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LÉS SPINGE

Well, Seacon is over and the anticlimactic return to the normal world is upon us, unfortunately. Ever since Seacon I've been feeling that I want there to be a convention every weekend; I must be a glutton for punishment. No doubt everyone will soon be writing long reports of the Worldcon and their adventures there, so I'll just mention a few of my own memorable moments.

Peter Weston turned up trumps all right; I was I must confess a little dubious about how his convention would turn out, but when the hotel night staff started breaking up room parties and telling people to go to bed, he managed to get them to lay off completely, and (I understand) had a meeting with the hotel management the next morning at which they were entirely trounced. Peter must be a Hero of British Fandom now. And in spite of my previous worries, the con itself went off marvelously.

One of the most pleasant moments of the convention was when they announced that 'Dreamsnake' had won the Hugo for Best Novel. It made me feel very happy, and it somewhat restored my faith in Hugos which had been rudely shocked a little earlier when 'Superman' beat 'Hitchhiker's Guide' in the Dramatic section. I suppose we just have to face up to the fact that no British entry can hope to win, no matter how good it is, unless it's had considerable exposure in the States.

A less pleasant moment was an encounter with Jerry Pournelle. Ro and I were having a quiet conversation with two American fans in a corridor when Pournelle came along in the middle of a violent argument with some other person who I gathered had accused him of being a fascist, an appellation he strongly resented (no comment). They stopped right next to us and Pournelle blasted everyone with his voice (and got so worked up I thought he'd pull a knife or something) quite oblivious of the fact that he'd disrupted our conversation with his noise.

I understand that when he spoke at the BSFG meeting a week or two before the convention he didn't make a very good impression, either.

The two people whose conversation with us was interrupted were both very pleasant, in fact two of the most pleasant new acquaintances we made at the con: Clifford Wind (an art-deco fan, which must be a good thing to be) and Janet Bellwether. We had several quiet talks to Janet during the weekend: it turned out she'd been staying in Birkenhead prior to the convention.

Lots of other good people had come across the Atlantic for the occasion: Susan Wood and Ned Brooks visited us in Liverpool while they were here, and we had a fun time showing them all the local sights.

Anyway, now it's over, and I suppose the next British worldcon is a good many years away. Seacon was a con to remember, and in due course to nostalgise over.

FANDOM FOR PIGGIES The art of fanzine reviewing is much practised in Britain nowadays, usually after a manner invented by Greg Pickersgill some years ago which worked very effectively in his hands but less well perhaps in those of the people who have followed after him. Fanzines are always, it seems, judged by comparison to a mythical type of perfect fanzine which is filled with humorous 'fannish' writing of a high quality and with nothing else whatever. Now I have nothing but admiration for the best examples of fannish writing, but it has to be realised that all real fanzines are curate's-egg in nature and while they occasionally rise to heights of humorous excellence it doesn't happen all the time.

Nor is this standard the only possible one by which fanzines should be measured. One of the virtues of fanzines is that they have broken the confines of science fiction and nowadays deal with every subject imaginable under the sun. They don't have to be merely in-group gossip about fandom and the doings of fans, pleasant though such writing is to read.

One alternate criterion for examining fanzines by is a standard which few British fans have ever shown any awareness of, but which I think is of some importance. By this I mean their treatment of women. Alan Dorey was talking in a recent 'Gross Encounters' about the low ratio of women fans to men fans in British fandom, but he seemed unaware of the reasons for it, or that the content of many fanzines in this country is hardly designed to attract women into fandom or to encourage them to stay in.

The sexism can sometimes be overt. For instance, Joseph Nicholas wrote in a letter printed in 'Gross Encounters 6':

"I for one have nothing against the principle of female equality, but what I do object to are the rabid screechings of those extremists who interpret the word 'liberation' to mean nothing more than a complete reversal of the current status-quo (a status-quo that seems to me to be entirely imaginary) leading ultimately to the enslavement of all males in some sort of quasi-feudal matriarchy."

