

AHH! I LOVE
A FANZINE WITH A BRITISH
FLAVOUR... PETE WESTON,
DRINKING, JOHN BERRY, ATOM,
TRIODE, DRINKING, PETER
ROBERTS, DRINKING, TOM PERRY,
ERIC BENTCLIFFE, DRINKING, ERG,
DAVE PIPER, DRINKING, JAMES
WHITE, PETER ROBERTS AGAIN,
DRINKING, TERRY JEEVES,
AND *sigh*...
DRINKING.



MOTA #19 August-September 1976

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Copies may be had in exchange for contributions, letters of comment, trades and old faanish fanzines. Back issues are available, so inquire.

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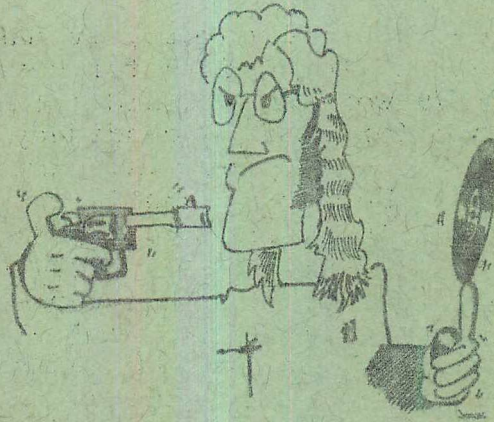
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Jonh Ingham (4A Salisbury Rd., West Ealing, W.13, U.K.) is becoming active once more and would like to receive fannish fanzines.



"Won't you step into my fanzine?"

That was the opening line in MOTA #1, used in a crudely drawn cartoon I did depicting a smiling crewcut young guy. It was not a picture of my by any means -- I haven't had a crewcut since the 4th grade -- but it was one of the few pictures I felt at the time that I could do well. I was wrong of course; I can't draw anything well. The first issue was dated July 1971 but really wasn't mailed out until August, five years ago as I type this stencil. Five years. Of course it has not been five continuous years of publication: I took a couple years off to travel around and to find a place to live and to gradually let the desire to "pub an ish" grow within me. Back then, during this inactive period, friends would jokingly ask when the next issue was coming out. "Soon," I would answer to their increasingly doubtful looks and smirks. Things have changed; now when they ask me when the next issue is coming out, they fully expect me to hand them a copy in reply. I've been in fandom several years longer than I've been doing MOTA but it was my first fanzine (though not the only one). Even though I don't stand as good a chance of breaking any records as the cartoon character up above, a Fifth Anniversary Issue is a comforting milestone to reach.

In celebration of MOTA's fifth anniversary, I recently indulged myself by having the first six issues (all done while I was living in Columbia, Missouri) bound. Dian Crayne (734 South Ardmere, Los Angeles, CA 90005) did a splendid job of binding the fanzines and for a very reasonable rate. I want to thank Dian for doing such a marvelous job and I encourage any of you who are thinking about having your fanzines bound to contact her. When I get back from MidAmeriCon, I intend to send off another batch to Dian to be bound matching the first volume.

As you noticed, this is not the standard format MOTA. It is much thicker with twice the usual number of pages. I decided my standard way of mailing the fanzine is impractical for this thick issue so I mailed it flat in a mailing wrapper -- not in a clasp-fastened manila envelope like the classy fanzines use, but in a plain brown millenary paper bag. MOTA retains its common touch....and its cheap editor. This does have its advantages. The paper bag can be used to make a hand puppet once the fanzine is removed; not a great hand puppet, of course, but a better one than a manila envelope makes.

The ability to mail this issue flat in a wrapper did away with my reasons for employing the final page to list the contents, indicia and mailing information. The table of contents and indicia are on the page in your left hand while the final page now becomes a back cover, a first for MOTA.

As for the stuff inbetween the covers, it makes up the Special British Issue of MOTA. I decided to do this for several reasons, because England is bidding for the 1979 worldcon, a bid I fully support; because Peter Roberts is a candidate for TAFF, a candidacy I am very enthusiastic about; because I think the current U.K. fanzine scene is very alive and full of Good Stuff; and because I would like to see more contact develop between Anglofandom and American fandom. Too many fans are unaware of what is going on on the other side of the ocean. The interaction between fans in the United States & Canada and those in England and Northern Ireland in the 1950s and early '60s resulted in some of the best fannish fanzines ever produced. I hope the contents of this issue will spark some interest in American fans to contact their U.K. counterparts and to promote an exchange of fanzines, letters, jokes and ideas. Perhaps that interaction between fandoms can be established once again.

There are benefits to be had from increased contact. We may even be able to work out some sort of system to exchange fuggheads in a way not too unlike how TAFF enables the fandoms to exchange on a temporary basis outstanding members of each. The Fugghead One-Way Exchange Program (FOWEP) would be of a more permanent nature of course in that no return fare would be provided. Fans would vote for the person they would most like to see leave their country and fandom and be sent Over There. It would not require as much money as TAFF since the fund would only need enough money for a one-way ticket. This cheap cost and the profound feeling of personal relief at the fugghead's departure may well result in more than one FOWEP winner per year; perhaps two or three or fifteen. The only real drawback I can foresee is that the FOWEP winner might be so undesirable that after a brief stay the person might win the FOWEP race in the other country and be returned to the point of origin. This bouncing back and forth of unwanted fans could result in the Fugghead One-Way Exchange Program Ping-Pong Problem (FOWEPPPP).

Turning from fuggheads to this issue's contributors -- two very dissimilar categories, I assure you, despite what you may have heard -- leading off is a long convention report of the 1976 Eastercon by Tom Perry called "Mein Con" which will allow you to experience the British convention through the eyes and mind of an American.

