

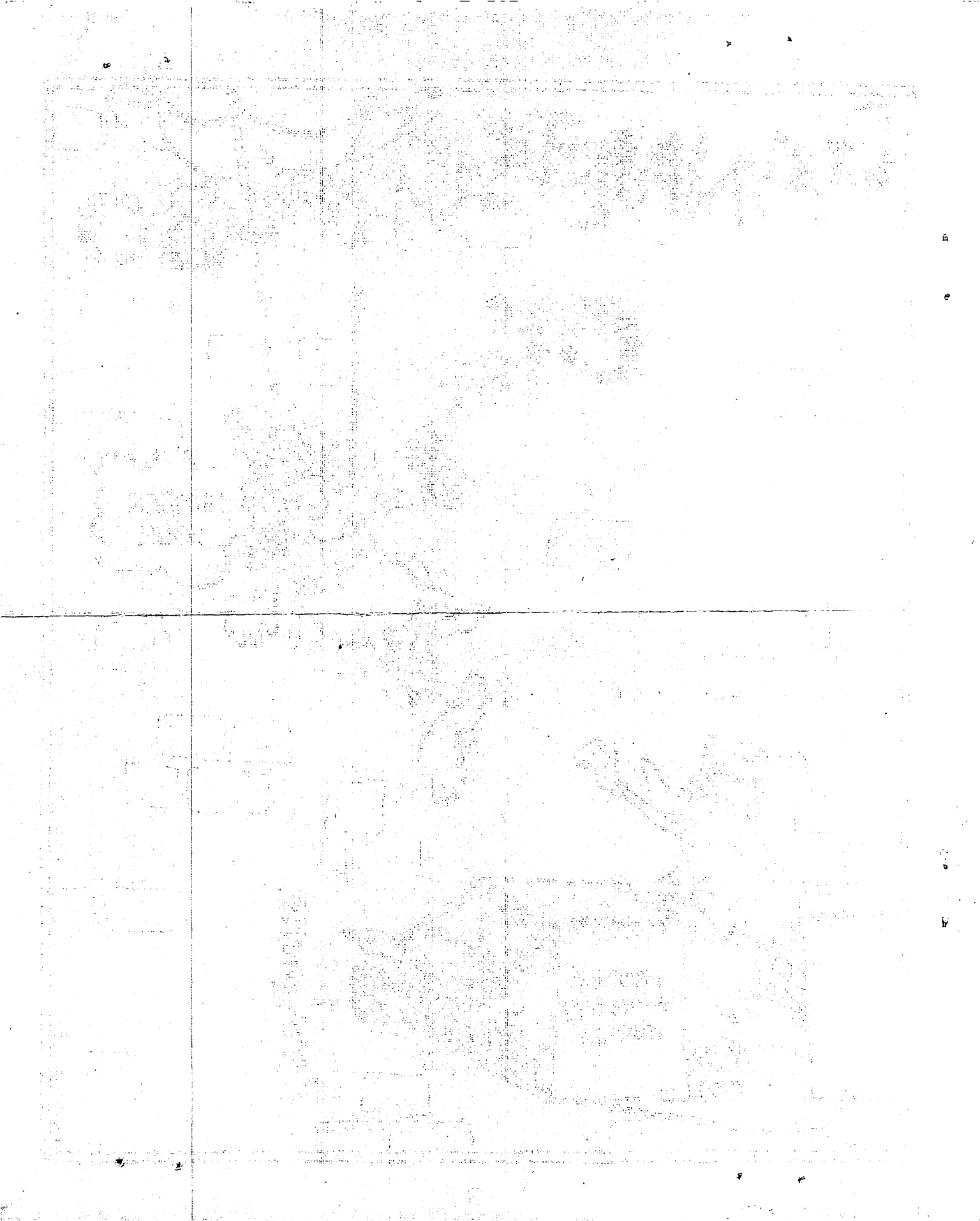
GAMING SCRIPTS

OK

NUMBER
FOUR

FANZINE
STANDARDS
BUREAU

MURDER



GANNETSCRAPBOOK 4
~~00000000000000000000~~

Yes, rub your eyes again! This is Gannetscrapbook - the self-same entity which crushed the pile of your welcome mat a mere 2 months ago! and here come the Gannets again. The regularity of this almost unique Fannish fan group collaboration seems asymptotic (remember geometry?). The gap between issues 1 and 2 was 2 years and a similar time passed before no. 3 and now in 68 days, no. 4.

That noise you just heard was no. 5 coming through the letter box and again and again and why is the postman carrying a sack up the path? The Gannets speed mediocrity to your door.

I'm afraid I began this latest headlong assault on the all too suspecting Fannish world. Having casually mentioned the possibility of resurrecting the corpse sometime last November, a January deadline was set and (by and large) met - though not without a number of the contributions showing signs of indecent haste - mine in particular - Sue was typing it as the disgustingly reliable and early submitted efforts of Jackson and Firth were being dupered. But I wasn't alone.

Opposite, at one of many typewriters in evidence sat Cockfield composing with furrowed brow and conflu stained hands. Across the room at a small table sat Harry Bell, painfully scratching his cover ilb onto a stencil with a dead biro. Later, he was to be seen slowly composing and typing the editorial - this half-page of Bell burble was probably the best thing in no. 3 - there must be a moral there somewhere. Meanwhile, Ian socialised in his own inimitable way while Rob and Mikelmitom duplicated (good rumour, huh? oh, well, please yourselves).

Well, anyway, it got done, and got out and was met by a deafening wall of silence, and considering how little effort we all put into it, I think thats a bit thin. So come on, wake up at the back there, and pull up your socks and loc, goddammit! OK maybe it did stink - but before you know there's a smell - someone's got to sniff. As Harry said in the lastish - we are serious (well, sort of), and we do intend to use GSB as a relieving organ for Gannet doings and chunter (Urrgh!) and we therefore want to be "regular".

So it comes to thisish. I'm not 100% sure of its final contents so you can be one up on me be glancing ovr (or down) to the contents list. I do know that Rob Jackson has graciously absented himself from this issue so that the lesser names would not be dazzled to myopia by the presence of such a thunderingwhackingstrappinghugoname-fan. Well, alright that was a bit of a fib - in fact, despite me trying to stimulate his fancentres (by telling him that this was to be a 'seminal' issue ((and that doesn't mean that you can jerk off into it)) - not just of GSB but perhaps the

first sign of the new direction. A new farce ((that's a typo)) in fandom!?) he has been Corralled on the Clarke reef - but he'll be back (with a hearty Hi-Ho-Maya!) - enter subscription now!

But, Ian, Andy, Dave and myself, garnished by Bell are here and by the time dawn comes around there may be a few others - if they arrive, stencils clenched in sweaty hands. (Bob Day, university surrogate Gannet, would've been here but he unforgiveably and unreproducibly typed in A4 - hard luck Bob, we have a swingeing editorial policy - better luck next time).