This is the 'stridentfeminist' myth. You can always tell something pretty awful is about to be said when an argument starts 'I have nothing against X, BUT...'. I happen to believe that women are so far repressed that some kind of positive discrimination is the only answer, but that's a far cry from 'a complete reversal of the current status-quo'. A bit later in his letter Joseph continues:

"Dreamsnake and... Houston, Houston, do you read? are perfect examples of the sort of thing I mean, where the principles of fiction have been sacrificed to a turgid series of almost indigestible little homilies about how wonderful the world will be when men have been removed from it."

I can only assume that the book Joseph was reading inside the 'Dreamsnake' dust-jacket was something else entirely: I found it a non-sexist story but devoid of anything he could seize on as feminist propaganda. I'm glad enough people saw its virtues to vote it the Hugo.

Another recent example of overt sexism is the first item in Kevin Smith's 'Dot 7'. This is a fannish-humorous account of Seacon

(written before the event) which is quite funny on the superficial level but is unfortunately based on the premise that Seacon would be taken over by stridentfeminist hit-squads slaughtering every male in sight. I take this to be a polemic against the entirely welcome development of womens' programming and womens' rooms at recent world conventions, which are presumably seen by some people as a threat to the male domination of fandom. Here's just a small sample:

"Don't be uncharitable' I said. 'They're fannish people. You can't be fannish and Feminist both: you need a sense of humour to be fannish.'"

More often the sexism in British fanzines is there by default not by intention. It's there because people write in the way they think and don't realise the sexist content is there, or if they do prefer to ignore it. Here for instance is a quote from a letter from Graham England, printed in 'Seamonsters 4':

"He laid six women at one Trek Con in Manchester and is willing to tell the world about it. If British fans are hard up for sex, why don't they go to Trekkie cons?"

You can as it happens read that remark either way round, but I suspect that when Graham wrote it he had in his mind the assumption that all British fans are men, and that Star Trek cons would allow them to get hold of women. If all British fans are men, where does that leave the few British women fans? Shunted off into the nasty old category of 'femfefans' perhaps?

Talking of 'femfefans', try this from a Yorcon report by Rob Hansen in 'Deadloss 2':

"The daylight hours at a con are a curious time spent in the hucksters' room buying no books, gently lubricating one's throat in preparation for the evening's coming assault, or studiously ignoring the programme. This is the time for hatching plots, character assassination, the sizing up of the few femfefans present, and the search for cheap food."

Again the assumption that fans are male and that women who happen to participate in fandom are a separate race of 'femfefans' (whoever heard of 'homfefans'?) who (so a lot of male fans would no doubt like to believe) only turn up to get laid.

Here's Alan Dorey writing about Yorcon in 'Nabu 8':

"Since I'd been in charge of running registrations and hotel bookings, a lot of the names I did recognise, and I was most disappointed to find that many of the single women I had noted down in my records as being likely 'companions' (based on presentation of handwriting and general literary personality) were in fact either aged spinsters or desirable young females accompanied by pretty fair likenesses of Piltdown Man in all his primeval glory. So much for graphology."

So does he think women attend conventions just to seek him out? I think I've printed enough quotations to make my position clear. I just wish fans would stop and think what they're saying occasionally. Although fandom has no monopoly on sexism: it's just a reflection of the prevailing attitudes in our society at large, and to prove it I'll end

with a letter which was printed in a recent issue of the ASTMS journal.

"It won't wash, Ms Susan P. Llewellyn (May/June Journal) - you can only fool people part of the time! The crackpot philosophies of intellectual Socialists have brought the downfall of the Labour Party, as well as bringing society to its present parlous state.

Neither political philosophy nor legislation can change the nature of Man. A natural woman is completely fulfilled as wife, mother and homemaker.

The best principles of trade unionism as I understand them include work-sharing. Should people be doing two jobs, as working mothers do, at a time of chronic unemployment? Modern technology will exacerbate the problem. One sees at present the wives of highly-paid men working for 'pin-money' while school-leavers are on the dole.