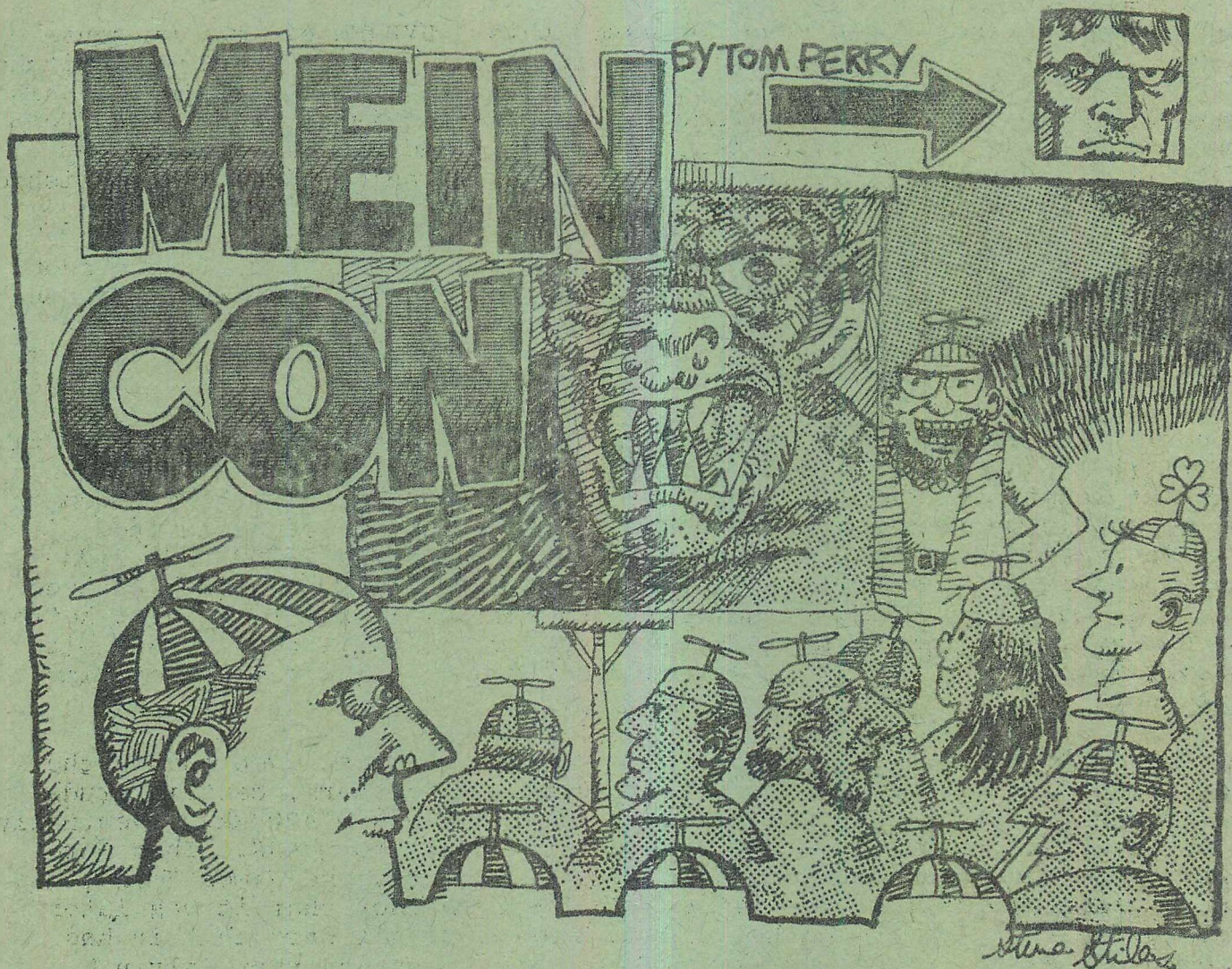
John Berry (of Goon Defective Agency Fame) contributes "My Country" in which he talks about a sport he calls 'football' but which is known in the U.S. as soccer. We call it soccer because most of the time the ball is being hit with the foot. We call another sport 'football' since it is a game where the ball is primarily carried in the arms or else tossed through the air for someone to catch with his hands and in which seldom does a foot actually touch the ball. This has been a short lesson in American logic.

Dave Piper is on hand with his column "Son of B*A*R*F" which this time deals with height or lack thereof. This is a popular thing in Britain with several people being known as Little Ian, Little Mal, Little John, and Little Bastard.

I've done a short batch of fanzine reviews of some of the current U.K. fanzines so that you may get an idea of what is happening there and which ones you might care to receive.

Wrapping up the issue is the brown paper bag.

+ Terry Hughes +



Exactly how I recognized the man as Walt Willis I don't know. But the moment he entered the convention hall from the back, during Ramsey Campbell's talk on horror films, I knew that was who he was. I had seen him before only in photographs and ATOM caricatures, but in a sense I felt that I knew him better than I did most of the people I see every day. The chance of meeting him face to face was the main thing that had drawn me to the Eastercon in Manchester, England.

How curious, I thought; here I am at last in the same room with Willis (a rather large room, admittedly), and the circumstances are such that I can't talk to him. I turned back to the front of the room and tried to concentrate on the speaker.

It had been more than 20 years since I received my first issue of HYPHEN. I had been reading sf for three years at the time and while I knew that fandom existed, I had little interest in it. In fact I regarded it with a certain mild contempt, which I had acquired from a paragraph in L. Sprague de Camp's Science Fiction Handbook. I regarded fans as frustrated sf writers; obviously you wouldn't write anything for free if you could make money doing it. I was 14 years old.

The bundle of green and orange pages that came on a bright snowy day in November 1954 changed my attitude forever. They contained magic. None of

the other fanzines I had seen possessed this. HYPHEN excited my sense of wonder just as sf had when I first started reading it. I quickly switched from writing terrible science fiction stories to writing terrible fannish articles, and not long after that -- weary of receiving rejections from faneds who didn't appreciate the concession I had made in writing for them -- I resorted to the fannish version of a vanity press and published the first issue of LOGORRHEA.

I had no mimeo but I did have an allowance and I managed to find a shop in downtown Lincoln, Nebraska, that would run off my stencils in exchange for it. A fair number of letters of comment resulted from that first issue. One, typed on the back of a map of Ireland, was from Willis himself, who managed to find several things to praise.

Kind letters from several of the BNFs of that bygone era convinced me that my first ish had been a great success. This left me facing, in my own mind at least, the same problem that successful first novelists encounter. Also, my discovery of girls resulted in other demands on my limited financial resources. In consequence the second issue of LOGORRHEA didn't appear until 1963, almost seven years after the first. Through college and well into my first job and my first marriage I preserved those letters of comment, and they formed the letter column of the second issue, with Willis leading off. Seven years between issues -- how's that for time-binding?