There was to have been a letter col this time, but with only one half of a real letter and a whole tho' dubious one - it wouldn't have impressed. But thanks Paa, you're wonderful! (see what you get if you loc GSB?) Extracts from Mrs Boal's letter: "Scrapbook - great fun. Four-letter words from the king -size phaggy Gannet? Fannish Romance didn't work. Liked cover - reminds me of Rob. A fair representation of the stylish writing and all round ability that emanates from Gannetland."

The other letter was ... er ... strange ... coming from one Hilma Peterson (self-style pseudonym of well known Myagroupee). It starts:- "i fowm viss shinin egzampall ov litterarry egspurteeze; wiv sun uvver free sarmpools skater ed along ve M4 near a serviss stashun" ... it continues equally unreadably. Well ... er ... thanks (?).

So, we have, in some order, within these pages:-

Cover	- Harry Bell
Dosvedanya Jock	- Kevin Williams
Far's Week	- Ian Williams
The Far-Tone of the convention	- Andy Wirth
Invasion of the body builders	- Dave Cockfield

This issue edited by:-

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-- but REMEMBER - all locs and trade should be sent to the next editor who is:-

Dave Cockfield
57, Wilson Court
Hebburn
Tyne & Wear

So read and do your best to enjoy.

Kev Williams (18/3/78)

D O S V E D A N Y A J O C K

OR :- AN ARMENIAN'S GUIDE TO EDINBURGH

"We'd like to give the car a good run" said Pam "You can share the driving".

"Oh, er, Great!" says I - "Where to".

"Edinburgh" says Andy - "the girls can shop on Princess Street while we visit the SF Bookshop."

"Yeh! Great idea!" says I "When?"

"Saturday" - we can stay the night in a cheap, guest house".

"Andy!" I cried with horror, "have you ever stayed in a cheap, Scots guest house?!!"

So it was that Andy, Pam, Sue and I were bouncing along in their neat, new, blue mini on a bright November day. We'd gone some two miles when:-

"There's a funny noise from the engine", says Pam - and sure enough a recurrent squeak could be heard.

"I'll take a look", I said with the bluff, easy confidence of a veteran autophile. Having taken a substantial look at the shining, spotless, hot-paint smelling engine I elicit little, if any data. Confidence unshaken, I adopted the second, fool the layman ploy, and said "You don't by chance have a stethoscope do you? No? ... Pity A Krooklok then?" I was handed one amidst mystified stares. Then with the casual grace of an expert whose done this sort of thing a boring number of times I placed one end in my ear and felt about the running engine with the other. After this extravagant though totally fruitless exercise I fell back on the old horse - "Nothing serious - just a tight bearing ----- it'll bed - in with wear".

And so we continued up through Northumberland - squeak accompanying us all the way loud and mute by turns.

Edinburgh hove into view.

"Time for a pint".

We enter a very folksy Scots pub, open fire, dark oil-lit interior, despite blazing sunshine outside, and quietly spoken, knots of old people sited strategically throughout the room. The smoke from the fire was choking, eyes red and streaming I ordered two pints. "What do the girls want?"

"Tea" was the chorus - and tea they had.

Departing like smoked haddocks we soon rushed to Edinburgh where after parking, the first stop was a phone box. We'd heard of a good Armenian Restaurant in the city. Pam rang. The reply:-

"Yes. You are booked. You will be here at 8.00 o'clock." a cheery prospect.

We part. Andy and I to the SF bookshop, the girls to Princess Street.

Andy, an ex-collector who in a moment of madness, sold off his precious pbs. and mags years before, was in the process of reconstructing said collection. - Much to the benefit of the Edinburgh SF bookshop. - At a much later we departed, met the girls, dumped the books, consumed a fine pint of dark Scottish ale and a typically nauseous looking Scots sausage-meat pie. Replenished we set forth to find the guest house.

'Aye, lass, ah noo ah book yoor boocking, but I find I've nay rooom - I've booked you with Mr. Campbell - I hope you doon't mind - ye'll be reet coomfoortable".

Mr Campbell's (3 doors down) proved to be a 4 or 5 storey cavernous, paint and polish smelling old house from which dirt had been banished long ago. So also Mr Campbell. Pink shining face, pink shining head - a picture of scrubbed nit-free middle-aged Scots manhood. I entertained idle thoughts about Mrs Campbell - a six-foot, aproned harriidan ruling the household with a tin of mansion furniture polish in one hand lavatory brush in the other, voice more penetrating than Lord Haw Haw, working her way through her third husband who was only allowed to speak when reciting his chores for the day, insisting on socks in the draw labelled SOCKS shirts on the shelf labelled SHIRTS and banishing laughter lest it steam up the ice crystal clear windows on which no moisture dare condense.

Unfortunately we never met her. So it's all speculation. Despite the entire house and its numerous rooms echoing with that sound which confirmed total abandonment, for some perverse (tho' no doubt well intentional health oriented reason) we were installed in the uppermost two rooms of the house. The nearest guaranteed unoccupied toilet was a blanched white picture of sterility (in which you felt NASA could have safely assembled dozens of Viking probes with complete safety) 5 floors below. No small wonder then that the landlord was so red-faced.

Our room was decorated with sickly plain pale green walls, white paintwork and a pale lino floor. It was an inherently cold room. There were no draughts, but you thought that there ought to be. It was like a large commercial refrigerator. The starkness of the decor was enlivened only by a number of small hand-linked notices, largely prohibitory in nature. We were invited not to wash one's clothes/hair or other offending object in the sink - what exactly you were permitted to wash was unclear. The light switch exhorted 'Save it', the window to be opened and closed quietly and with care and the beds not to be smoked in (though infinitives could be split). The heavy door, although not declaring admonishment seemed 'angry', being restrained by a heiniously strong spring. The draws of the cavernous chest were cheerfully lined with yellowing 15 - year old copies of the 'Kirkealdy Courier ad Advertizer' inveighing passionate snippets regarding swine yields, hayrick arson and garden gnome thefts. The final notice, somewhat more detailed, referred to the use of the electricity meter. Since this seemed out of place in a hotel room,

I assumed it was for the edification of a tradesman, in the event of failure. So I had paid it scant attention particularly amongst the many other minatory notices. However, it announced itself sometime later. Having washed (permitted areas only) I was reclining on the bed, idly leafing through the days purchases when, with a barely audible *click*, the lights and fire suddenly ceased function, plunging the room into a grey Scots gloom. Squinting inspection of switches and meter quickly elicited that lighting and heating were clearly not part of the (admittedly reasonable) cost of the room. We had, in fact, been enjoying the fruits of the previous tenants investment. A number of 10p pieces later, we were powered up again, although the alarming rate at which the meter sped toward zero encouraged thrift. We switched off the fire and huddled together under the clothes (no wonder there are so many Scots).

Sometime later (do you get the feeling that you're reading the script of a late '50's B-feature?) we all got together and set forth to seek the Armenian restaurant. Pausing only for a pint, we quickly located the correct road and down it we trod. Large, grey and clearly unoccupied buildings lined the way unrelieved by any sign of shop or restaurant. This tall, gaunt facade was broken only by a rough-looking one-storey flat roofed structure labelled "Public Wash-house". "Ha!" says Andy, "this must be it, Public Wash-house and Armenian Restaurant". We all chuckled at such a fine joke and continued on. Presently we reached the end of the road and no even-faintly Armenian restaurant was evident. A telephone directory gave the number of the place and we re-traced our steps. By now we were half-expecting it to be a krypto-communist peoples' liberation movement recruiting centre - it seemed unlikely that a commercial concern would secret itself so successfully.

