.

BANGOR EYES WERE SMILING.....Kev Williams

I don't quite know how to begin this story; you could say it's "larger-than-life", if you know what I mean. Some people may even think it's a pack of lies.. Let me just say that as you sit there relaxing in your smoking-jacket with your pipe full to the brim with your favourite dog, the cigars sitting obediently at your feet, the cat wound and the clock put out, nestling down in front of a roaring Lord Longford warming your hands on the hot air, remember: this tale may be strange, but take heed dear reader, there's not a word of truth in it and you never know - one day - it may well not happen to you! Think on this.

It began on one of those days you get only in South Wales, particularly Swansea, particularly on one of those days. A dim, grey Saturday morning, with the drizzle coming down like armour-piercing bullets. You could walk around in a gigantic condom and still get soaked to the skin.

People arrived at the bus in straggly ones or twos until it was about half full and we'd all waited in the cold for those lazy sods who, with a skinful of watery Hancock's Dark the night before, had sworn they'd be there on time.

Eventually we set off, the ancient single-decker rattling and jerking like an epileptic elephant in corrugated-iron armour, and things soon cheered up, with Ffrancon telling us about his eye operation and how he got arrested for indecent exposure when taken short in Bethesda's Municipal Gardens (mind you, it was midday on a Saturday! - uninhibited, our Ffrancon). Very soon a poker school was flourishing in the back seat, with the cards being dealt on to a precarious surface comprising a soft-topped suitcase balanced on four pairs of knees of varying height.

Before we knew it, time had crawled past and after what seemed days sitting on one cheek, trying to keep the playing surface level - we hadn't even reached Aberystwyth.

On eventually reaching this westerly metropolis, we trooped into a local transport cafe for one of those peculiar steam-heated, soggy, tasteless pasties with its limp and flaccid pastry flopping open like a great flesh wound, accompanied by a cup of poisonous khaki tea made with best 'steri' milk. Eugh!

As the journey progressed, tactics were discussed for the games in hand. Our annual half-hearted 'It's a Knockout'-type sports tournament against Bangor University was really just an excuse for a mammoth piss-up, but we went through the motions for the sake of tradition. Hardly anyone present was in the least qualified to play any of the sports, but we'd been told the beer wasn't too bad and that was reason enough. We did eventually reach Bangor, by the inevitably circuitous route you have to take to get between any two places in Wales, with the driver squinting through the haze of his ten-millionth cigarette since leaving Swansea. We zeroed in on the union bar and had a very jolly night exchanging good-natured banter (and a few broken chair-legs) with our friendly rivals.

The first jousting consisted of two games of 4-a-side soccer. The rumour that

Bangor had hired Glasgow Celtic for the day was soon confirmed, as our A team went down 8-0. The B team took to the floor, eyes upraised in supplication. But at half-time we were 4-1 in the lead.... "Oh! I could see the flower girls rushing out to place garlands around our necks, as we were driven slowly down the Avenue of the Americas with the ticker-tape fluttering down and being dazzled by thousands of flash-bulbs as the world press flashed the news to every corner of the globe. I could see gnarled Mongolian peasants straining their ears to pick up the broadcast scratching its way out of their people's communal Dansette, American millionaires being sat up in their automatic chairs and Glamorgan declaring UDI." Unfortunately, we conceded ten goals in the second half.

Our tiddly-wink team was struggling as well, so it was all out for points in the next event, 11-a-side soccer. I was told beforehand that the winger I had to mark was pretty good. I can't really confirm this since he didn't slow down long enough for me to get a good look. All I saw throughout the match was a ginger blur. Six goals later and defeat by an equally large margin in three or four other sports, Bangor's eyes were smiling and with friendly pats on the back and "better luck next time" being snowed on, thick and fast, a restless urge to throttle something grew, and we trudged tight-lipped down to the boozier.

The darts saved everything. After oiling the elbow joints with half a dozen pints, and a bum-burning Bangalore at the local curry emporium, we annihilated them at darts, wiped the floor with them, trod on them, squigged them into a little bloody spot on the lino. So we left Bangor at midnight, happy, inebriated and filled with a totally unjustified feeling of a game well played.

The journey back was hell. Imagine. Three of us sat on the back seat of the coach. Too many to stretch out. Too few to be jammed upright. It was impossible to sleep. Eight or nine pints inside, bladder bursting every ten miles, and worst of all, the bus swinging back and forth around invisible bends. By the time we reached Aberystwyth, I felt like a soggy floorcloth. My mouth was like an empty bag of crisps, my legs like two planks of wood inexpertly nailed together and my bladder full of concentrated hydrochloric acid.

Have you ever tried to find a Public Toilet in a provincial Welsh town at 3 am on a Sunday morning? Well, it's not easy. We found a place which most resembled a urinal. And there we were, twenty ill-assorted individuals, looking like those who didn't quite make the last thousand of the Mr. Universe contest, lined up along the platform of Aberystwyth station, corroding the rails of the main line to Pwllheli.

Dehydration set in. Luckily, the milk train had arrived some hours previously and stacked in neat piles just outside the deserted station was the milk supply for the whole town. If you look up 'The Times' for March 22nd, 1967, on page eight you'll find a small piece about the mysterious disappearance of an entire town's milk supply. This has remained one of the great unsolved mysteries.

Now the facts are revealed. I've often wondered if anyone choked to death on dry cornflakes that day, or if some constipated vicar had to consume his All-Bran in holy water. I suppose I'll never know.

I want to go to bed said Irene. one hefty kick and I'd go through the wall.
Are you still in Ompa. Yes.

For God's sake Organise an, err I cant think what.
This is True, said the Weardale Mauler.
Ta! Thier, alligned.

((They're.))

((Here I must have told Kev how to make an exclamation mark with an '!'))

We are still going to make a profit!

We'll keep you plied with booze!

Every hour!

But he drinks benedictine!

This is reasonable, says the Mauler. ((We plied nobody with hourly anything -
we were too busy.))