I stuck with the original title for a few more issues, even though the readers had no enthusiasm for this obscure medical term; certain crude individuals professed to believe that the title was DIARRHEA. Eventually I shortened it to LOG and then changed it finally to QUARK. This word has roots in nuclear physics, journalists' cablese, and James Joyce, and thus makes an ideal fanzine title. So ideal in fact that it was later used by another fan who either didn't know or didn't care that it had been used before. He didn't even pay me that courtesy that Calvin W. "Biff" Demmon had accorded to Gina Clarke when he found himself using a title that she had used previously. He had written her apologetically saying that obviously there should not be two fanzines with the same name, and therefore he was changing the title -- of her fanzine.

When WARHOON suspended publication, QUARK acquired Willis as a columnist. To me this was the next best thing to being Willis. All my life I had been subject to bouts of hero worship, with the object of adulation changing from time to time. The incumbent idol at this point was Robert Heinlein, but he was falling from favor as I matured and his writing degenerated, with Willis taking his place in my esteem. In several senses Heinlein and Willis are antithetical: Willis, for instance, regards sf and writing with the love that is the root of the word amateur, while Heinlein has said publicly that to him they are just the easiest way of making money. Heinlein has married his science fiction to the convention of realism by making the future seem as dull and familiar as the present, while Willis makes the world that exists today seem intriguing and exciting.

As the quality of Heinlein's published work declined in the early 1960s, Willis's writing was acquiring a new depth and fascination. A corresponding change was taking place in my subconscious attitudes towards life. Fittingly, it was a combination of Willis and Heinlein that brought an end to QUARK.

My life had assumed a strange dichotomy. I was disillusioned with my job

as a journalist and my marriage was falling apart -- but my heart was light, for I was the fanned who published "The Harp That Once or Twice." In a spasm of uncharacteristic fairness I changed the nature of QUARK by putting a price on it. Up to that time I had sent it to anyone I pleased and stopped sending it to anyone who I felt didn't appreciate it. But I had the idea that reading Willis was a basic fannish right, which I could not withhold from any fan. Besides, I thought that Willis deserved a wide audience and felt guilty about the comparatively paltry circulation of my fanzine. Willis didn't request this and I never discussed it with him -- I just did it.

Several issues later I offered to publish excerpts from Alexei Panshin's critical work on Heinlein. I had read that Heinlein was threatening to sue Panshin for libel and thus causing publishers to shy away from the manuscript. My motives were not as idealistic as they may sound. I had studied the laws of libel and slander in journalism school and from the description of Panshin's book I doubted that Heinlein would have a legal leg to stand on. If he did file a nuisance suit I felt sure I could rely on my father's law firm for legal representation. My chief motive was simply that I wanted to read the manuscript.

Panshin sent parts of it and I read them. They were disappointing. Heinlein had nothing to sue about, and hardly anything even to resent. Panshin was in fact a great admirer of Heinlein, as his own sf books were to demonstrate. This was the book that Advent published as Heinlein in Dimension, and if you've read it you'll remember that it consists largely of extended plot summaries and criticism that seldom delves deeper than the mechanics of story writing. Panshin's harshest comments are reserved for Heinlein's treatment of sex.

I had boxed myself in. I should have forthrightly reneged, but I couldn't bring myself to do so. My initial offer had been made under the pose of fearless idealism, and now I didn't have the guts to chicken out.

On the other hand I really didn't want to stencil all those pages of bland comments. Panshin might have consented to a condensed version, but the nature of the manuscript's publicity had been such that condensing it would have given the appearance of omitting parts offensive to Heinlein. I looked for a strong piece to excerpt, but there was simply nothing I thought strong enough. My own review of Farnham's Freehold had been more vitriolic than anything Panshin had sent me.

So I did the worst possible thing: nothing. Meanwhile a sercon fanzine, RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY, began to print other chapters of the book, and mentioned editorially that the rest of it could be found in QUARK, giving my address. Sticky quarters began to roll in. Some of these fans wanted me to send them two or five copies of my fanzine. Universities attempted to subscribe. The mail would bring five or ten envelopes a day from people I had never heard of. Sometimes I didn't even open them -- just shoved them into the fan cabinet and resolved to figure out what to do later.

My situation was complicated by the fact that my marriage was on its last legs and I was actively searching for another job. Willis seemed to be retiring from fanac; so were other QUARK contributors. The rent that Pacificon II had torn in fandom was widened further by the Vietnam war, which was to split the whole country.

Finally it became obvious that QUARK had followed HYPHEN into a state of

suspension. Panshin sent a terse note, demanding the return of his manuscript. I sent it, lacking the heart to send my lame apologies. I also started returning the subscription money.

Shortly after, in 1967, I left the midwest, the profession of journalism, and my first wife all at the same time, traveling the 1300 miles from Omaha to New York in 24 hours of straight driving, stopping only for gas and coffee. I also left behind my fannish identity. My fanzine collection went to a west coast collector, including all my copies of QUARK -- everything had to go; from now on I would be traveling light.

The one thing I did keep was a bound copy of The Harp Stateside by Walter A. Willis. I had always regarded this as a book, not a fanzine. For years it was my only link to my former life.

So when my job brought me to England in 1975, I had been gaffiated for almost a decade. My one tenuous tie to fandom was MOTA, which Terry Hughes continued to send me over the years even though I continued to swallow up the issues as the chasm of an earthquake swallows houses. I have always said Terry is generous to a fault.

It was through MOTA that I started getting interested in fandom again. I sent off for some English fanzines Terry had mentioned -- EGG and TRIODE. They arrived around the first of April, along with notes from their editors, Peter Roberts and Eric Bentcliffe, both of which ended: "See you at Mancon." Almost simultaneously came a letter from Terry Hughes bearing the information that Walt Willis would also be at Mancon. That cinched it. With the help of Eric Bentcliffe I managed to get registered as member number 570 only days before the beginning of the 27th British Science Fiction Convention. Good Friday found me speeding the 300 miles from Locks Heath in southern England to Manchester in the northwest. I had to rely on good old fannish intuition to find my way since my wife had thoughtfully taken all the maps of England with her while she drove my inlaws around Cornwall. The one map left in the house was the Daily Telegraph map of Europe, which was a bit out of scale for my purposes, extending as it does from Iceland to Iraq. I managed to get a fix on Manchester from it, but I could find no trace of Holmes Chapel in Cheshire where I was supposed to meet Eric Bentcliffe. To this oversight on the part of the Telegraph's mapmakers I attribute the subsequent events.