As we approached the public wash-house for the second time a large, black Austin Princess funeral car drew up and two suspicious-looking swarthy men in foreign attire alighted and disappeared into the 'Wash-house'. The rear of the car contained crates of tomatoes, cucumbers, capsicums and other assorted veg. piled on the leather upholstery. Closer inspection of the public wash-house showed, to one side a strange cyrillic-like script and a picture of a squatting, cloaked man. The door was unnumbered like many others on the street but was about where the restaurant should be. Having little other option, we entered.

This was indeed the place. The dimly lit L-shaped interior being about the size of a living room, and every available space was occupied by tables and chairs:- even so, only about thirty people at most could be occupied.

A fur-hatted, kaftanned, distinctly croatian-looking gentleman conducted us to our seats and unannounced produced a bottle of wine. No menu was provided. You ate and drank what you were given.

An hour or so passed and we were just draining the second bottle when the first course arrived, followed over the next two hours by seven more - all washed down with more and more wine. The food was marvellous mixtures of spiced meats, weird salads and kebabs. All of this was presented amidst loud, male-choral, Russian music -rousing the inebriate diners into mumbling (they were in Russian) song. This struck deep chords of brotherly (and sisterly) feeling in my Welsh nature and I too joined in with 'The fine Don Fellows', 'Machine - gun cart' and 'John Reed walks in Petrograd'.

The walls were enhanced by poster depicting great triumphs of the Proletariat - railway systems, viaducts and smiling peasants toiling happily. Past local revolutionary leaders, uniformly disguised by thick, curly, black beards stared sternfully out from underneath black hats in sepia and age-tinted photographs. The impression was of resolute, dull fortitude of past aggression and present denial. A chameleon people.

But it was an immensely enjoyable evening despite the implied condemnation staring down from the walls and for about a fiver a head well worth a visit whenever you're in the city.

On our way back, the next day we were motoring quietly along a quiet Scots road. I was gazing idly out the window - being the nominal navigator, though all the signs said Newcastle. We suddenly passed a road-sign which said 'Bionic Area'. A three or four second, double-taking silence was broken by Andy and I both saying simultaneously: "Bionic Area! Pam, stop!" We rapidly reversed and proceeded down the indicated lane. What secrets would be revealed?

- kilted Steve Austin figures tossing cabers into orbit?
- bionic pipers skirling ultrasonically?

But we were met with a disappointingly mundane café which true to Caledonian tradition, was closed. Detailed perusal of the sign revealed it to a very cunning transmogrification of 'Picnic Area'. And now, after a revealing and enjoyable weekend I am left with an uneasy feeling that phalanxes of funeral cars full of boinic Armenian Glaswegians will soon sweep down over the border to annex Whitley Bay!

- KEVIN WILLIAMS

IAN'S WEEK: eight days in the life
of your friendly neighbourhood
Gannetfan, Ian Williams.

I finished work at one o'clock on the Saturday lunchtime of January 28th and breathed a sigh of relief. I was about to start a week of fun-filled holiday. I was going to relax on the Saturday afternoon and then the following morning begin three days of fanac commencing with a meisterwerk of fannish wit and raconteuring about a weekend Rob Jackson, Dave Cockfield and I had spent with Bob and Sadie Shaw. It was to be given personally to Ian and Janice Wiles for their fanzine Nabu as I was going to be staying with them from the Wednesday till the Sunday in sunny Sutton. After I'd finished that, there would be some work done on Siddhartha my personalzine, a few locs and that would nicely take me up to Wednesday.

Instead I came down with cold.

It began with a few snuffles on the Saturday evening turning into wastebasketfuls of soggy paperhandkerchiefs on the Sunday. I did not feel like writing meisterwerks of any kind. Instead I read back issues of Marvel comics, those being the limits my befuddled brain would extend to.

Monday: I stayed in bed all day feeling very sorry for myself and reading more Marvel comics. My grandmother began making noises about how if I was no better by Wednesday I wouldn't be well enough to go all the way down to London. Even Howard the Duck began to pall by Monday night and Coronation Street became too complex for my febrile brain to follow. I slept badly that night as I had done the previous two.

Tuesday morning: I felt a little better, but not enough to get up. By lunchtime, however, my head cleared somewhat and I peered out of my bedroom window onto the newly fallen snow. By late afternoon, it did indeed seem as if the worst of my cold was over, but being somewhat pessimistic, if not slightly hypochondriachal, by nature I suspected it might only be temporary. So I phoned Ian and asked him for his work phone number in case I needed to ring him to say I wouldn't be coming.

Wednesday: happiness, delight and a bunged up nose, but that was all. I phoned Janice and told her I'd be on my way. Had breakfast, packed my bags and got through to Newcastle for an earlier train than I'd intended catching. Rang Ian to ask if he could meet me sooner. Could. The train was the Flying Scotsman, air-conditioned, comfortable and fast -- three hours and forty minutes to reach London, a journey made all the more pleasant by the fact I had four brand new imported sf (sent from Rog Peyton's excellent bookshop Andromeda) to read. I raced through Farmer's 5th 'Tiers' novel, The Lavalite World (poor) and began Jack Chalker's Midnight at the Well of Souls (very enjoyable) and then I was at King's Cross.

It was too early to meet Ian at Victoria so I passed the time by visiting Dark They Were & Golden Eyed, 'The world's largest sf

bookshop' so the ads say. Well, it might physically be the largest, but the actual selection was abysmal. It had none of the books I'd ordered from Rog or any of those I'd just considered ordering. In fact I bought only one new book that I hadn't seen anywhere else. It also boasts an enormous stock of comics yet out of a list of over 20, I'd been asked to buy for some friends, that could reasonably be expected to be in stock, I obtained one. This in direct contrast to the excellent mail service from Rog Peyton. (Hi there, buddy!)

Ian had arranged to meet me at the W.H. Smith's stall in Victoria beside platform eleven. I walked into the station, saw Smith's and sat down on a nearby seat and looked out for Ian. After 15 minutes or thereabouts I stood up, stretched my legs and looked around and saw a second Smiths twenty yards away... next to platform 11.... Feeling sheepish I waltzed over and said hello to Ian.

Three quarters of an hour, a crowded train journey, and a walk in pissing rain, later we arrived at the palatial Maule residence, a cozy upstairs flat in uptown Sutton. As soon as I'd taken my things off I immediately began perusing Ian and Janice's sf collection. Their living room was exactly the way I'd have mine if I had a place of my own (which is a definite possibility by next year): wall to wall bookshelves situated under which was the stereo and record collection, table by the window in the far end of the rectangular front facing room, comfortable settee facing the sf. All very nice, indeed, though I snorted contemptuously at the arrays of Doc Smith, and Star Trek books. "All Janice's," Ian said.