I wouldn't let anybody mess about with it if I were you!

Move along a bit!

UP TOMORROW? Don't worry I won't wake you.

These things must go in the..... what!

In the thingie, you know,

I had two registrations todgy.

Book dealers room?

Thats right.

In the X Storage Room? I can find it, it's room 105. No..... Get it started!

\$6X4 is it or not ((?))

We may have to use the one out the back.

Their twice as heavy is the University and polytechnic ones.

You can fix them at right angles.

((Display screens, actually.))

((There now followed a short coughing fit from Ian Williams.))

He will be speaking on consumption in SF.

There's ten or 106 or... perhaps hes not with us, in the spare envelopes,
I've got some spare envelopes.

Have we really produced something like this? I think it's better.

From what I've seen of the last lot they've not been so good, after all even
the adverts are readable.

Comics oriented! Never, it's too condescending.

Somebody else wrote and said "Can we have the back cover?"

We gave it to bram because, after all, their not getting their copies of thet
until we get 66 ((NNoo,, celloott,, 66..)) copies of that.

We wouldn't have got the money we have got until we appeared reliable; how
else?

Ian's things of 1974.....Ian Williams.....

It was a room. A square room with a floor area of 100 square feet. A grey-painted square room with no visible means of entrance or exit. It was a cluttered room. The floor was littered with photographs, scraps of paper, books, records, magazines.

It was also cluttered by cross-legged, seated Dwarf, by the standing chin-stroking Masked Stranger. Considering the circumstances they had found themselves in, a truce had seemed in order. They both surveyed the piles of material that they found themselves in the middle of.

"Cunt," muttered Dwarf.

"Who?"

"The Maker, the Creator, the Writer."

"Will we get out?"

"When he has finished with us."

"Oh." Pause. "What are we supposed to do?"

"You're being very meek and mild aren't you? For the heroic Masked Stranger, I mean. I thought you impinged yourself upon events."

"I'm out of my depth here. Your foibles and fuck-aboutery I can handle, not his." The Masked Stranger pulled an ebon knife from his belt (They've changed, he mused) and flicked over a record. It was 10 c.c.'s "Sheet Music". He pulled the lyrics out of the sleeve and read:

"Hey, prince of the moonbeams,
Sun of the sun,
Light of a thousand stars;
Your gorillas are urban
And there's bourbon on your turban
And the sun shines out of your ass."

Doesn't rhyme, he thought. And he can't spell, thought Dwarf.

A hand-written note slipped out of the sleeve. "Shit hot concert " it read, "but they shouldn't have done the second encore."

Dwarf glanced round idly at the scattered books. His eyes flicked over some authors and titles. "Hadon of Ancient Opar" by Philip Jose Farmer, "Shardik" by Richard Adams, "The Spell Sword" by Marion Zimmer Bradley, "The Stirk of Stirk" by Peter Tinniswood. The titles of a few comics protruded from under a cushion -- "The Savage Sword of Conan", "Savage Tales", "Dracula Lives", "Swamp Thing". There were piles of non-fiction and children's books, the titles on the spines appearing blurred.

In one corner of the room, half hidden, was a cassette recorder. Dwarf unravelled himself and lumbered over to it. A gnarled finger pressed the play button.

"Good afternoon," said a voice, female, non descript. "Newcastle Polytechnic, Department of Librarianship."

A male voice, quiet, a trace of nervousness: "Hello, I completed the two year course a couple of months ago. I was wondering if you could tell me the results of my finals? The name is Williams, Ian Williams"

"Yes, certainly, just hold on a moment." Pause, rapid breathing.

"You've passed in all subjects."

"All!"

"Yes, a 'C' grade in each paper."

Dwarf flicked the off switch. "Ah, how nice," he said sarcastically.

The Masked Stranger was looking at photographs of a wedding. The happy couple both had longish dark hair, the girl had a healthy amount of flesh on her (a trickle of saliva dribbled from the left side of his mouth), the male sported a beard and an inane leer. Scrawled on the back of the photo were the words: "Conformist bastards, I'll miss them."

Dwarf pressed the cassette recorder again. "Hello, Ian," said a male voice. "We've decided to offer you the post of Branch Librarian at Silksworth." "Great!" said Ian's voice.

On the floor at Dwarf's feet was an application form (filled in and dated 4th December 1974) for a job with Rochdale Public Libraries. Dwarf thought that didn't even need him to comment on. But, he thought, that's the Marquesa of Manchester's territory and the rest of those Lancashire loonies, why there?

The Masked Stranger was looking at some more photographs. The first was of a young girl without makeup, wearing metal rimmed glasses, short curly hair, and a grin on her face. The second girl had a rounded face, straightish hair, noticeable makeup. She bore a certain resemblance to the first girl. The female on the last photograph was older than the other two, she wore glasses perched on the snub nose of her freckled face which was, thought the Masked Stranger, pixyishly appealing. Attached to the back of that photo was a page torn from a diary. "Saturday 10th August. Pete Presford's anniversary party, Gannetfandom finally arrived. Can't even go on my holidays without seeing them. Spent most of the party talking to Anita's cousin Sandra. Wouldn't mind seeing her again, though Manchester's a long way from Sunderland, assuming she'd want to see me anyway. Naah, most likely impractical."

Dwarf picked up a series of Barclaycard accounts from a nearby table. On each was listed at least one weekend return to Manchester. Sick in the head, thought Dwarf and stood, vindictively on Eric Clapton's lp "461 Ocean Boulevard".

Dwarf pressed the cassette recorder play button again wondering what more insipid crap would come out of it this time. He had nothing better to do.

"I still think we should take the money and go to the Riviera," an effeminate male voice. Doesn't he sound a sweetie, thought Dwarf. "Yeah, sure," said Ian's voice. "Rob, have we definitely got that bar staying open 'till the early hours?" "I've already told you we've got that sorted out. Bloody listen will you." "I think I'll become an alcoholic," said a female voice. "Are we going to get some convention work done," said a fourth male voice, "For Christ's sake, Tynecon's only six weeks away."