I missed my appointment with Eric at his home, so I proceeded on to Owens Park, a campus of the University of Manchester, hoping to meet him there. I didn't stop to think how I would recognize him. I suppose I must have imagined that -- since I had a beard, an American accent, and cowboy boots -- I would stand out and he would recognize me. As it turned out this combination helped me blend into the crowd.

I registered and moved my luggage into my room. This involved a walk of a quarter of a mile to a dormitory quadrangle called Tree Court, followed by mounting three flights of stairs. This failed to excite my sense of wonder -- I simply accepted it.

At this time I had been a stranger in a strange land -- Europe and more particularly England -- for over six months and I'd got into the habit of accepting things, from French plumbing to Danish prices, without protesting. My room was sparsely furnished, there was no telephone, the john was down the hall -- no matter. I had survived worse: living in a tent on an Indian reservation, in a barracks on an Air Force base, in a small hotel in Paris. If I had realized that this campus convention had

been the subject of a storm of fannish controversy for months previous, or that there was an alternative, I might have felt differently.

The programme claimed that Eric Bentcliffe was even now on a TAFF panel which also included two other old friends, Roy Tackett and Pete Weston. I hiked back to the con center -- a separate building in the dorm complex incorporating a bar and lounge downstairs and the auditorium upstairs -- only to find, instead of a TAFF panel, a single person haranguing the audience about TAFF. #How many of you support TAFF? How many of you have ever voted in TAFF? How many

have heard of TAFF?# He glared around at the uneasy fans in the room and stomped out, undoubtedly to set vinegar traps for flies. I surmised that he was not Eric; he certainly didn't sound like Eric.

I milled around in the crowd downstairs, looking for someone to talk to. I knew there were at least three people here -- Weston, Tackett, and Bentcliffe -- that I'd corresponded with. It was frustrating not to know what they looked like. But I kept hoping to make a connection somehow. Maybe I'd see one of the fans I had met years ago in America, or one of them would see me. As I looked around I began to realize that, even if I did or they did, recognition was unlikely. Hair has been cultivated on so many male faces in the last decade that few are left unchanged. My own Van Dyke was a case in point.

As I looked around for old friends, I noticed that eyes darted away from contact with mine. This situation changed suddenly when I leaned against a cigarette machine. Now faces began to turn my way. I smiled hopefully at several people, only to have them hurry past, before I discovered the reason -- I was standing beneath a professionally lettered sign that said:

LISA CONESA would like to state that she has no connection with the Lisa Conesa who the programme says will be holding a poetry soiree.

The real Lisa Conesa will be holding a vodka-and-lime -- refills welcome.

At this point I decided to abandon the passive approach. I acquired a pint of bitter and looked about the room, thinking that perhaps I could just start a conversation with someone and ask where to find Eric and the others. This wouldn't be easy -- I am not naturally gregarious -- but I have learned how to impersonate an extrovert well enough to get by in



American society. I looked around and found myself standing next to a small man with a gray mustache. He was alone and looked terribly bored. He'd probably be glad to have someone to talk with, I thought, and ventured a friendly "Hello".

He looked around sharply at me. Then he looked down at the convention badge pinned to my jacket. He stared at it. I looked down too, wondering what he was staring at. For the first time I noticed that there was a tiny space left for filling in your name. My eyes met those of the little man again and he gave me a pitying smile which seemed to say: The badge is right. You are nobody. Then he turned away.

I tried to tell myself that he was just a rude old fart, but actually I was shattered. I went out into the sunshine, sat down on a bench, took out a pen, and wrote TOM PERRY on the badge as clearly as the minuscule space allowed. Then I sat looking at it. It was a futile gesture: Not only was the name impossible to read for anyone of normal height and eyesight -- but could I really expect anyone to remember my name after all this time? It seemed unlikely. Perhaps I could practice saying very quickly: "I put out a fanzine about ten years ago -- perhaps you've heard of it -- its name was QUARK." For the first time I appreciated the fact that that other guy had used the title too. If they didn't remember my fanzine maybe they'd remember his and take me for him. At least it improved the odds a little.

I decided to give it another try before letting one rude clod get me depressed -- the downed pilot taking another plane up before he loses his nerve. I looked about for another subject. Young people I discarded out of hand -- there was no chance they would have read QUARK; besides, the girls might think I was making a pass, and in this modern age, the boys might, too. I spotted a middle-aged man on the sidewalk in front of a building called the Tower. He was fat and bald (not to say -ing), and was all by himself. He looked bored. As a matter of fact, he didn't look like a very promising conversationalist, but I was getting desperate for someone to talk to, and at least it didn't seem very likely he'd reject me -- or anyone. So I walked up to him.

Before I could speak, three other men of similar age converged on the fat one. They broke into animated conversation, ignoring me. Well, not quite ignoring me -- each of them kept glancing at me from the corner of his eye. I stood there waiting expectantly, thinking that they would turn and speak to me as soon as they had this apparently urgent business of theirs settled.

Suddenly the four men moved off, each in a different direction, as smoothly as close-formation fliers in an air parade. One second they were there, the next I was alone on the sidewalk in the square in front of the Tower. I blinked. Had there really been four men here just an instant ago?

From across the square someone snickered. He had apparently witnessed the whole thing. At least I had confirmation that it really had happened.

I walked slowly back to my room, ignoring everyone. I wasn't about to take another plane up only to get shot down again. I had to give this some thought. I lay down with an sf book I had bought in the huckster room and, after letting my emotions cool off a bit, turned my fine fannish mind to analyzing this problem.

It occurred to me that perhaps here in Manchester I was meeting British people for the first time, after living in their country for six months. Perhaps they really were more formal than I'd ever realized. My encounters up to that time had been either with tradespeople or with Britons working for an American company, many of whom had lived for a year or more in the U.S. Even then there had been hints of a different style of manners outside the company; one secretary had told me that she had had to address her boss on her previous job as Mister So-an-so, even after having worked closely with him over several years.