After an hour or so relaxing we made our way to the inevitable pub, as I am well-known for my fondness of these institutions. This, however was to be rather special as our destination was a Young's pub. Now Youngs is a real ale that Ian M. has been raving about for the last three years: its strength and flavour, he said often, were unsurpassed. And at last I was to be given my opportunity to try this divine nectar. I sipped the first pint in the cozy, unpretentious little pub. I finished it with undefined feelings so I tried another to get the taste of it. Yes, Ian was right, it was indeed an extremely pleasant pint, smooth, slightly sweet, and cool (but not cold). As to its strength, well. After 4 pints Ian said, "I'm pissed. Fucking strong, great stuff. God I'm pissed." "Funny," I said, "I feel fine." But then Ian has been known to get drunk on the smell of alcohol. Still, Youngs Special is a good beer.

Next day it was raining down again. We had a lazy morning, Janice cooked a very nice lunch and we finally went into London to mooch around the bookshops prior to seeing Wizards. Curiously we bumped into Rog Peyton and a young lady in a back-alley off Charing Cross Road. Rog never changes: he's shortish, fat, long hair on a receding forehead, and a lively, animated and amiable disposition. He didn't know Wizards was on and was peeved he didn't have time to go see it. We did and I enjoyed it immensely. Ian and Janice didn't. Certainly it's a film I could pull to pieces on a number of grounds. I agree with most of the criticisms I've seen of it. But

it's imaginative and entertaining and as a low budget try-out for LOTR it bodes well indeed. Bakshi has the talent to do LOTR well if he's given enough money to do it and takes his time. In the meantime, don't miss seeing Wizards.

After a very nice pizza we all went to the One Tun for the monthly meeting of London sf fans and kindred spirits. Lotsa nice people there. The place was packed out and the lager was 50p a pint. The night was really pretty formless fragmented conversations with a number of people. One or two incidents do stand out. Colin Lester wanted to talk to me about my fanzine production (ha, ha) so I went over to talk to him at the bar. Standing next to him was tall guy who suddenly said, in a mid-Atlantic accent, "I don't like fanzines." I looked at him (um, a long way, at him). "Oh, why not?" I said. "I only like well-written stuff." And then he went into a rather, to me, irrelevant prozine bit. I asked him if he'd read any fanzines. No. "I hope you don't mind," I said, smiling sweetly at this idiot who was at least a foot taller than me, "but your remarks are rather stupid to say the least." I went on to outline why his remarks were stupid before ambling off in disgust at myself for letting an obvious idiot annoy me. "He is an idiot," Simone Walsh said when I told her about it. "Him and his drawling American accent when he's lived over here since he was two." Then there was the female Trekkie who dressed rather revealingly. "I couldn't take my eyes off her legs and mini-skirt." said Joseph Nicholas some time later. I'd never seen the mini-skirt noticing only her transparent top and bra-less bouncing boobs. I muttered a comment to Roy Kettle about show-offs. A mistake. He immediately turned to the girl who was standing nearby (engaged unsurprisingly in conversation with a drooling Peyton) and said, "Excuse me, but my little friend here thinks you're the most erotic creature he's ever seen in his life."

Friday: it was another rainy day. "Worst weather we've had in months," Ian said jocularly. We played Monopoly and I won, then Cluedo which I didn't.

Late afternoon we returned to the centre of London for another look round some bookshops prior to seeing Star Wars. Star Wars, at long last I was going to see this miracle of modern movie-making. I'd been looking forward to it for months, ever since the first ecstatic reviews percolated over from american fandom. I was, it must be admitted, heartily sick of the months long advertising campaign, sick of the clips on tv, more reviews and previews, the book, the Marvel comics version, the t-shirts, the posters, the calendar. I felt as if I knew the movie off by heart. When I saw it, I realised that indeed I did. Nothing in it came as a surprise. All the same, I enjoyed it marvelling in the special effects, cringing at much of the dialogue. All the same, I just can't understand how a super kids film has grossed more money than any other. I was impressed by the marvellous use of sound (though when I heard the sound track in mono a week later in Sunderland, it didn't come over nearly as well. "Better than Jeeamms Bond," said a kid sitting nearby).

Now if only someone would lavish the same care over making a movie of The Stars My Destination what a feast we would have. In the meantime, roll on Close Encounters.

Saturday: guess what? Still raining, worse if anything and we had to go into Sutton to get food and drink for a small party Ian and Janice were having that evening. I took them for a curry before we began the shopping. The main course was quite good but the onion bhajias were the weirdest (and worst) I've ever tasted --coated with small chips would you believe? Back at the flat Janice took on a housewifely roll of cook and Ian and I lounged around talking. Just before six, Ian and I set off for the pub to buy some more beer bumping into Joseph Nicholas on his early way to the party. Once in the pub we decided to have a quick one before going back. When I ordered the three pints of Youngs Special, the barman asked me if I was Welsh. (There were a lot of these primitives in town for a rugby match against England: they'd won.) I looked aghast at his question and said in as broad an indecipherable accent as I could muster. "Haddaway man, aam a Geordie." In fact, I'm not being a Wearsider, a true Geordie is one who comes from the banks of the Tyne, but these bloody southerners wouldn't appreciate the difference anyway. We were tempted to stay for another pint, but felt we'd left Janice alone long enough. So off we went back to sit expectantly awaiting the other guests. Two hours later they began to turn up and a good party began.

There were some of the finest in British fandom there: Greg Pickersgill and Simone Walsh, John and Eve Harvey, Martin and Liese Hoare, Dave Langford, Kev Smith, Malcolm Edwards and Chris Atkinson, the hosts, Joseph and myself. I can't remember too much about the party as everyone got totally pissed. I remember having an amicable discussion with Greg about the merits of the Stranglers who I like, but about whom Greg has certain reservations. "THEY'RE FUCKING USELESS, YOU'VE BEEN BLOODY CONNED!" or words to that effect. I still can't figure out how Ursula LeGuin got into that conversation. I think I lost that particular argument. Much later in the party someone began playing Family records, loudly. As they were a group I never liked, I decided to retire from the fray. Now as bedroom and kitchen were occupied I went to the toilet, locked the door, put a towel on the floor and lay down. About half an hour later the others noticed I was missing and began banging on the toilet door. At least I think that was the reason. We finally got to bed about 4.30: good party.

Sunday and it was time to go home. It was sunny. Joseph, Ian and I had a couple of pints in a pub near Carshalton railway station, all of us feeling very tired. I got into King's Cross an hour before my 3.0 pm train. I slumped into my seat and eventually the train got going. At Stevenage a few miles north someone threw a brick through the engine window. Two hours later a suitable replacement engine arrived. We got into Newcastle two and half hours late. Then my connection for Sunderland was a further half hour late. I just got in time for my last bus.

All in all, it was a very good week. Ian and Janice were simply marvellous hosts and it was great seeing them again. It would probably have been even better if I hadn't had the hangover from my cold and had the ability to sleep better in strange beds, no matter how comfortable. But, I saw a lot of good people, bought books, took in the movies I'd intended. Yes, a very good time. Many thanks to Ian and Janice for being so hospitable, kind, and tolerant in being able to put me up and put up with me.