Dwarf flicked the cassette recorder off, yawning as he did so.

The Masked Stranger picked up a sheet of scribbled on paper. He began to read the scrawl. "Notes: epithets of the Masked Stranger. 1. If you're bigger than he/she/it/them, kick the shit out of same. 2. If you're smaller --run. 3. If in doubt --run. 4. Sex isn't the most important thing in the world, but it is the nicest. 5. What is the most important thing in the world? I think it's just being alive, but as I haven't been dead (I think), I'm not even sure about that." "Clever bastard," said the Stranger aloud, in an admiring tone.

Dwarf noticed a large scrawl on the wall. "For a full account of Tynecon '74 and the headaches of a committee member, see Siddhartha: 5. If you haven't got a copy write or send your fanzine to Ian Williams who has lost his mailing list." The writing faded.

Suddenly, the cassette recorder switched itself on as if by some invisible hand. The voice of Ian Williams was heard.

"Tape notes one. Reflections and thoughts on 1974 and some resolutions for 1975. I don't normally bother with stuff like this. I've never really considered January 1st to be anything other than the day after December 31st. A year is purely a term of measurement, not a distinction between one era and another. Things are rarely so self contained. A year is not a closed cycle in itself, not even climatically, it starts in winter and ends there. However, this time it does single itself out as being rather special and almost self contained. One thing I've learned from it is in future to rely on my common sense rather than on instinctive inclinations." Dwarf looked at the Masked Stranger. "He can be quite pompous when he sets his mind to it." The Masked Stranger had picked up a couple of photographs. One showed a flushed Ian Williams clutching a rock, perched on a steep sided ridge. Another showed him at a zoo scratching a dingo through the bars of its cage, next to him was one of the girls from another photograph and a small child. "There was that wonderful nerve-racking high on Tynecon. And I got started and established as a professional librarian. The thing that bothered me was: now what? It was a very up and down year. When I was up I was about as high as you can possibly get, but when I was down, I was the most miserable I'd been in six years." "Poor baby," muttered Dwarf.

"Another thing I've learned is that there is no such thing as the inevitable, there is always an alternative. Even if that alternative isn't much better it is still a choice. I exercised this choice on New Year's Day, rather than wake up with a hangover on a friend's couch, I walked the fourteen miles home at 3.30 in the morning. I'm not arguing the merits of either, that is irrelevant. The point is

that I chose to do in 1974 other than the 1974 year (of course I've convinced at least one of my friends that I'm round the twist.) 1974 was quite a unique year, I got a lot from it, one way or another. And I'm glad it's over."

Silence hung in the room. Dwarf and the Masked Stranger looked at each other, The Stranger's face was blank, Dwarf's bore an expression of annoyance. At length, the latter spoke.

"The conceited arrogant bastard."

"Eh?"

"He has the nerve to complain about what's been happening to him. Shit, at least the fucker's been living. He's been experiencing things and he's learnt things. He ought to be grateful for that. He's been living, dammit! What about the poor bastards for whom that year was just like another, each day like another, surrounded by humdrum mundanity. And he complains."

Then, like a dream, the room faded around them.

Dwarf and the Masked stranger perched on stools at the bar of the saloon. In front of the Masked Stranger was a beer, in front of Dwarf a large whiskey. In one movement they picked up their respective glasses and drained them. They noticed there were full bottles open on the bar so they poured another.

Behind them, the Sitar Boy entered. He looked at them goggle eyed and dashed out again. They heard his footsteps and voice fading away.

"Uh, hey man, Aye-aye Bird, you won't believe what I've just seen."

The Puppet staggered into the room from the toilet and gazed at the two silent figures. He giggled, then an urbane voice said: "I must confess, that I never thought I'd see the day when you two would sit drinking together. What happened?"

"Don't ask," said Dwarf, picking up the bottle of whiskey and draining it.

"You can't keep this up forever," said the voice from the Puppet's mouth.

"I suppose you're right," said Dwarf, a smile crinkling the corners of his mouth. He picked up the Masked Stranger's full beer glass and poured it over the Stranger's head, then he gleefully bounced out of the door, scattering Sitar Boy and the Aye-aye Bird.

"I said you wouldn't believe it," said Sitar Boy glumly.

The Masked Stranger got slowly to his feet, beer dripping from his face, staining his shirt.

"Sex," he said in a dignified manner, "is not the most important thing in the world, but it is the nicest." He went upstairs to where the town whore was waiting.

WHAT THE READER SAW Rob Jackson

Recently Dick Geis has been running in The Alien Critic a series titled "Translations from the Editorial", containing individualistic views of what an editor really means when he says something diplomatic. So far he has not covered the blurbs you see in prozines at the top of the title page; you know — the ones they use to push you into having a look at the stories they've bought, desperately hoping you'll actually read the things rather than just tuck them away in your shelf. I'd like to interpret a few for you now.

-
- | | |
|--|--|
| A genuinely superior story | = We had to read this through three times before we understood it properly, but as it is by a famous author we expect its flashiness will con a lot of you into enjoying it. |
| A good strong story | = This guy can't write pretty flowing English for toffee, but he invents a nice tight bouncy plot. |
| A quiet and moving story | = This one hasn't got an ending. |
| We are proud to offer... | = Whoopee! A Big Name back from the anthologies for once. |
| ...and gives it a subtle and ingenious new twist | = Our four hundredth story about alternate worlds/aliens/whatever — and one of our lesser ones, too. |
| Chiller | = This one is about an odd little kid who gets misunderstood, or else a nasty way of finding some dead people. Or see below. |
| First rate story from a new writer | = This one is about a soldier back from Vietnam, or about the freeways grinding to a halt, or a bored chap who gets his wish in an alternate time-world. Or see above. |
| By...who says about himself... | = We let him/her rack his/her brains for this one instead, as it is the eighth essentially identical story we've bought from him/her. |

Enjoy.