I had spent two weeks in Germany and had learned to shake hands solemnly with my co-workers each morning. I had spent two months in Paris and learned an even more elaborate ritual. If I could respect such foreign modes of behavior, then certainly I could also learn to get along with Britons on their own terms?

It was also possible that this was a fannish mode of behavior. I had read in various con reports of the problems of shedding neofans. My own feeling was that this total ignoring of another person was far more rude than just saying "Piss off, mate!" to someone who had actually turned out to be a pest -- but perhaps the second course of action was more difficult for many people. Ignoring everyone you don't already know is an impersonal act, and in a sense more passive, than rejecting someone after you've allowed contact to occur.

Perhaps it was a British custom, or perhaps a fannish one, or perhaps some of each -- but obviously you couldn't simply walk up to people and introduce yourself and expect a friendly reception. There had to be an introduction of some kind. Not necessarily a formal introduction -- my correspondence with Eric Bentcliffe, followed by phone calls, culminating in an invitation to visit, had apparently been an acceptable way of getting acquainted. Clearly I had been foolish not to make damned sure I arrived at Eric's in time -- then I could have driven him from Holmes Chapel to Manchester and been introduced to others by him. But I had been too casual about the whole thing, even to starting on a 300-mile trip with no maps; now I was paying for that casualness.

Obviously I needed to find Eric or the whole trip would turn out to be a waste. A glance at the program showed he was going to be chairing the official opening of the convention at 8:15 in the bar. I would just have to wait till then. Meantime I would stop trying to introduce myself -- it was accomplishing nothing except bruising my ego and alienating people.

Having reached this conclusion I felt much better. In terms of Transactional Analysis, I had interrupted an ancient dialog between my Parent and my Child: "Tommy, go out and play with your little friends."/"They're not my friends! They keep beating me up. I don't like them."/"Oh, don't be so sensitive. Go on out now, that's a good boy." Instead of continuing to play this fruitless Game, I had invoked my Adult and come up with a rational solution. I felt pretty good about it all.

So good in fact that I was ready to venture out of my room again. I would stop trying to make contact -- I would just sit and enjoy the programme. As it turned out I picked a good time. In the con hall Ramsey Campbell was speaking on horror films. At the start it sounded dreadfully like a sercon analysis, but fortunately it degenerated into a series of beautiful quips, such as: "In the film Sodom and Gomorrah we learn that God is English when he takes the hero into the desert and says, 'Now it's all up to you lot.'" And: "In The Fly, the fly has the man's head and can talk.

The man has the fly's head, and he can talk. Now, who got the fly's brain?
-- Probably the script writer."

It was during this speech that I looked around and saw Willis entering the auditorium.

At last I had recognized someone. It seemed ironic that I had just promised myself not to walk up and introduce myself to anyone. Well, I would stick to it. Certainly that was one contact that I wanted to make correctly. I turned my attention back to Campbell.

But not for long. Someone walked up the aisle and sat down noisily about four rows behind me. Chairs were scraped around. Once settled down, the newcomer began to interrupt the speaker with shouts of "Haw!" and "Rubbish!"

Campbell politely pretended not to notice, but I turned around to glare. And wound up staring. It was the man I'd recognized as Willis. I felt like a pilot who'd been shot down three times in quick succession.

He wore a look of smug arrogance. In one hand was a pint of ale and in the other a cigarette. His feet were propped up on the chair he'd dragged so noisily into place.

Obviously this was not the Willis I knew. Over the years, through his fan-writing and correspondence, I had gained a clear picture of a gentle, thoughtful, sensitive man, one who combined intellect and warmth, deft wit and compassion. This attitude permeated all his work in a most convincing manner.

I had grown used to discovering that fans I met face to face were different from the personalities that radiated from the pages of their letters and fanzines. Biographies of writers suggest that those who are skilled with words often use them to distort their own images -- indeed this seems to be one of the most common motives for writing; I know I've done it myself.

But this was worse than distortion. Obviously the Willis that I knew from his column and such works as "The Harp Stateside" was a complete fabrication, as calculated and phoney as the generous, friendly, folksy images that are created by ad agencies for ruthless greedy politicians.

Those who might be tempted to expose him were deterred by the devastating wit he could unleash when necessary. I could think offhand of a couple of fans who had attacked Willis. They had been ostracized by other fans, including me. But apparently there had been some basis for their attacks. Certainly the man heckling Ramsey Campbell could not write truthfully, "I have never been able to think of anything so important that I had to shout it." Willis had written those words in admonishing a loud and obnoxious American fan, years ago, and I had reminded myself of them many times when I felt the urge to raise my voice unnecessarily. Sometimes it had helped. I doubted that it would after this.

The Campbell talk ended and the room emptied. It was supper time but I didn't feel like eating. Back I went to my room in Tree Court. I was hot and tired and my emotions were once again getting the better of me.

There were two possibilities, I reflected. One was that Willis was a fake and always had been. The other was that he had changed over the years -- that his success in fandom had gone to his head and changed him into the hideous gibbering unspeakable thing I had seen in the con hall. Perhaps

he had even realized this -- even if only subconsciously -- and this change had caused his gaffiation in the mid-sixties. There is no way to discipline fans, no way to keep them from laughing raucously at what they consider funny; this is why no one has ever been able to impose a military dictatorship upon fandom.

Once you get a swelled head, it will tip you over and drag you down. Fandom is the one place where hat size is directly related to capsize.

Probably then Willis had once been something close to the Willis I thought I knew through his writing. Perhaps 20 years of fannish success, or his automobile accident, or the publication of his book, or the troubled situation in Northern Ireland, had changed him. Whatever it was, it had happened. The man I had come here to meet no longer existed.

By this time I was in a real funk. I can't remember having felt so bad since 1961 when my best friend put a shotgun in his mouth and blew his head open. If this seems like an extreme emotional reaction to a few minutes of noisy behavior, I guess it is -- but it happened. Looking back I can only surmise that the stresses of my recent life contributed to my reaction. For six months I had been living in a foreign country and traveling in several other foreign countries, with the attendant subtle emotional stresses that that entails, and for the past week or so I had been living in an isolated state -- work had taken me to Denmark the previous Monday and Tuesday, and when I returned Wednesday my family had driven off to explore England with my visiting inlaws, and I had spent Wednesday and Thursday nights in an empty house. The events of the last few hours hadn't helped, either.