It appears I've finished that little piece about forty lines short of what intended. I also realise I've forgotten to mention some things I was going to put in: like Ian's collection of pornography. Then again perhaps it's just as well.

So I've got some space to talk about other things of importance. Things of vital concern to every human being on this planet, which, if they are not brought into the fannish eye could mean the doom of everything we stand for. Except I've forgotten what they are.

So instead I'll talk about something personally important to me. I'll be thirty this year and, apart from 3½ years at college in Lancashire, I've lived at home all my life. Enough is enough. Every time I've been down to London I always come away with the feeling I'd like to move down there. Unfortunately there's one practical reason why this is impossible. There is very little mobility in my profession of librarianship at the moment. Two jobs (on the basic salary scale) were advertised in Sunderland and there were forty applications. So it's a buyer's market and I'd probably stand little chance anywhere else. People tend to get into a library authority and work their way up. Apart from that I'm a competent branch librarian, but no more. I've little interest in the more esoteric aspects of the profession. So I'm stuck in Sunderland. Recently I've moved to a new branch which is the busiest on my present salary scale so I should stand a good chance of promotion next time a vacancy comes along. But that, if current trends are anything to go by, won't be for a few years. I found out from one of my staff that a new estate is being built within walking distance from my library which should be ready next year. When they are, I'm hoping to buy a flat there.

I worked out I had enough for a deposit for a 95% mortgage and so had plenty of time to save up for furniture which I ain't got none of. However, I've recently found out that building societies current maximum is 90%. This means one hell of a lot of saving for the rest of the year. I've already given up cigarettes and won't be going to Novacon this year or next's Eastercon. Plus staying in the house six nights a week. I reckon the flat's going to cost £10,000. Austerity rules!

No books, no booze, no baccy, no buddies. What am I doing!
Ian Williams, Feb '78.

THE FAN - TOME OF THE CONVENTION

"I love these End of the World Cons, don't you?" said the Welshman slurping a giant bowl of Paonesian Alphabet Soup.

"Aye, there's something special about EWCON." replied the old man across the table. "All the big names are here. Clarke, Asimov, Heinlein, they all turned up. Marvellous to see every-one mingling together, having such a good time...Garcon!"

The robot waiter halted on its caterpillars.

"Be a good robot and get my friend another plate of poached Ganzer Eggs, he's about to run out." the oldster said. "And get me a Deathworld Maimer while you're about it."

"With dry ice, sir?" asked the robot.

"No, with ammonium tri-iodide, and stirred anti-clockwise to get the full benefit of the coriolis force." returned the geriatric knowingly.

"Very good, sir." the robot turned and left.

"Thanks for the Ganzer Eggs old-one." said the Welshman, "I was so busy eating, I hadn't noticed I was running low on the side dishes. I don't know how you do it."

"Do what?"

"How you catch the robots photo-electric eye, every time."

"They recognise a man of impeccable taste." replied the old man loftily.

"More like they think you're one of their own, in that motorised bath-chair of yours. I wondered why cyborgs always got served first at the bar."

"Now, now, let's not have any discriminatory remarks here." said the geriatric. "Everyone's enjoying themselves. Old-hand authors, young writers, fans of all description. They're all chatting and drinking together merrily. I can't recall seeing such a relaxed atmosphere. EWCON certainly takes some beating."

At that moment, a tall thin individual appeared at the entrance to the resteraunt. He had close cropped fair hair, and frightened blue eyes. His harassed expression twitched with a flicker of re-assurance when he spied the two misfits at one of the tables. He made his way directly towards them.

"Lads, lads." he said plaintively.

"What's the matter Eldritch?" asked the old one.

"Lads,' something terrible has happened."

"I don't like the sound of this," said the Welshman.

"There's a fan going around insulting the writers and doing all sorts of horrible things to upset them," announced the tall man.

"Egad, how what where why?" gasped the old-one.

"You've got to find him and stop him before he ruins the con." persisted the other.

"Can't you just throw him out or get Bob Shaw to sit on him for the duration?" asked the old-one.

"That's just it. No-one knows what he looks like."

"But you just said he insulted some of the writers," said the Welshman.

"Yes, but not one of them can agree on what he looks like. And it's not because of style or artistic interpretation. If it wasn't for the fact that each separate incident carries the same hallmark, I'd have said it was a different fan every time. Look, you've got to stop him. I can't spare the time. Lectures to arrange, filmshows to set up, panels to sit on, banquets to look after, you know..."

"It's hard being the con-man," said the old-one.

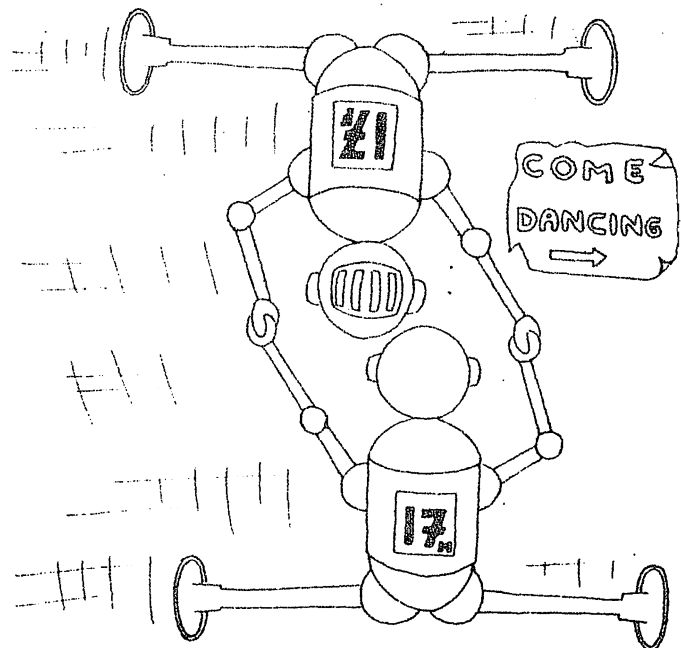
"That's con manager," admonished the Welshman. "But Eldritch why ask us? Why not let your regular bouncer handle it?"

"Regular bouncer's bust, isn't he?" replied Eldritch.

"Blocked glycol pipe wasn't it? I thought he was over-heating, then he ceased up completely on Wednesday night. Right after that young hooligan you knock around with...whatsisname?"

"Whatsisname!"

"Yeah, that's him. Well, he challenged the bouncer to a joust didn't he? Skateboards and sticky buns on mop-handles down the length of the banquet table. The young hooligan. He knew darn well



well that two hundred and fifty pounds of duralinium comes out of a U-turn like a beached whale. Some of the cream from one of his buns must have got into ^{the} poor machines cooling system. God knows how. The engineers are dismantling it to find out."

"So you reckon it's our responsibility to find your foul fan, since we didn't keep a tighter reign on Whatsisname?" asked the Welshman.

"That's about it, lads. Plus the fact that you two are world renowned sleuths since you trapped the arch-fiend Luigi."

"Ah, that's another story." said the Welshman. "Tell us more of this foul fan of yours. What is this trademark you speak of?"