Vandalism, lawlessness, anti-social behaviour are more apparent in the 'latch-key kid' homes, whether Ms Llewellyn likes it or not, as those of us active in public work are all too aware. Verbal smokescreens, together with false facts, cannot hide serious social problems."

I think that speaks for itself. Enough said.

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AMICITIAE LAUS

In July we were invited to Jean Frost's birthday party, and went down to Birmingham for the occasion, which turned out to be a quiet, friendly sort of event: besides us there was just Mike and Pat Meara and Dave Upton, although several other people had been invited but had sent apologies or (worse) just not turned up. The intention was on the Saturday afternoon to go on an expedition to a cider mill in the wilds of Herefordshire, but Mike and Pat got lost in Birmingham or something and didn't turn up on time so just Ro and I went along with Kevin and Jean, taking a wrong turn in Worcester and going miles out of our way through country lanes and villages with completely unhelpful signposts (we'd omitted to take a map along with us). We did eventually get to the cider mill at Stoke Lacy, which was a fascinating place where they gave you a cup and let you loose in a room full of samples. At the end of the room there was a huge black vat full of very strong cider which would probably have made an excellent paint-stripper. Getting back to Birmingham was easier: we took the main road, which was probably just as well.

On the way back we stopped at one of those pick-your-own establishments and between the four of us we bought no less than 11½ pounds of strawberries, which was a bit of a mistake because by the end of the weekend they were practically coming out of our ears, and there were still a lot left over. As they were rather ripe to start with it developed into a race between consumption and fermentation.

Ro and I really had a good time that weekend, surrounded by and talking

to congenial people, better in some ways even than being at a convention. Getting to know Jean Frost and Kevin Easthope as friends is turning out to be remarkably pleasant.

There's an area near the back of our house which is overgrown and is mostly the garden of a derelict house in the next street (although recently they've started repairs and modernisation, so it won't be derelict much longer). The other night a fire started in some rubbish there (I suspect it was children that did it - they're always playing about. Overgrown gardens have a particular fascination for kids: I know they did for me when I was nine).

Someone called the fire service to come and put it out. Since they couldn't get their fire engine right up to the location of the fire they had to park it on the road and run out a couple of hundred metres of hose. A couple of firemen did the actual manhandling of the hose while a third one stayed by the fire and kept an eye on it. Ro and I were watching from our kitchen window (like everyone else living nearby) and we heard this third man utter the classic comment: "Hurry up with the hose, it'll have gone out in a minute."

Can any kind reader on the other side of the Atlantic get hold of a copy of the music and song score book for "The Rocky Horror Picture Show"? We've been unable to locate a copy here in Britain, and being fans (of the music anyway) would like to have one. We'd come to any reasonable arrangement over the cost, of course. Ta.

We seem to have seen a lot of films lately, and one I particularly liked was the remake of 'Nosferatu the Vampyre' which came to Liverpool a couple of weeks ago. We saw the dubbed version, incidentally. I was impressed with the way the film created moods and atmosphere: the plot was pretty basic but the subtle way the emotional aura was built around it was the best feature of the film. Klaus Kinski's acting as the vampire was unusual but very effective: I saw Dracula as a pathetic creature, longing for death but never finding it, not scary at all but wrenchingly sad.

The topographical scenes were good too, and especially the ones of the Carpathian mountains and of morning mist over the Dutch polders. The film seemed to follow the original 'Nosferatu' fairly closely, but it didn't have the surreal air that the earlier one did. Nevertheless, a good movie, one of the best Dracula films in a long time (and far above the Hammer standard).

One of the worst aspects of Seacon was its unsuitability for disabled people. You'd think with a modern convention centre they'd have made some provision, but no. Ro had a hard time with all the steps and so on (she timed herself from the main hall to our room: nine minutes), but that was nothing compared to Pam Boal, who had to take her wheelchair out of the front of the hotel, round to the back (in the rain), and through a little entrance at the rear. There was a sign in the con hall indicating the wheelchair route - but it led up steps!! Pam said she'd heard of another wheelchair-bound con member who'd just given up and spent a whole day sitting in the bedroom because it was such a struggle to get anywhere. So much for the Metropole.