But in a sense the malaise I felt was largely my own fault. All my life I had been too ready to venerate mortal men, only to reverse my feelings sharply when each one in turn revealed human flaws. Possibly this constant seeking for the perfect father figure had something to do with the fact that my father was flying missions over Germany when I was growing up. Or perhaps it was a characteristic of my generation, as indicated by the wide popularity of Superman and Batman comic books when we were young.

Whatever had given rise to it, though, I was now an adult -- and a father, too, come to think of it. Certainly I ought to realize as well as anyone the limitations of fathers and their surrogates. We were human beings, that's all.

Slowly, over the course of an hour or so, an attitude that I had held for a lifetime began to change, and as it did my depression began to lift. At the end of that time I realized what folly it was to castigate Willis for a few minutes of boorish behavior of which I might easily have been guilty myself. I pulled myself together and decided that from then on I would use ideals as a goal for my own behavior, rather than trying to measure others by them. And I would try to guard against this tendency of mine to enter into blind hero-worship. There are no heroes -- only people,

Sobered by all this reflection, I washed up and headed back to the bar, where Eric Bentcliffe would soon be opening the con. On arriving at the bar I discovered that the Official Opening had been moved upstairs to the con hall. I went on up and found a spot in the crowded room where I could lean against a wall.

Eric and Pete Presford were introducing famous fans and pros, who would then rise briefly while everyone went clap clap clap. Many of the names

I didn't recognize, but I clapped anyway. Suddenly I realized I was applauding the man I had recognized as Willis. I hadn't caught his name, but it definitely hadn't been Walt Willis.

I had now been nursing my misconception for over two hours, and I found it difficult to shed it all at once. If that man wasn't Willis, who was?

James White was introduced and stood up. Bob Shaw was introduced and proved to be down in the bar. Avoiding this situation was the reason the Official Opening had been planned for the bar in the first place. Unfortunately so many people had shown up to see Shaw actually present as his introduction that it had had to be moved, and he had not moved with it.

"And now," said Eric, "I'd like to introduce a man whom many of you will recognize when I say that his father was a printer and he merely reverted to type --"

I recognized the famous pun. It dates from the days of the printed fanzine SLANT, and had been made famous by Rog Phillips, who had repeated it in one review after another in his fanzine review column (yes, that's how long ago it was -- back when the prozines had fanzine review columns) until the pun's author had written another column about that repetition.

Everyone in the hall was applauding now, so that Eric had to raise his voice to finish: "... Let me introduce WALT WILLIS! Walt, where are you? Ah, there he is in the back of the hall." All eyes turned to focus on a man in a bright red cardigan sweater who was not ten feet from me, perched easily on a deep windowsill in the corner. The man stood up, waved and nodded to the crowd, then retired back to his nook. Eric went on to introduce others.

I stood there trying to think clearly. Here I was standing ten feet from Willis. I had decided earlier not to try introducing myself to people -- but certainly this was a different situation? I had corresponded with Willis, contributed to HYPHEN, sent him a bootleg copy of "Fanny Hill," written to the United States government about his missing luggage, published "The Harp That Once or Twice" in QUARK.

Furthermore, he had been to the U.S. twice and had liked it. He knew that the easy, open manners of Americans -- which undoubtedly struck many Britons as brash and pushy -- were just our own way of showing friendliness.

Could it possibly be wrong just to walk those ten feet and say hello? Wasn't it almost ridiculous not to?

The most compact and powerful computer known to man ingested all this raw data and massaged it thoroughly before producing, once again, the wrong answer. I pulled myself together and walked over to Walt.

"Excuse me, I wonder if I might introduce myself," I said carefully, being a little more formal than is usual with Americans. "My name is Tom Perry."

Willis blinked. He shook my hand and said absently, "Pleased to meet you. ... Oh, excuse me," he added, and moved over to where James White was sitting. White had just motioned him over, saying, "Here's a seat for you, Walt." Obviously the seat had been there all along and White was providing the getaway route in the unlikely event that someone would commit the incredible gaffe of forcing himself on Willis.

I sat down in the windowsill from which I had just chased Willis. It was easy to think, "Maybe he just didn't recognize my name," but that thought was inevitably followed by another: "Maybe he did." I started planning to leave the convention early the following morning -- obviously it was too late to drive back to Southampton that night. My gaze traveled back to the front of the auditorium, where Eric Bentcliffe was still introducing people just as if nothing had happened.

"And finally," I heard him say, "I'd like to introduce a fan I haven't met myself -- but whom I was supposed to meet this afternoon. Is Tom Perry in the room?" There were puzzled glances and shouts of "Who?" I moved forward out of the shadow and waved to catch Eric's attention, while trying to imitate the hearty grin of the American extrovert. "Ah, there you are, Tom. In the back of the room is a fan of many years standing --"

The fan of many years standing was suddenly invited to sit. I found myself seated next to Pete Weston and directly behind James White and Walt Willis. Willis scrunched himself around backwards to talk to me. "I thought you said your name was Derry. I was trying to figure out how some bloody Englishman could have the nerve to call himself Derry..." James White turned around to whisper, "Why do the English speak English with that horrible English accent?" -- always my favorite of his many deathless quips. Pete Weston was reciting from his bottomless memory all the street addresses in America to which he had sent me copies of SPECULATION over the years of my gafiation. He had pursued me relentlessly across the continent; at times I thought he must have hired a private detective agency. And I was sitting there trying to get my vocal cords back into operation.

After six hours at the Mancon, people were speaking to me.

A few minutes later I found myself seated in a corner of the bar, between Weston and Willis. As we settled into place I took a moment to study Walt's features. He has a rugged face with lines around the mouth and eyes that testify to his sense of humor -- he can express the equivalent of a belly-laugh by crinkling the corner of an eye. I didn't notice the multiple earlobes found in the ATOM cartoons, but I did notice another feature I'm surprised has never been caricatured: the eyebrows, which extend out beyond the sides of his head like a guardsman's mustache.

We three former faneds inevitably began to speak of how our fanzines had come to an end. SPECULATION had lived to a ripe old age, not petering out until well into its thirties, while HYPHEN's last issue was number 36. "Did you remember that you were a HYPHEN columnist, Tom?" said Walt with a twinkle in his eye. "'Perry and the Tirades' appeared from issue 36 onwards."