"It's frightening." replied Eldritch. "No-one knows who or when he will strike next. But the modus operandi is always the same. He plays upon the idiosyncracies and weaknesses of our favourite authors. For instance he walked up to Robert Heinlein and called him a left-wing agitator. The poor man nearly choked on his ezwalburger. It took me an hour to calm him down. He wanted to leave straight away, and I couldn't blame him."

"Next, in a different guise, the monster collared Robert Sheckley.

'Repeat after me,' he says, 'Peter Piper Picked a Peck of Pickled Pepper.' Well, Bob was a bit dieseled up, and he tried it. If we hadn't got him to a speech therapist in time, the poor guy would have swallowed his own tongue."

"And there's worse to come. This same evil dastard, in a new disguise slipped water into Bob Shaws gin and tonic."

"The fiend!" grated the geriatric.

"I'm beginning to see a pattern here." said the Welshman, "All these authors have the same christian name."

"I noticed that." replied Eldritch, "But even as I began searching the attending members list for clues, I got word that this creature, this were-fan, had struck again. First he split an infinitive in front of Jack Vance. Then he asked Ben Bova if he believed in fairies. And finally he called Harry Harrison a bum in front of Brian Aldiss."

"Good job Whatsisname didn't hear him." muttered the Welshman.

"Yes. Where is Whatsisname? by the way," asked Eldritch.

"If you're thinking he's behind all this, forget it." said the Welshman. "We locked him in his room before coming down to eat. He's working on the Orchestral Antithesis to the Sound of Music. It's an opera for deranged coyotes and disabled bagpipes."

"I don't think I want to hear any more." said Eldritch.

"That's what we said. Which is exactly why we locked him in his room. Got to admit it shows promise though. In his version, a witch is abducted from her coven by a warlock, and they escape from Medieval Europe, where they are being threatened by puritans, by time travelling to the refuge of Nazi Germany."

"Young Whatsisname takes his music seriously, I gather." offered Eldritch.

"Oh yes, happy as a lark. He'll be up there for hours, churning out the orchestration." said the Welshman.

"But he can't write sheet music." said the geriatric.

"Have you ever known details like that to stop him?" returned the Welshman. "He's happy enough. When it's time for the Frank Russel lecture he'll find a way to break out of his room, but I shouldn't worry about him until then."

"So, who do you think is behind all this?" asked Eldritch.

"Well, if I didn't know better I'd say it was Tito." replied the geriatric.

"Tito?"

"Tito Goblin." continued the old-one. "You remember him. The fan of a thousand faces. Most of them unacceptable."

"Ah yes. It's all coming back to me now." said Eldritch.

"But it can't be him because he's in hospital."

"Really? what happened?"

"He was gored by a wild stilton that ran amok in Tesco's."

"How horrible."

"Yes, it was fatal for the poor cheese."

"But there's nothing more ferocious than a rogue stilton except perhaps a maverick gorgonzola."

"Ah, it wasn't the cheese that hospitalised him. No. It was the stand of drill collars that dropped on him when he was coming out of Tesco's, that put him in hospital."

"That's funny I didn't know Tesco's did drill collars in ninety foot stands." said the Welshman.

"They don't. They only stock thirty foot singles." replied the oldster. "Which is why the whole affair was so suspicious. But at least we know the renegade fan can't be Tito."

"How's that?" asked Eldritch.

"Well, I spoke to the doctor of psychiatry who has him under observation. I met him at the iron mongers. He was buying some heavy duty chain and a large mallet..."

"I remember!" interrupted the Welshman, "We went down with whatsis-name to see if he could get his money back on that stand of dented drill collars he found."

"That's it. Anyway, the doctor said Tito would be. And then he corrected himself and said Tito was suffering from incurable brain damage, on top of the incurable brain damage he was born with. He said it was unlikely the poor fan would ever be released from hospital. Then he cackled frantically and bought some more chain."

"That rules him out then." said the Welshman.

"Perhaps it would help, if we could visit the scene of one of the crimes." suggested the geriatric.

"Of course." said Eldritch. "Let us adjourn to the Smoke Room.

There might still be fresh clues there."

"The waiter never came with my Ganzer Eggs." observed the Welshman dollopping his remaining foodstuffs into an immense doggy-bag.

"Probably my Deathworld Maimer got him." replied the geriatric,

"If he tried to stir it clockwise..."

They rose and left.

The doors to the Smoke Room were guarded by two immense reptilian humanoids. "Merseianaries." said Eldritch, "friends of the family. Strict instructions not to let anyone into or out of this room without my say so. I hope you two have strong stomachs. No offense Welshman, but what you will see in here, isn't for faint hearts."

"Nothing wrong with my heart, or stomach, look you." said the other.

The Smoke Room, was grandiose in the old sense of the word. Red drapes pulled back from immense Edwardian Bay windows allowed moonlight to filter subtly across the claret carpet. The room was walled with early Chippendale mahogany book-cases, that extended from floor to ceiling. Each book-case was crammed with volumes bound in scarlet leather. Every one a classic of science fiction. It was a gentlemen's room. Wine hued, the studded Winchester chairs, with their spacious leather seating were designed for men of learning. Scholars, connoisseurs of art and literature had exchanged quiet and intelligent views upon the more refined aspects of science fiction within the confines of that room. There was a cask of matured port upon the late

Victorian writing bureau. Decanters of fine brandy lay casually upon a matching mahogany reading table. The Smoke Room was at once, a place of learning and of relaxation, of study and of innovation.

In the far corner of the room stood three figures poised over a map of the Middle Earth. The lamp upon the map table was still aglow, picking out the features on each rigid countenance like some tableau from a wax museum. Each figure stood stock still, as if frozen, immobilised by some sudden shock.

Eldritch and the two misfits approached them cautiously.

"Frank Herbert," said Eldritch pointing to the bearded one covering his ears. "The were-fan accused him of not thinking enough about his plots."

The next figure was covering his bespectacled eyes. "Poul Anderson," said Eldritch sadly. "The were-fan accused him of insufficient attention to detail."

"The fan's a maniac," gasped the geriatric.

"Agreed," said Eldritch passing onto the final figure who was frozen in the act of covering his mouth. "Arthur Clarke," continued Eldritch, "The were-fan accused him of plot inconsistency."

"Deus Irae! we've got to stop these atrocities before it's too late," said the Welshman.

"Wait a minute," announced the geriatric.

"How do you know all this Eldritch?"

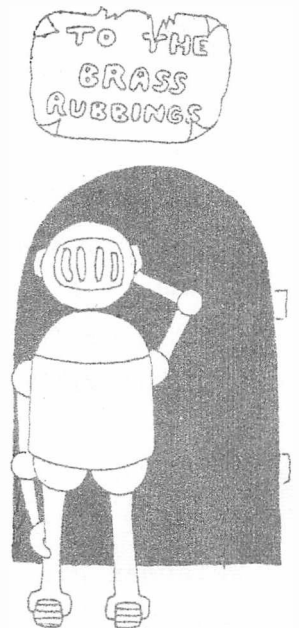
"About a minute before I found you two," replied the con-manager, "Dr Isaac Asimov came bounding out of this very room, yelling there was a maniac loose. He said a fan had walked up to him and said 'I am a robot, all robots are liars.' The good doctor was halfway across the ceiling and still running by the time we managed to get a tranquiliser dart into him. So, I placed a guard on the doors and came looking for you two."