= This is a chiller, but it is a first-rate story by a new writer.

Unusual

ii About a misunderstood kid/soldier from Vietnam/nasty way of death/stopping the freeways/a bored middle-aged chap who gets his wish by changing time-stream.

Suspenseful

= By another guy with no style, but who knits nice cat's-cradle plots. (Everything strings together.)

...makes a welcome return...

= If we publish this story in a series about a character who last appeared here seven years ago, all you bored old timers out there who were thinking of cancelling your subs might delay a couple of years, in search of The Stories They Used To Write.

...could be about...or about...or
about...

= I'm not sure what this story is about, and I don't think the author was either.

There was a time when "space opera"...

= Here is a space opera.

This time around he tries a different tack.

= This time around he does almost exactly the same thing again.

Fast becoming a unique voice...

= Isn't a unique voice yet.

Vividly detailed picture of life in the near future.

= About a trip to Mars.

His...was nominated for a Hugo
last year.

= Hint. This year too?

...carried to a logical and frightening conclusion.

= Don't read too carefully or you might see the ending long before you're meant to.

=====

WHILE MUNDANES SLEEP...

Gray Boak

By the great oil-bearing North Sea
By the dirty, stinking river
Slept the fanzine of the Williams
Of the massive, broody Williams.

Upon every Tuesday evening
Down he went unto the tavern
Where he supped foul ales and spirits
Underneath the wary gannets.

There he met the comic Penman
Wordsmith Ritchie, Oilcan Harry
Painted Marshall, pretty Judith
Dare we mention - Henry PiJohn?

Into this vile den of vipers
Came our hero, Mighty Mauler
Strong he was, and brave of spirit
(Victor of the Desert Campaigns).

Far afield the word had hastened
MAYA woul bestir no more
'Till the news had come to Tyneside
Reached the Mighty Mauler's door.

He had locced the giant OUTWORLDS
He had subbed the SFR
Now he moved into the Gannet
This his greatest task by far.

Now he stood upon the threshold
Quelled the uproar with his glare
From the foul smoke-ridden corner
Williams rose to meet his stare.

Oh, it was a clash of champions
Chairs and walls they thrust aside
Faced each other, roared out warnings
Stamped and prowled and growled and swore.

Mauler's stride encompassed counties
Williams swept whole towns to dust
Mountains trembled in their sockets
Rivers rushed to clear their way.

Williams flung a rock at Mauler
 (Pebble dust it was, say some)
 Mauler ducked, then swung his left arm
 Slapped the Goblin on his paw.

Mighty was the sound that issued
 From the wounded Goblin's maw
 Mighty was the roar redoubled
 When he stepped on Mauler's toe.

Mauler purpled, lost his temper
 Thrust his hand beyond the rest
 Wrapped it round a pint of Special
 Tossed it onto Williams' vest.

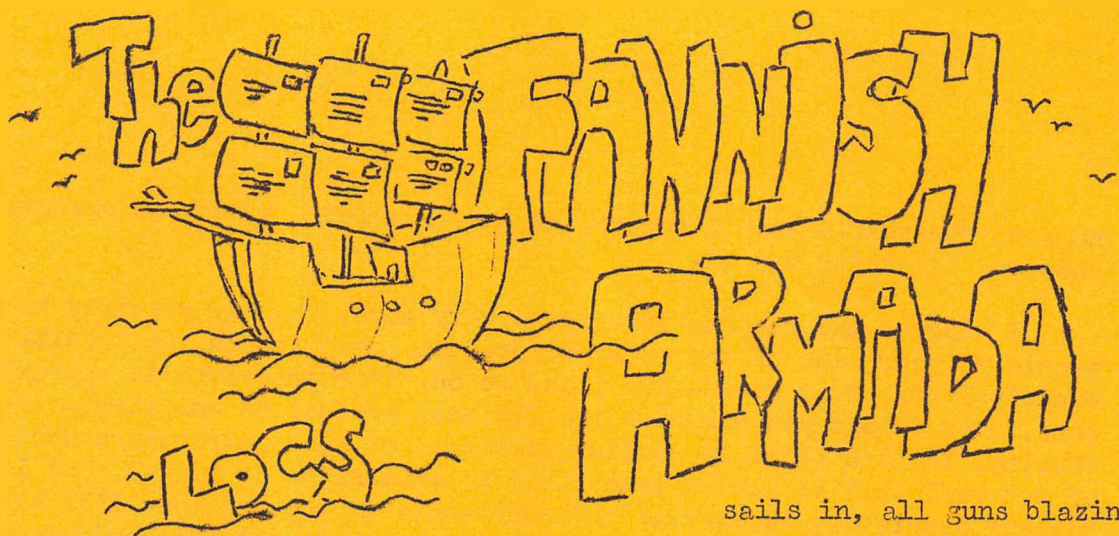
Apoplectic, all a fury
 Filled with flame and rage and ale
 Escalation his intention
 Williams wailed an awe-ful wail.

All around the glasses shattered
 Bottles bounced onto the floor
 Wading through a pool of Special
 Mauler thrust the villain o'er.

See how Mighty Mauler conquered!
 See the Goblin's cause astray!
 Mighty Mauler seized the fanzine
 Took the Maya far away.

See the many great editions
 See the plaudits they have won
 See the latest golden issue.....
 Mauler - where has MAYA gone?

How about that then? British fanzine poetry will never be the same again. Forgive me, Lisa? My thanks to Miss Margaret Palmer for the last line of verse 14. (My original was even worse, I assure you.)



Locs on Gannetscrapbook 1. All ((interjections)) by me, Robert Jackson; the others seem quite prepared to let me do all the ~~work~~ talking.

.....

Harry Warner, Jr,
423 Summit Ave,
Hagerstown,
Maryland 21740,
USA.