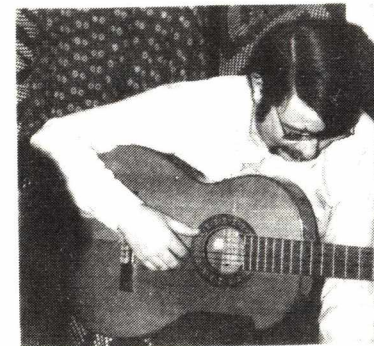
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CRY OF THE WILD GIRLS

Pamela Boal: 4 Westfield Way, Charlton Heights, Wantage, OX12 7EW

Yes,

every organisation suffers from its group of 'middles': middle age, middle class, middle of the road minds. My advice however is not to knock them, gently educate, motivate and use them. If an organisation's 'middles' aren't helping then it's because the rest of the group haven't put them on the right road (possibly they are equally prejudiced and can't see the potential) which takes a little more thought than being scornful. Do the FoE really object to central heating, for instance, if so on what grounds? Surely coal fires are a big pollutant and room by room, gas or electric fires are more energy-consuming. It strikes me that Jean Frost is confusing movement with action. She seems to be saying no matter that I have no clear understanding of any of the issues involved, demonstrating and helping with exhibitions makes me one of the good guys. Home preparation and preservation of food is by no means unconnected with a desire to improve diet and natural quality of life style. Perhaps Jean like myself is well versed in the subject and would not therefore be interested in such a meeting, I would suggest then she is the exception rather than the rule and that others might be pleased to learn. I would also suggest that she takes a look at a few W.I. programmes, her image is way out of date. All-female groups are just not my cup of tea, but I wouldn't reject any organisation because of what I imagine they are.

SF writers as a lower form of life! Interesting proposition but by no means one I intended. The capital N for novelist was simply a haste-engendered grammatical error. I was gently suggesting that we look at our tendency to pigeon-hole writers. We label people Detective Writers, Western Writers, Romance Writers etc. With labels we give attributes. As we so often complain, the non-SF reader has the idea that all SF consists of poorly plotted, cardboard character strewn space operas. Perhaps if we thought of those who write in our favourite genre as novelists, short story writers, who

apply their craft and artistry outside the confines of a label, regard them as men and women of literature, we would be doing both the genre and our favourite authors a service. Before you jump to yet another wrong conclusion I hasten to add that I am not saying that those authors who have never ventured outside the field of SF should be any less highly regarded.

Joseph Nicholas: 2 Wilmot Way, Camberley, Surrey GU15 1JA

So John

Collick's proposed 'Entropy' will be 'appropriating' its title from a previous fanzine of the same name, but so what? Very few of we present day fans will ever have heard of such earlier fanzines, and will be completely unaware of our 'transgressions' in that respect. After all, there's no written history of fanzine fandom, and thus no way in which we can check whether or not a title has previously been used. I'm aware that there are various bibliographies available, most notably those produced by Peter Roberts and Keith Walker, but just how complete they are is a very moot point. Meaning, of course, that it's high time such a history was produced, if only to get the knowledge down on paper before those carrying it in their memories are lost to us for ever. I think Harry Turner is now the only remaining British fanzine editor who's been in it since the beginning, and I'm sure that his reminiscences would fill several hundred miles of tape... as those of Mike Rosenblum would probably have done, had the interviewers managed to reach him in time. And it's a bloody crying shame that they didn't.