The discussion turned to Walt's long gafiation. Inevitably it has to do with the "troubles" in Northern Ireland. Willis is active in the Alliance Party, a group of Protestants and Catholics seeking peace in Northern Ireland. "I'm doing all the same things I did in fandom -- writing, publishing, making speeches, trying to persuade people -- and I just can't stop. In this kind of work you always have this feeling that if you can do just a little bit more, it might make a crucial difference. That's why I haven't had time for fandom recently."

"I've read your book on Ireland," I said.

"It's a little outdated now," said Willis.

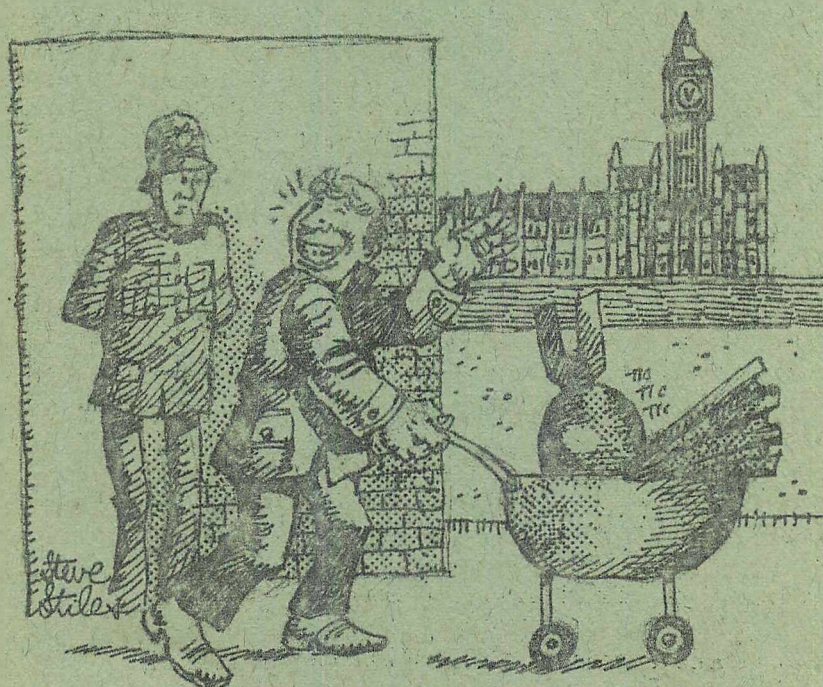
"Yes," I said, remembering the note of hope in the final chapter. "Do you still think Ireland will be reunited?"

He sucked thoughtfully on his pipe, as if he knew the answer but didn't like to say it. "No," he said at last. "No. Too much has happened. I think that eventually there will be a sort of repatriation, or an adjustment of borders."

Ireland's troubles interested me (one of my grandmothers was a Cassidy), and Walt seemed willing to talk about them, so we got deeper into the subject. It wasn't until Ethel Lindsay came up to talk to Walt that I noticed Pete was no longer taking part in the conversation. I turned to him.

"Tom, you just have no idea how sick we English are of Ireland. It's been going on for years and it just never stops. And what's it all about? It's a goddam religious war, for Christ's sake. You know what we English say? That thank god it's the Irish who are planting these bombs in our country -- otherwise they'd do twice as much damage. As it is the damn fools usually manage to blow themselves up or plant a dud. Did you read what happened a couple of weeks ago in Birmingham? Five Irishmen planted these bombs, see, and they caught them because they all took the same boat train, all gave false names to anyone who would listen, pretended to be traveling separately when they were quite obviously together, and so on. Hell, they probably had gunpowder under their fingernails! Anyone else would have laid low for a couple of weeks and got clean away."

He shifted in his chair, warming to his subject. "I tell you, Tom, a couple of years ago, England went through a bloody awful winter -- no oil because the Arabs were embargoing it, no coal because our coal miners were on strike, the whole country was on a three-day week, and even the weather was horrible. All this time I was taking the Times and the Telegraph, two papers that really give the full story, and I was spending upwards of two hours a day reading all this bloody awful stuff. And then



one day I just said screw it, and stopped buying them. What a great feeling! Saved myself a pound a week and had more to drink and more time to drink it in."

Pete gave a happy smile at the memory and took a long pull at his pint of bitter. But his mood changed again and he began to catalog Britain's woes. This is something every intelligent Englishman seems to do and in a sense it actually testifies to the country's basic health. What other country constantly undergoes so much self-criticism?

After finishing this gloomy recital he cheered up a bit. "But you know? -- England is just going through a stage that all the other countries will come to someday. The British Empire used to span the globe, Tom. We conquered the world. We were first."

"Now wait a minute," I said, "what about Greece and Rome?"

"Let me modify that," said Pete. "We were the first to conquer the world when it was round."

Pete also gave me my first inkling of the controversy over the consite by apologizing to me, on behalf of English fandom, over the discomfort of our surroundings. I murmured something about they didn't seem so bad to me, and he looked at me sharply, as if trying to decide whether this was a fannish put-on or was I possibly demented. Apparently he settled on the put-on, for he chuckled and continued explaining the situation that had put the Eastercon in such shabby quarters: "The same group wanted to put the con here last year, and a group of us got together a counterbid solely to keep them from doing it. But they wouldn't give up the idea, so this year here we are." It began to dawn on me that the other Easter conventions had been held in comfortable modern hotels, and that this one was an anomaly not only to myself but to the British fans here as well. Peter enlarged on his theme, branching out to the general lack of organization: "Take the TAFF panel this afternoon. The committee told all the participants it was going to be Sunday afternoon. Or take the lack of a fancy dress period --"

"They've got one scheduled now," I interrupted, pointing to the latest revision of the programme which had been posted on a blackboard near the door.

"Sure they do, now," he said. "But originally they didn't. I said to them, 'You didn't say you weren't going to have fancy dress,' and they said, 'Well, we dint say we were going to have one, did we?' And I replied, 'That's not the point -- you didn't say you weren't.' Hell, Tom, for 27 years these conventions have had a fancy dress period. A lot of people put a lot of time and work into costumes every year. No one told them not to this year. So the committee said, 'Uh, do you think maybe it would be better to have one?' I told them, 'You're going to be fucking well LYNCHED if you don't!' And so now they've got it scheduled."