Gannetscrapbook dazed me a trifle, in a pleasant sort of way. Maybe I could best describe the experience as fandom's equivalent of Future Shock. I recognize in its pages all the typical behaviour of fans, but there are half-familiar and familiar and unfamiliar names all mixed up among each other, there are references of in-group punchlines that I know nothing about, and after a while, I figured out what this first issue reminded me of. In this disintegrating nation, the television networks run a lot of domestic dramas in the early afternoon hours, before the kids get home from school and kick and scream until their mothers let them get in front of the television set and watch the programs aimed at the bloodthirsty little idiots. About once every two years I watch one of these soap operas, each time my television set has had a breakdown and the repairmen are working on it and keeping it turned on so they can ascertain the instant when the picture stops being upside down or sticking obliquely out of the loudspeaker. There are all these handsome people in a highly emotional state, speaking in perfect diction about crises, and I know nothing of their pasts or how they got into this situation.

But after reading the items in Gannetscrapbook I think I have most of you at least partially attached to mental images. Without boasting, I think I can even claim to have settled for myself what Gannet is. At first I thought it was the name of a great author whom I'd never run across and all the people in this fanzine are enacting roles in his finest novels. Then I shifted my hypothesis to an inexpensive but dignified institution where the occupants are recuperating from difficulties caused by too severe stress in the outer world, by means of shock treatments before breakfast and occupational therapy like fanzine publishing. But now I've decided that Gannetfandom takes its name after something

no more remarkable than a tavern, an inn, a saloon, a pub, or whatever the modern name for the thing may be.

I enjoyed the reading experience very much. You may possibly be the first people on your side of the ocean to produce something in the tradition of the municipal apas over here - APA L and so on. Your procedure is approximately the same, even though you disguise the finished product as one single issue of a fanzine. You can probably realise that some of the contributors wrote the kind of material that is almost impossible to comment on at length. But I found nothing completely incoherent and many spots in the sections I'll be speechless about left me wishing desperately I knew enough to get full enjoyment from the in-group jokes.

I don't much care for small parties but I can't bear large parties, like you. But I do believe that the popularity of loud rock music will produce eventually a revival in the old art of lipreading. My father used to be an expert lipreader. There wasn't any deafness in the family; he had been a great fan of the movies before sound films arrived, and he learned how to enjoy more of the dialog than was quoted on the screen. Lots of other people could do the same thing. Just think how nice it would be if everyone got into the habit of reading lips instead of trying to hear conversation during loud rock music. This habit might spread to concert halls where normally exactly the opposite effect occurs and you can't hear the music properly for the people whispering and mumbling around you. People would simply operate their lips without uttering sounds. Eventually this habit might spread to radio studios, and then the disc jockeys would cease to be a national nuisance because nobody could hear them and of course nobody could read their lips from a radio, and all we'd be left with is the music, which is why we listen to the radio, anyway.

Mary Legg's little item got me to thinking. Almost any good camera would betray a vampire immediately. There would be no way to see a vampire in a reflex camera, because the eye put to the viewfinder sees an image that is reflected by a small mirror from behind the lens to the prism. In the camera that focuses with a rangefinder, a small rectangular section of the vampire would be blank when the photographer looks through the viewfinder, the section where the tiny mirror in the rangefinder creates the split image when the lens is out of focus.

.....

Aljo Svoboda, Is this the stuff that great fans are made of? I must admit that
1203 Buoy Ave, the fact that you're folded over lengthwise and that one or two
Orange, pages are almost unreadable prejudices me in your favour, but
CA 92665 even so. Where's the inherent fabulousness that should be there,
USA. or whatever it is? Great Ghu, you should be ashamed of yourselves,
strangling Ian Maule's creativity and turning him into a common
workhorse like that. You deserves whatever you get, maybe ~~can~~ poor repro' for the
rest of your collective lives. That's enough of this scathing accusation stuff
for right now, but you get the idea.

Is Fannetgandom the Brooklyn of Great Britain, or does it just look that way?

Another interesting case of disorientation because of mirrors occurred at the Los Angeles Museum of Art a year or two ago. One of the pieces there was an S-shaped maze made up entirely of mirrors. People could go through it, but many of them only barely made it, although the maze itself was very simple. Later, they posted a guard around it and kept it open only at certain times after a girl was raped in the bend of the S one day, only two yards from civilisation... There is also the matter of distorted mirrors. At times, I feel very uncomfortable around one; perhaps some ancient racial fear of mirrors capturing my soul, and in this case, deforming it. Yep, Mary Legg may have something there.

I certainly enjoyed Gray Boak's part; his faannish dictionary was especially ghod, if he could only pad it out a little. Maybe that's only because he's an Established Fan, and the rest of you will never amount to anything but rank neos or BNFs or maybe more. ((Five years ago I was a four-stone neofan; today I am two separate professionals. You too can build your writings with... Dynamic Tension!))

Please send ~~flowers~~ more of these, won't you? I think you're going to start turning into something really good, if not Of Lasting Value, very soon, and I'd like to see how it happens.

.....

Terry Jeeves,
230 Bannerdale Rd,
Sheffield S11 9FE,
UK.

I could have ignored your zine, but since you obviously put in an awful lot of work, I feel it only fair for you to get a response; I am going to try to make it a helpful one.

With all that talent at your disposal, you have produced one of the cruddiest zines I have met in a long time. Either your contributors are unable to write coherently on a chosen topic, or they are almost all too blooming lazy to try. Nearly every other page gives us the old "x lines to fill here so I'll flannel on." THIS is not how to produce a fanzine. I don't care what you write about so long as you (and this is a collective 'You') make it interesting. First have something which is worth saying, if only because it interests you, then say it... Now to detail. See the utterly juvenile interjections... the mis-spellings. If you have any pride in this, then heaven help you.

Back there, I keep qualifying my comments by saying "almost all the material". "Sensa Wonder Drug" actually held my interest for the first two pages; "Oilcan Harry", again an honest attempt to write something of interest and not just to put black marks on stencil until the thing is full up; and finally Mary Legg also has a sincere effort with "Reflections". Three decent items out of the lot. ((Personally, Terry, I felt, and still feel, that the only decent thing in my own contrib was the piece about parties you didn't enjoy, and that my waffle was the early part of it, which you did enjoy! No quarrel about the existence of waffle, though...))