If you're looking for thoroughly sexist and offensive quotes, try Lee Correy's story in the July Analog. I can't remember the title, but it's really nothing more nor less than one long chauvinist diatribe from beginning to end, trotting out all the stock Middle American clichés about women being unable to make up their minds and being naturally less intelligent than their male counterparts, and being on a continuous diet because they're not satisfied with the bodies nature gave them when they were born, and being so man-hungry that they can never think of anything more complex than what clothes to wear and what cosmetics to use, and being in existence with the sole purpose of pleasing men in any case. It's just as well Correy kept his 'heroine' (and if there ever was a misnomer then that must be the most grotesque, as far as this context is concerned, at least) single instead of making her a mother, otherwise he'd probably have given us all sorts of shit about the wrongness of abortion and the wonderfulness of cake recipes and knitting patterns as well. In other words it was just the sort of objectionable right wing story that you'd expect to find in a magazine such as Analog, and if editor Schmidt doesn't receive a truckload of angry mail as a result of his publishing it I shall be very surprised. And if the story is one that he himself has bought, not inherited from Ben Bova, then Conde Nast should devote serious thought to the possibility of firing him. Goddamit, this is 1979 not 1939! Why is American SF so narrow-minded and backward-looking? Or are the people who edit it so incurably adolescent in their mentality that they cannot admit that the world has changed since they first discovered the dubious wonders of Hugo Gernsback, and hope that if they continually rehash the past then they might actually be able to convince themselves that there has

been no change at all.

There's no doubt about the superlativeness of Yorcon, however; it was indeed a damn good convention, and I'd go so far as to say that it was the best Eastercon I've attended since my first (Seacon 75, although if I'd had just a bit more money than I did I'd have gone to Tynecon 74 which from all I've heard about it would probably have made an even better first). I say this not because that first convention was objectively any 'better' than Yorcon but because it was my first, and hence a totally new and different experience; I went not having the slightest idea of what to expect, but trying to be as fully prepared as possible for anything and everything, and hoping that I would find it all in some way enjoyable - and lo and behold, when Monday morning finally rolled around I felt really depressed to find that it had in fact drawn to its close. And I'm sure the same must be true of any fan's first convention (always provided, of course, that they've gone to it in the right frame of mind - such an attitude being, I suppose, somewhat similar to the one I took to Seacon 75): they can't help but enjoy it simply because it is all so new and different. (Although I dare say that Mancon 76 might have been the exception in this regard). And they'll probably find, like the rest of us, that subsequent conventions aren't quite so enjoyable because they are essentially repeats of the first - unless they, like Yorcon, deliberately strive to excel themselves by projecting an even more convivial and emotion-charged atmosphere than all the others put together, since (or so it seems to me) it's the atmosphere that makes or breaks a convention.

Which all sounds suitably vague and woolly. Still, have you given a thought to what next year's Albacon just might be like? I mean - supposing conventions do follow some sort of cyclical pattern? Because if so, then Yorcon can perhaps be equated with Tynecon, which will mean that next year's convention will be a bit like Seacon 75, good but not quite so good. Such a remark is based on the assumption that the cycle is one of five years' duration; what if it were actually four years long? Oh god, no! Another Mancon 76!

But then we shouldn't really so prejudice the FOKT mob who are running Albacon, the fact that they are SF enthusiasts rather than SF fans notwithstanding. In the past couple of years I've come across all manner of guff purporting to demonstrate that only SF fans possess the dedication and organisational ability necessary to run a successful convention, but to me these arguments have always seemed rather self-serving in nature, as though deliberately constructed to 'prove' a predetermined point - and so I've tended to disregard them. In any case there has as yet been no definite empirical proof, since it's not until now that enthusiasts have actually been given the opportunity of running a convention - and there are grounds for believing that they could make a rather better job of it than we fans, for the simple reason that the majority of today's convention attendees are enthusiasts, not fans, and a convention committee composed of like-minded individuals can therefore be expected to cater for their wants and needs in a considerably more appropriate fashion. After all, that the 'code of ethics' adopted by the enthusiasts is different from that adopted by we fans does not constitute a suitable cause for making them the automatic objects of our derision, although I can't deny that their fanzines are pretty shitty (and in some cases downright appalling, recalling to mind the dear dead days of the later

sixties, assuming that everything I've ever heard about those 'dear dead days' has somehow avoided being exaggerated out of all proportion to reality, which doesn't seem very likely. Heigh-ho for historical perspective).