"So the villain, whoever he is, should still be in this room," said the geriatric.

"Unless he escaped through the windows."

ventured Eldritch.

"Which is unlikely, because being Edwardian Bay



windows, they don't open." observed the Welshman.

"Who's that curled up over there?" asked the geriatric, pointing to a figure rolled up into a tight foetal ball upon one of the red leather couches.

"That is probably Chris Priest." said Eldritch.

"What happened to him?" asked the Welshman.

"I can't be sure, but in his incoherent babbling, Doctor Asimov mentioned something about the were-fan recommending a good barber to Mr Priest."

"The fiend. He'll stop at nothing, this twisted, warped anti-fan. He must be stopped." foamed the Welshman.

"I think I've got it." said the geriatric. "Do you notice anything unusual about some of the objects in this room?"

"Don't start with the Sherlock Holmes bit Gerry" scolded the Welshman. "We haven't got the time."

"Okay. Well, my observation is this." said the geriatric. "In this fine old smoke room, with its antique furniture, its priceless S.F. and its rare old ports and brandies, who would be caught dead reading a tatty fanzine and drinking a pint of bitter?"

"Well Chris is a bit eccentric." ventured Eldritch defensively.

"Yes, but not even he would have the gall to bring grot like that into a room like this." returned the old one. "A room where Lem first dreamed of the Cyberiad, where Williamson had his first humanoid vision. You don't bring beer and fanzines into a room like this. Look, Mr Priest demonstrated his respect by wearing a smoking jacket and slippers like everyone else."

"No. that pint glass is out of place. Welshman? Have you got a Garbage-World Pickle in your doggy bag?"

"Eh? Yes, why? It's a bit ripe."

"Hand it over."

"Whatever for?"

"If the villain did not come out of this room, he must still be here, but disguised as something else. I'm going to smoke out our were-fan."

"You'll do more than just smoke him out with that." said the Welshman gingerly handing over the fulminating vegetable to the old man. The oldster promptly dropped the obscene spice into the beer glass. At once it shimmered, lost its solid texture and began

to take human shape. It grew as it did so, and in a twinkling, there upon the coffee table where the glass had been, stood a sneering, writhing fan, in a brown tweed suit and horn-rimmed spectacles. "So, you foiled my plans." announced the creature on the table, "Curse your logic old-one."

"I know you." said the Welshman. "I recognise that face. You're Bent. Blark Bent, reporter for the Daily Globe. You're here to cover the con."

"Reveal my secret identity would you?" snarled the figure. "Well it won't do you any good. Do you hear. You'll never take me alive." "We don't want to take you anywhere Blark." said the oldster, "Just tell us why you did it." he gestured at the petrified trio in the corner.

"Hah. Why should you care?" returned the wriggling form. "Why should you bother now? Not one loc. Not a single loc. After all the hours I put into it." he indicated with his foot, the tatty fanzine lying on the coffee table. "So much time, so much effort, so much money, and so little response. You! all of you, you're living in a fantasy, with your juvenile S.F. and your silly fanzines. Well I'm tired of it all. I'm tired of being ignored. I'm tired of your adolescent exuberance and your ephemeral existences. I'm going back to the real world, do you hear me? To the real world, where real people live normal lives and there aren't any stupid conventions and backstabbing fans." And with a flick of his toe he opened the fanzine at page one and dived headlong into the frontispiece.

"Gone." observed Eldritch, picking up the scruffy document and examining it from cover to cover.

"Without a trace." said the Welshman. "How do you suppose he did it old one?"

"I dunno." returned the geriatric, taking the fanzine from Eldritch "I suppose if he put his heart and soul into this personalzine, it would be logical to extrapolate that he could put his body into it as well."

"You mean he became one of his own characters?" asked Eldritch.

"Possible." said the old-one, "Bredgeling? If you've read it you'll know it's full of dire fan fiction. Not worth loocing."

"But to get so involved as to become part of the observation. By the tears in Heisenbergs eyes, we're all real people here aren't we. We aren't caricatures, are we? are we....."

I
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S
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N BUILDERS

by DAVE COCKFIELD.

In keeping with governmental policy to prevent each of us from inflating, the Health Education Council is squandering £1,000,000 to promote the precept that us Herbies would be much better off as budding Twiggy's (with biceps).

All they want us to do is starve ourselves, relinquish the right to consume great amounts of liquor, and kick the shit out of ^{our} bodys with indecent amounts of exercise. It has naturally been assumed that a person would much rather resemble a praying mantis than an overstuffed teddy bear.

I'm a well overstuffed Gannet, happy, contented, and confident that there is no way that I could be conned into believing propaganda designed at making my life a misery. Even if I do feel that the nationwide advertising campaign is aimed directly at me.

That is why, when Harry Bell suggested that we try-out the fitness room at the Eldon Recreation Centre I said YES! I blame it on the drink.

The first few weeks were very easy going. Not because I discovered that I was miraculously fit but because that's how long it took for my gym kit to arrive after ordering it from a relative's catalogue. I had intended buying it outright but swiftly changed my mind when I realised the expense involved. I also decided that there were more interesting perversions to spend the money on.

While awaiting my equipment I took the opportunity to attune myself mentally. I ate, drank, made merry, and did everything possible to convince myself that I no longer wished to be a 190 pound weakling. It was much more pleasant thinking of myself as a 190 pound, streamlined, muscular, beach boy kicking sand into the face of Ian Williams. Okay, I know that I can do that now (who can't) but in my dreams I do it with style.

Consequently, due to the delay in obtaining equipment Rob Jackson beat us to it and instigated his own fitness program. Swimming, work-outs in the fitness room, and only two bread and butter puddings a week. He took great delight in letting the rest of the Gannets know of his prowess. On the weight machines that is, although it is well known that he was only recently bitten by the fitness bug after consorting with the opposite sex - whatever they are. One look at Rob and it's easy to tell that he is constantly with Coral Clarke in spirit (or connected by the telephone) if not in body. The Gannets are still debating why Rob is in training. Coral is noted for her fancy dress costumes (or lack of them) at Conventions so Rob could be planning to attend the next as Adonis. However, it is more likely that he was taken in by that part of the adverts which said exercise improved one's sex life too. His may have improved but it's done nothing for mine.