Why was everything else so rotten? Because everyone was waffling like mad to fill up their page quota. For gosh sakes take more time. Rough out your pieces first; get a theme and work at it.

Phew. That is the toughest LOC I have ever written. I don't like slamming any fanzine, they represent too much work; but with all that talent up there, why don't you use it instead of abusing it?

((Time and effort; there's the important factor. You mention the awful amount of work you feel must have gone into Gs 1, then go on to prove the lack of it. To be honest, it wasn't much of an effort to put out; perhaps not enough. Gannetscrapbook doesn't have any pretence at quality; it's simply a pile of trash, waffle, or whatever rattled out in the hope that people who know us - and in some cases people who don't (vide supra, Harry Warner) will get some enjoyment out of it anyway. So much of the writing in it is entirely personal; for example Thom Penman's article gives me more pleasure every time I read it. If you didn't enjoy it, my only reaction is one of disappointment that you don't know us better. There seems to be a relationship between the size of the intended audience and quality as judged by someone outside that audience. Our intended audience is too small, possibly; however, if we tried harder or altered the style it would of course change character and possibly be another zine altogether.))

.....

Frank L. Balazs, 19 High St., Croton on Hudson, N.Y. 10520 USA.	There are problems in understanding much of it for an ignorant American fan like me. "The Elephant's Wearing an Overcoat" for example is full of references I haven't the slightest idea about. I haven't figured out who 'Goblin' is a nickname for. I do have an idea, but refuse to divulge it as I may be wrong and have little to no desire to be chortled at. Is it Williams? Huh, huh, huh? (chortle, Frank? We don't chortle at that. Okay, Gannetfandom, on cue, a nice big laugh!) ((His interjection, not mine. Breathe easy, Frank; that's a correct deduction.)) Actually, I figure it's probably an Ian sceeing as how many of them are floating around (just so long as they don't drown): Mauler is covered, and Penman doesn't seem to be the fan in his family.
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Do you realise how much of my interpretation of you weirdos is contained in that above paragraph? My God, I've left myself open for all sorts of hell if I'm wrong. Excuse me while I find someplace where I can quietly be sick....

Really, is British fandom that devoid of artistic talent? You mean that there is not even one person in Gannetfandom willing to draw something, however incompetent? Maybe, at least, some fancy lettering? Doesn't really matter - what is written is what is truly important. I don't think there are any fanzines primarily for art, with printed matter thrown in for balance; no, usually it's the other way around. Art communicates, but not the same way the written word does. It certainly cannot be as specific. But a book review interpreted through - say - cartoons would prove interesting.

((We have artists, yes; but one other person drew something last issue - and it was so incompetent that he's never going to cut anything first time onto stencill again... are you Rob? (thump) *squeaky no*))

((Fancy lettering - see this issue; art fmz - see comix fandom, I suppose.))

Graham Poole,
23 Russet Rd,
Cheltenham,
Glos. GL51 7LN.

Hey, I liked the front cover illo... those distorted, warped shapes from the Hell of Hades, the twists and curves of frantic feminine forms, the..... duh, wait a tick, my brother has just told me he's been doodling on a piece of paper that was lying around. Uh! He's sick,

Herbie made me feel pretty guilty about the slippers I wuz phlogging to death so I've had them put down painlessly. Afterwards we had to call a plumber round to unblock the bog. Then Marysienka (Showusa?) Legg informed us delightfully all about uh, what was it she wrote about now?

Dave Rowe,
8 Park Drive,
Wickford,
Essex,
SS12 9DH,
UK.

Gannets/Crap/Book was right. The only worthwhile piece was "Old Goblin's Almanac" and perhaps the ramblings in Gray's Interim, but who the hell did those awful handcuts

oh

Blimey. It's been so long I've even forgotten when I did them! Over to you Master Colley. ((That last sentence is nasty!))

Lisa Conesa,
54 Manley Rd,
Whalley Range,
Manchester,
M16 8HP.

I do wish you lot would introduce yourselves or each other, especially the "new" names. Who the devil is Henry Pijohn, for instance? At least Rob Jackson sounds human, though I suspect that some, if not all, of the names in Gsb are pseudo-names and/or phen. Am I right? Okay, so we know that Rob is a medical student - but... I must say that the style of writing is different from the rest of the Gannets, so he could possibly exist, but it could be a deliberate hoax. See what I mean?

((We're found out at last! We decided that "I" should have a beard and a past history of pre-clinical medicine at Oxford, where he wrote stories for Sfinx, in fact still does in the wildly optimistic hope that they may get bought by prozines or anthologies instead. These stories are one of Thom and Ritchie's more boring chores.

If you remember, there was a lifesize working model of me on view at Ompaceon. Completion of the final assembly and training it in time were Professor Williams's crowning achievements. (You didn't know what he was professor of, did you? Biomechanical engineering and electronic cybernetics at Vaux University, Sunderland.) He also brought the Henry P. Pijohn to the con, but it is an earlier effort and nowhere near as sophisticated as the Robert Jackson model. However, both models are fully mobile, equipped with a reasonable vocabulary and come fully clothed even!

Lisa goes on to lament the lack of a fannish Who's Who - Terry Jeeves is reviving the one in ERG, though even that is not entirely hoax-proof, one thinks!))

Mary Legg,
20 Woodstock Close,
Oxford OX2 8DB.

Black mark there, oh editor? You really should have explained how the Scrapbook came about, since the circumstances explain the state of my contribution at least. What were the circumstances, they cried? Well, for me at least, 'twas the receipt about a week before Xmas of a letter from H.R.B. asking for a contrib. by 30/12, I think it was. So, what with the state of the mails over the Christmas rush, it was sent off within about 2 days - and showed it! ((It was a rush job for all of us - and most of the rest showed it more than your contrib.))