You'll notice that I've completely avoided trying to define the terms 'enthusiast' and 'fan' but then I could always say that such definitions were unnecessary because the terms themselves were vaguely self-explanatory... gosh, what a cop-out! All right then: 'enthusiasts' are people who read great quantities of SF, go to no more than the two major conventions of the year, and aschew fanzines like the plague; while 'fans' are those who go to all the conventions and embrace fanzines as the greatest thing since sliced bread. Which isn't much of a definition, since if the FOXT people are enthusiasts but also produce fanzines, then they must also be fans... perhaps I should just have copped-out instead, what?

All of which would appear to make me out as the voice of sweetness, light and moderation. Bloody hell! But of a slip-up there, boss... but then, fuggheaded though it may sound, I do believe that we should at least try to keep an open mind on this matter even if that means hoping for the best while expecting the worst. After all, Albacon has yet to produce its first progress report - and you'll remember that it wasn't until the first Marcon PR that we began to get some inkling of the disorganisation and chaos that lay behind it.

(++ Peter Roberts seems to have done a good job on his bibliographies. He may have got a few detailed facts wrong, but he has, I think, left out very few British fanzines as far as I've been able to check up from my own memory. ++ I don't really mind who runs conventions; the point I was trying to make about Albacon was that I prefer to go to small, fannish cons if I can. But I expect I'll sit in a corner with my friends at Albacon just like at any other. Cons have merged for me in any case into one continuous party. It just leaves off on a Monday and after a longer or shorter mundane interval picks up (with only the venue changed) on a Friday afternoon. ++)

Edgar Belka: 43 Court Farm Road, Northolt, Middlesex

Seeing that everyone else is telling you how they got into fandom, I might as well follow suit. Although I spent a year at Newcastle University, and met Rob Jackson up there (among other gannets) I was never really in fandom. I had just discovered science fiction, so I was far from ready to dive into fandom. It seems strange to me, however, that a serious fan club should start at Newcastle U. the year after I left.

I regard my entry into fandom as starting at N.E.London Poly. There I discovered that a chemistry lecturer was keen on SF, and I got in touch. He was on the board of the SF foundation, and sent me on to see Peter Nicholls and Colin Lester. It was there that I saw my first fanzines, and Colin Lester suggested I go to the One Tun. Thus I think I may hold the claim of being the first person in this country to enter fandom through an academic body!

I can vividly remember my first visit to the Tun. The first impression, when looking for the pub, is that you've gone to the wrong place: all the streets are deserted. The pub, however, was packed. Armed with a pint, I started button-holing people. The first

person I met was a local, and nothing to do with fandom. The next group were dead keen on some mysterious game called D & D (I spent ten minutes trying to think of how to get out of the discussion, since they decided it was their duty to educate me in the ways of the game). The third person was Rob Holdstock (although I didn't know at the time) and his words of wisdom were restricted to 'You're not a trekkie, are you? I can't stand bloody trekkies.' and so saying he disappeared into the throng of people. All ended well, however, when Dave Langford and Kev Smith noticed I was the only one in the pub not to have a copy of their latest fanzine.

(++ You mean there are actually people who have no connection with fandom who go along to the Tun on the first Thursday of the month? I wonder what they think of fans - and why they keep on turning up.++)

Brian Earl Brown: 16711 Burt Road no. 207, Detroit, MI 48219

The first I heard of fandom was from a column in 'If' in the early 60s: Lin Carter's fandom column. I didn't act on it but always sort of knew it was there. 'Amazing' got me primed for fandom in the early 70s, subscriptions to 'Outworlds', 'SFR' and 'Algol' gave me exposure and in 1974 I launched my first fanzine. One copy ended up with Cy Chauvin who invited me to a nearby convention, and it was downhill from there on.