Once fully equipped I no longer had any excuse to forestall the inevitable and arranged to call on Harry at ten the following Saturday morning. From his house we would meet Rob at the torture chamber. Practising my best Harry Bell impersonation I arrived at ten-thirty and was rewarded by the sight of Harry, bright, alert, and raring to go. Somehow he had actually dragged himself out of bed on time although I suspect that he had been up all night to manage it. Three-quarters of an hour later we began our exercise in a somewhat unexpected manner. By racing into town before the Halifax Building Society collapsed for need of Harry's well (he's got one in the backyard) earned money. We failed. When we arrived it was closed but our lateness was not due to lack of fitness. Oh no! Blame it on the buses. Had the bus arrived promptly, availed itself of our custom, and then pissed into town at 90 mph we might just have made it on time. It arrived two minutes late as buses and trains always do. Only at such time do I envy motorists. Unperturbed by this set back we endeavoured to obtain the one item we needed before meeting Rob. A tube of duplicating ink. If you are wondering what ink has to do with exercise I'm tempted to tell you. In fact it was wanted to duplicate Harry's fanzine, Kamikaze, later that night. All known shops which sold ink were shut and bolstered by how well things were going we headed for the Recreation Centre secure in the knowledge that fate was with us that day. Quite in what way I don't know but it was surely around somewhere keeping well out of reach of my hands.

We met Rob, went through the boring procedure of paying our entrance fee (50p), commandeering a locker in the changing room, getting changed while discreetly looking the other way (so would you if you saw three naked Gannets), and enthusiastically entering the fitness room. As we entered it was noticeable how the room was geared to strength. It almost took two of us to open the entrance door.

I had already been a spectator in the room once before so knew what to expect but it was still an assault on the senses. The room was approximately 20ft by 12ft, one wall of which was a complete mirror for the edification of the narcissistic among us. It contained a varied assortment of benches and upright machines which made the mind boggle. Each machine had a series of weights which could be lifted by means of a bar affixed to a cord, affixed to the weights, suspended on a pulley, enclosed in a framework.... or something like that. It was actually easy to use the equipment once first impressions were combatively disposed. Rob straightway attacked the nearest machine looking like a clapped-out Arnold Schwarzeneger as he went through a set of squats while pulling against a weight, and did his best not to lay an egg. Turning away from this horrific sight I noticed Harry studying instructional diagrams on the wall. They were in cartoon form and at first I thought that he was searching for artistic inspiration. However, upon closer inspection, I noticed that they were similar to "Early Barker" and reasoned that Harry was probably looking for Jim's signature. Compared to Rob's descriptions of the operation of each machine the pictures were simple to follow. He'll never make a vacuum salesman but his enthusiasm did rub off on us as Harry and I took the plunge.

We quickly established a disjointed routine trying every machine as it became available. We squated, lifted, pedaled, rowed, pushed, and pulled until we barely had the strength to stand. By the time I had finished I was exhausted and ached in muscles I never realised were muscles. Rob was also looking tired and Harry sat on a bench doing his best not to fall off. He had overdone it a little too much and was feeling faint. Not surprisingly we decided to call it a day content that our money had been well spent for a two hour workout. Where it had taken a small effort to open the door entering it took three of us with our shoulders against the door to force an exit. Once we had it open the reason was very apparent. There was a gale force wind pressing on it. Harry shortly overcame his bout of illness and after a good shower we were ready to indulge in even more strenuous activity, namely Snooker. It is a game that I play quite often so it came as no shock when I beat both Harry and Rob although Rob did make it a close race for a while. Proficient snooker players are normally said to have a mis-spent youth hidden in their closets but Rob is so innocent that he doesn't even have a closet to hide a mis-spent Irish penny nevermind anything else. Unless! Could there be a Rob Jackson none of us have ever heard about?

Before we realised it we had been in the Recreation Centre for most of the afternoon and had even sacrificed Dr Who in the search for physical perfection. But it was worth it. We felt great, had a spring in our step, and were in the mood for a celebration drink. As the bar at the centre was locked we went to the established Gannet meeting place, the Duke of Wellington, and sank a few pints while congratulating each other on how well we looked. We were in such high spirits that when Rob suggested going for a curry it was impossible to do anything but grin sheepishly and agree that it was a good idea. When the curry had been tucked away I was feeling well and truly stuffed and almost died upon learning that Harry and I were going to have to walk back to his place. Unfortunately Rob was unable to give us a lift because his car was parked at the other end of town and was almost as far away as Harry's. We said goodnight to him and set off at a reasonable pace trying to ignore the light shower of rain. The walk ^{was} amazingly enjoyable and put me in a perfect mood for bed. As I climbed in and began to doze I decided that we had started our fitness programme well and if it kept the same momentum in weeks to come I would be on my way to reaching a peak of fitness I hadn't seen for a long time. I would even lose a couple of inches with a bit of luck, and a lot of determination in resisting the beer and curry.

I opened my eyes on sunday morning full of apprehension. After participating in the famous Gannet/Rat football match I was an invalid for days. The morning after it had even been necessary to ask Bryn Fortey to help me out of bed although it may have been the Mancon bed at fault because Bryn and Mike Collins had slept very comfortably on the floor. Anyway, I eventually plucked up the courage to rise and found that other than slightly aching shoulder and neck muscles I was in excellent trim. This kept me in good spirits all day but later that week my right calf developed a serious case of cramp which persisted for two days. One of my wishes had come true. I was my childhood hero, Hopalong Cassidy, incarnate.

Since that first day we have been back a few times and have even shown a marked improvement. Like the symptoms of advanced senility. Actually, we have all been able to progress onto practise with heavier weights and managed to lose a few pounds in the process. It's a pity that rubber tires didn't diminish as quickly but all they seem to do is deflate slightly.

Perhaps the most engaging pastime it is possible to indulge in is observing the various types of people who also use the fitness room. There are three main types,

- 1) The reasonably fit person who wishes to stay fit. More often than not the only sign that they are fitter than the average person is that they can indulge in the same kind of workout for a longer period of time.

- 2) The overweight puffing billy who pulls short of putting everything into his exercises but still sweats his guts out. I wont ask you to guess which catagory I fall into.

- 3) The freaks. Supremely fit and muscular guys who perform for an audience. They preen themselves in front of the mirror, undertake difficult weight lifting assignments and exercises with ease, then really turn the heat on and push themselves to their own limits while leaving everyone else breathless and slightly embarrassed at the thought of how far they still have to progress. These guys then stick their noses in the air and walk away in a world of their own where lesser mortals cease to exist.

Physical fitness and body building of this sort is definately on the increase. When we first started it was normal for only half a dozen people to be using the room at any one time but lately it has become very crowded. This could of course be due to the extreme exposure the government is giving its campaign on television and in the newspapers. However the fitness fever is spreading so fast that it is not hard for a diehard science fiction fan to believe that something more insidious is happening. We are subtly being invaded by a parasitic organism which thrives on exercise. It is the only answer but will an unsuspecting world believe it. They never took heed of the dangers of bionics and now we have bionic dogs chasing bionic cats and bionic budgies mechanically imitating Pete Roberts. But fandom has a chance to escape. The Gannets are well known for drinking, eating, lazing around, pubbing our ish REAL SOON NOW, but not for exercise. Rob's at it, so is Harry, even Ian Williams has been heard to mutter that he might try swimming at the Sunderland Sports Complex. So take warning before I finally succumb to the bug. Run, (no that doesn't sound right) CRAWL if you wish to survive to grow big and fat and suck lollipops.

Beware the Body Builders!

YOU'RE NEXT!

!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

GAMETSCRAPBOOK 4

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