About non-fan parties: Don't all groups tend to close ranks against outsiders? I've even seen fans do it - and so far as the public school and university types go there are indeed such bods inside fandom itself. ((Yes, and I'm one myself, which is why you missed the point of my article somewhat. Theoretically I was among my own kind, so I should have felt at home; the point was, I didn't.))

I've just recalled that I missed out the famous "Mirror, Mirror on the Wall" legend. Did you see that quip where the mirror gave the wrong answer, and then said: "Don't shout at me, I only work here." Well, I thought it was funny.

The two Ians' mention of fannish hierarchies. Oddly you never seem to hear the word "neo" bandied about like it used to be, when the neo used to ask "When will I not be a neo any more?" In those days ('ark at Methuselah, they cried - this was in '62-63) there seemed to be more of a gap between new and established fen than there is now. I recall asking when I wouldn't be a neo myself, and being told it would be when I didn't ask the question any more!

Gray has a point about the selectiveness of the loc-writer. In theory it's a good idea, but soft-hearted folk like me don't like to miss out commenting on a contrib if at all possible. The cynical (no pun intended) would say to Gray that the majority of fen are too idle to conduct a feud! It's not really something I would support myself, anyway.

Malcolm Edwards,
75A Harrow View,
Harrow,
Middx. HA1 7RF.

I'm forced down to commenting on Gray Boak's contribution, not because what he has to say is witty, intelligent or perceptive, but because his comments are not entirely confined to the alien fans of the far north east, and furthermore, he's the only person in the whole issue who mentions my name.

A major prize for A. Graham Boak then, senile fool that he is. The sneering Mr. Edwards... That curl of the lip you see is not a sneer, but simply second-rate materials, slowly disintegrating. Actually, Gray may be surprised to learn that I agree with almost everything he says even if, compounding Greg's error in thinking that British fandom could be complete without my presence, he fails even to mention me among the omissions. I'm afraid Gray would be unsuccessful in trying to start a sercon/fannish feud with Greg and I as leading participants, because he would probably find that we agreed on most things. Gray is probably harking back to that panel at Worcester, on which I said a couple of harsh things.

But I've nothing against fannish fandom as such; I'm all for it. What I objected to then, and still object to, is the inverted snobbery of it (or part of it.) Sure, fanzines, conventions, etc don't have to be devoted to discussing sf - but that doesn't mean there's something wrong with them if they do. I object to fannish fans who sneer at serious fanzines as if to want to discuss sf was somehow immature, a waste of time. We all know of such people - indeed, Gray cited one such group (the Brooklyn Insurgents) as if he would like to see a British equivalent. Well, screw that. Arnie Katz and co. produce some good fanzines, no doubt about it, but what really pisses me off about Katz in particular is the way he continually snipes at people like the Browns, or Linda Bushyager, simply because the kind of fanzine they like to produce is not the kind Arnie Katz likes to produce (or to read). Okay, I'm reading too much into what Gray says, and agree whole-heartedly with his last paragraph. Both kinds of writing have their virtues (and combine in VECTOR: the fanzine with Pam Bulmer critiques and Bob Shaw columns!) The worst offence is bad writing and I think it's undeniable that this is mostly confined to fannish fanzines. You can publish any old pile of crud and there'll be someone even more illiterate than you who'll think it's good.

.....

Peter Roberts, 87 West Town Lane, Bristol, BS4 5DZ.	Gray is in a bitter mood, I see, and also a somewhat confused one; he says, for example, that "Peter Roberts often talks a lot of sense, but I must disagree with him when he suggests that it is time to stop slating British fanzines." Apart from the fact that I <u>always</u> talk sense, Gray is contradicting himself; turn back a page and you'll find the following: "British fandom is in a healthier state now. There is more contact with other fandoms; there are good fanzines being produced in England. The old crudzines have disappeared - and good riddance." He does admittedly go on to knock the MaD group zines, but that's a lot less than attacking British fandom as a whole. Gray's right - British fandom is "healthier" now and there's no longer any need to dismiss a fanzine simply because it's home-grown; the day of the Typical British Crudzine is, I trust, past. We can finally make some distinctions between the products of British fandom and sift out a few titles as fit to be seen abroad; a few years back it was painful to read the American fanzine review columns when a British fanzine strayed into them - mercifully few were ever sent abroad, however. Nowadays things ain't so bad.
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Gray also contorts himself when talking about friction and the lack of it in British fandom. I mean, would the Manchester Group agree with you about this lack of feuding, Gray? Anyway, I thought it took a bit of nerve for him to say that I "suggested force-feeding a possible feud between the fannish and sercon elements in Britain." The loc in Maya that Gray is paraphrasing was intended as a rebuff to the Americans who seemed shocked at Greg Pickersgill's 100% Fan or Nothing outburst in the previous issue. My main point was (and is) that the fannish crusade in America has produced a large number of fine fanzines and influenced many others (Beabohema certainly, and probably SF Review as well); Focal Point, Potlatch, Fiawol, Rats!, Mota, Fangle, Beardmutterings, and many more, are all fruits of the fannish crusade in America. Only Egoboo predates them and

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even that can be seen as an attack on the predominantly sercon fandom of the time, inspiring the later followers. Now if a similar campaign could achieve such results in Britain then I'm in favour of it. Greg's original letter and the replies to it had an aura of righteousness which gave the whole thing this air of a crusade or a feud in the making; it doesn't have to be handled in that way, though. The upwelling of fannishness in Britain needn't lead to a quixotic gallop at Jim Goddard's Cypher or any such head-on confrontation. Such an exercise would be pointless and divisive. But those fanzines with a mixed and volatile content whose editors are looking for readers' reactions can (and should, I feel) be pointed in a fannish direction. I'm thinking of - say - Lurk or Zimri, where book reviews mingle uncomfortably with fannish material. Mike and Pat Meara have put a poll in their latest fanzine and if the fiery fannish fans bother to fill this in the editors may well be encouraged to change their present haphazard policy. The same can be achieved by loc-writing and so on. The crusade only starts when the fannish diehards gather in a clan, dismissing the undecided fans and thereby alienating them. American fandom is, perhaps, big enough for such action not to matter too much (though there were plenty of protesting cries from the middle-ground - Mike Clicksorn and others); British fandom is too small for such divisions. I don't want to be stigmatised as an aloof fannish fan, though I greatly fear that in some quarters that's already my position.