I've heard that neofans do not so much get 'let in' to cliques as form ones of their own, and that matches up with my own experiences. And the comment you quote about sticking around long enough to become a familiar face is also true, I've found after sticking in fandom for a while.

Pinching women or love 'pats' on the butt are I think extremely uncommon in the States. At least, I've never seen anyone do that sort of thing, but then I may lead a sheltered life. We did have a young woman in our plant, working as a purchasing agent and secretary. She was transferred recently because she wasn't doing her job: probably because it seemed like there was always one of the young studs from the shop in the front office talking to her.

Dave Langford: 22 Northumberland Ave, Reading RG2 7PW

Les Spinge: not a name which any hapless sod is liable to duplicate accidentally. It irritates me, too: surely there are/ have been at least three zines titled Tangent? It happens in books as well as fanzines. I still remember the incredulous horror with which I discovered 'The Dispossessed' by someone I'd never heard of, and the sickening disappointment of seeing 'The High Place' by not Cabell but some mere nonentity (THP being high on my wants list at the time).

WAHF Steev Higgins, Brian Earl Brown (again) and Joseph Nicholas (again).



THE PHOTOPAGE Photos 1 and 3 were taken at the Skeltons' party on the last Sunday in July; 2, 4, 5, 7 and 8 at Jean Frost's birthday party the week before; and 6 as long ago as September 1974, at the Belgian 'SFANCon' in Gent. On number 1 the people are (L to R): Ro Pardoe, Dave Rowe, Mike Meara, Pat Meara, Mike Glicksohn, Cas Skelton, Paul Skelton, Susan Wood, Gerald Lawrence. Number 2 is Pat Meara; 3 is Mike Meara in traditional British headgear; 4 is Mike Meara again; 5 is Kevin Easthope and Jean Frost; 6 Peter Roberts and psittacoid friend; 7 (L to R) Kevin Easthope, Jean Frost, Ro Pardoe; 8 is Ro Pardoe again.

A LATE LOC from Ian Maule came just in time to fill up the last space in this fanzine. How convenient.

"In 1964 I bought a copy of New Worlds, saw an advert in the back for the BSFA, told my mother that I intended joining, and was immediately told not to. End of Part One.

One day in early 1970 I was doing my usual Thursday tour of all the bookshops in Newcastle, keeping my eyes open for any new books on the shelves, and poring over the piles of rubbish in my favourite second-hand shop for any SF. This day I came across the first issue of 'Vision of Tomorrow' lying at the bottom of a stack of womens' magazines. Flicking through, I discovered that despite it being published in Newcastle I'd never ever seen a copy on sale. Anyway, I took it home, read it from cover to cover, and noticed a little advert for 'Speculation'. Being of independent means I sent off my £2.00 whatever it was in those days and some weeks later received my first 'fanzine'. End of Part Two.

Quite independently of the above the book 'Nine by Laumer' had contained a full page ad for the BSFA. Off went my money and two months later my name appeared in the Bulletin as a new member. Three days after that I received a letter from Ian Williams with instructions on how to get to the Gannet public house where the North East group met, and inviting me along. Unfortunately Ian didn't mention what day they met, but eventually he wrote to advise me. End of Part Three.

Again independently, the BSFA sent me a selection of fanzines amongst which was a copy of EGG 3. This looked much more interesting than 'Speculation', the serious level headed discussion not being for me. So Peter Roberts received the first ever LoC from me.

Basically it's a question of which one of the three methods actually got me into fandom. Certainly it wasn't 'Speculation' which as far as I was concerned at the time existed in some sort of limbo. Without being biased (not the right word) it would have to be Gannetfandom with some help from Roberts."

LES SPINGE 35 is dated September 1979 and comes from Darroll Pardoe, 38 Sandown Lane, Liverpool L15 4HU, England, who produces it now and then for the entertainment of his friends and anyone else he thinks might be interested to read it.

Front cover illustration by R. Anning Bell.