Gray's comments on the Manchester Group have a spokesman-like look to them and the fact that they're backed up by a chorus of jeers in the rest of the Scrapbook only enhances that view. I wouldn't blame the MaD Group if they saw the thing this way and put the finishing touches to their theory of a reactionary establishment plot against them. Like the members of OMPA, they'll soon see all criticism as evidence of vicious prejudice; a few good shouts from them and a couple of snarling replies will result in a split that's good and wide - and a split that'll place a good few neofans on the MaD Group's side of the fence. That, I feel, would be a S&D thing.

I'm not sure what, if anything, can be done to save the situation. I must admit that I've been annoyed by some jibes from the MaD group (specifically in Malfunction and Madeup) and a few more will prod me into a feud of sorts. For example, I've been accused of making money hand-over-fist with Checkpoint whereas every issue has made a loss, albeit small, except for the eighteenth which, for some reason, made 4p profit - hardly enough to finance a printed Egg, as was suggested; also I was accused of cutting Pete Colley and Pete Presford off Egg's mailing list - this printed denunciation arrived with "Thanks for Egg, Pete!" written alongside... Straightforward criticism, even if fairly harsh like a recent loc on Egg from Pete Colley, is ok by me; but I don't go a lot on empty accusations and rumours - particularly if they're not retracted. All this indicates that common ground between the MaD Group and other active fans is quickly disappearing; Gray is already feuding and probably on a level where a meeting at a convention would be unpleasant (the true test, perhaps). I don't want to go the same way and I believe the split will become a genuinely nasty one unless everyone returns to the more academic pastime of faulting each other's fanzines without taking personal swipes at the editors.

Wow - this is what I really call a fence-sitting letter.

Pete Presford,
10 Dalkeith Rd,
South Reddish,
Stockport,
SK5 7EY.

On the matter of Gray (call it Arthur) Boak. He will be dealt with in no uncertain terms in the next Malfunction. How such a fugghead can remain free when there is such a profusion of dog-catchers in his area I don't know.

((At that stage - mid-February - it looked as if all might be boiling up for a first-class ruckus. A month or so later, however, Malfunction-3 appeared containing none of the expected words of battle. Instead it contained quotes from an exchange of letters between Pete and Gray which had evidently been entirely reasonable and non-vitriolic. This didn't contain too much discussion of MaD Group zines, but it did establish a fairly cordial atmosphere. Thus by the time Ompacon came round the unpleasantness Pete Roberts mentions was not so likely, and as far as I know Pete and Gray met without any nasties at all. So..... fence-sitting fandom breathes again. Naturally Pete won't have been convinced Malfunction is of quite the rock-bottom standard Gray thinks, nor will Gray exactly vote it for a Hugo, but the daggers seem to have been sheathed.

Pete also mentioned in his M-3 editorial that he wasn't serious in accusing Pete Roberts of making a nest-Egg with Checkpoint, either. So the whole thing seems to have blown over for the moment. A storm in a teacup? Talking of cups and things, Pete, you could have attacked Gray for calling the kettle black in an article published in a pot. Which would be panning him, and would jar his sensibilities, leaving him dished. A sinking feeling would knife through him and tap his strength, bowling him over and leaving him on the shelf or bottled in his cups. He would have bin ladled up on a platter.....

sorry

Back to Pete's letter.))

"What's a Vagina Dentata?" indeed. Wise men have puzzled over this for many years in Manchester. The local witch doctors now admit to having treated several cases of this ailment since National Health was introduced. We now quote you an excerpt from "Dentists' Monthly".

"The modern generation, with its easy access to sweet and sickly substances, finds itself wearing false teeth at a much earlier age. This, together with the promiscuous society, is producing a new malady for the medical profession to deal with. The name of the malady is "Vagina Dentata". A typical case history might run thus: a young man out with a girl of easy intentions finds himself treading the more experimental paths of sex, of which one comes under the common slang name of "Muff Diving". In this, the young man after a few sparring moves upends the girl on the couch or substitute and buries his face in her crotch. During the exciting play that follows the young man becomes well in, as the modern term has it. In the final shudders of orgasm the girl closes her legs sharply while the man is still there. If he is wearing the above-mentioned false teeth they can be gripped by the vagina, and such is the contraction of the muscles that the teeth are wrenched from his head.

The end result is impaction of the dentures which necessitates surgical removal. There are not many surgeons capable of this operation; most of them are incapacitated due to laughter.

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Well, think on it. What would you do if you walked into Casualty and saw a young girl stretched out on a table, with a pair of false teeth grinning at you from the depths of her thighs?

((Gnash her teeth for her?... Pete, we don't have Causality Departments in hospitals, we have Casualty Departments; that's the prize in a superb collection of typoses.))

Some short notes and WAHFs:

My interjection after Terry Jeeves's letter is taken from a private reply I sent to him in which I agreed with virtually all his points; in case his letter as presented here seems harsh I should say that he wrote back to me saying that he himself felt he'd been a bit rough on the zine. Still, his points are well taken.

WAHF: John Hall ("Dear Gannets: Fuck you. Your revolting ego trip zine is too good. This annoys me."), John Piggott ("I've been sitting in front of this damn typewriter for several minutes wondering what to say. Everyone knows I'm a sweet, talented guy from whom good writing fairly flows out so I'd hate to spoil the image by giving rise to an inferior loc."), Alan Hunter ("As I have never met any of the people named, the snide remarks about their appearance or personal habits are above my head - or probably, and more accurately, beneath my feet. The direction depends on what you use for a compass."), Alan Barrie Stewart, Ian R. Butterworth, and Roger Waddington.

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