Traces of the consite controversy could be found even in the Mancon 5 programme book. The Chairman's Address by Peter Presford hailed the campus convention as an experiment and somehow associated it with greater numbers of fans and pros coming to the Easter conventions. He contended that a hotel convention kept many fans from attending. "Staying at the Convention Hotel to some is a mere dent in their monthly salary, to others it is six-months of hard saving. And if they are like me it means staying outside the Hotel in a local B and B with their family. ... The University Campus

Convention allows everyone a far greater choice. It means basically that no one cannot afford to stay where the action is. For those that require that little extra comfort...fair 'nough, they can spend as much as they wish. They are not limited by the Convention Hotel. ... Do you know there are folks who stay outside the Hotel so they can spend an extra £15 to £20 on books." By "B and B" he means "bed and breakfast," a form of accommodation to be found throughout England in private homes; I imagine an American equivalent might be a boarding house, or renting a spare room from a hard-pressed family. In a B&B you would have a small, sparsely furnished room, no private bath, no telephone, and a long trip to the convention hall. It can't be entirely a coincidence that these were exactly the conditions that prevailed on the campus at Owens Park. The Manchester group had in effect turned the con into one enormous B&B.

One thing that hurt the con was the absence of telephones. Modern human beings can endure all sorts of privations without harm -- after all, a hard bed is still a bed, poor food is still food -- but severing links of communication truly diminishes human potential. We had all of us traveled to this town in northwest England simply to communicate with one another, and now one vital instrument of communication was missing -- the common, taken-for-granted-everywhere telephone. By Saturday afternoon fans were leaving messages for each other scribbled at the bottom of the blackboard by the entrance to the lounge below the con hall; above these messages could be found the latest version of the official programme.

You could also argue the statement that the campus convention meant "that no one cannot afford to stay where the action is." If you define "the action" simply as the official programme, okay. But for most of us our fannish friends and acquaintances count as part of the action, too -- not to mention the professional authors and editors. London's Ratfans stayed at a hotel nearby rather than in the convention dormitories, as they had announced they would months before. Some of the pros stayed there too.

The result of scattering congoers is that no one at all can stay "where the action is" -- because it isn't in any one place; it's been dispersed instead of being concentrated at one point. And that concentration was the whole point of the convention in the first place.

Weston introduced me to Peter Roberts, the Fan GoH, who wore long blond hair and an incredibly wrinkled orange outfit. Roberts is the quintessence of modern British fandom -- young (around 25), quip witted, a follower of such quixotic causes as Cornish nationalism, vegetarianism, science fiction, and fandom. He is also a linguist and has recently turned pro by translating science fiction stories from German and Polish.

His renowned rapier wit was in evidence when I asked him about OMPA -- was there a waiting list? "Yes," he responded, with a malicious gleam in his eye, "there's a waiting list to get out."

Roberts works for the British Museum. "Did you know the British Museum collects fanzines? In fact you have to send them two copies of every ish. I got a notice from them saying they were missing the following numbers: 3, 7, 13, etc. And down at the bottom it says PTO, and on the other side is a list of the fines for failure to comply: £25 first offense, and so on."

Of the two appreciations of Peter in the Mancon programme book, one focuses on the legend that he is immobile. This legend would have it that a popular sport among British fans is to gather together to watch him not

move. To quote Ian Williams quoting Rob Holdstock:

"At one point he rose to his feet and the room fell silent, all eyes turned upon him. He stared at the floor for a moment and put one foot in front of the other, held the stance for a few seconds, then quickly reversed the position of his feet. The room was tense with expectation, but he shook his head and sat down again. It was a most disconcerting moment."

I can now report definitely that Roberts does move. I was well along by that time, having consumed several pints of bitter after skipping supper and thus getting more use out of the alcohol than usual, but I clearly remember (sort of) Roberts leading a party of fans to a room, thus creating a room party. Whose room it was I never established, nor can I recall the 20-some inhabitants by name, but I know Roy Tackett was there. I know because my notes include the following conversation:

Tackett: "Say, Tom, you remember the furious battles between the duper fans and the mimeo cranks?"

Me: "Yes, but the duper fans lost. Their pages are all blank now. There's one for sale in the huckster room -- all blank pages."

Roberts: "Oh yes, that Olon F. Wiggins fanzine. Twenty pages of blank paper, stapled to gether. Cost you a quid to buy it."

Some time the next morning -- I managed to get up about 7 o'clock despite not going to bed until 4:30 and without the use of an alarm clock or a wake-up call (there was no phone, remember); these British sunrises are relentless -- sometime Saturday morning I asked Roberts to describe the game of Fannish Football that had been played between the London Rats and the Gannet Flyers on Friday afternoon, Bob Shaw refereeing (FLYERS SHIT ON RATS, 1-0). Roberts and Harry Bell, the team captains, were nursing their aching muscles in the bar as a result of this unaccustomed exercise.

The word football in Europe usually denotes soccer, but this game had apparently been a modification on rugby football. This is sort of like American football without pads. And hence, I suppose, with tears. I tossed off a remark to the effect that it must be a very mild game compared with the American version. For some reason this remark inspired Roberts to go into a delightful comic pastiche of the American game. "I think American football developed from the game as it's played at Eton, where the pitch is 220 yards long and ten wide," he said. "In America they put on these padded pants, and shoulder pads, and arm pads, and rib pads, and finger pads, and spiked shoes, and top it all off with a big helmet with a face guard, so that by now you really can't tell who's inside, if anybody is at all." He had donned these imaginary garments as he went along, and seemed to be hiding inside an American football uniform, though in fact he was still wearing the same wrinkled orange outfit (he had changed the shirt, you could tell by close inspection and asking him). "Then they sort of bounce about off each other, recoiling off the pads you know --" Hilarious bit of business, but if he wins TAFF next year he'll have to be deterred from performing it in an American bar. It could be fatal.

Later Saturday, Peter introduced me to Greg Pickersgill, who was sitting in the midst of a circle of Ratfans. He reminded me a little of a Hell's

Angel I used to know -- an impression that was confirmed that afternoon at a faneds panel when he spoke with bloodthirsty relish of "burying Harry Warner in the wahfs." But perhaps it was only his mood. "I don't like being in a waiting room," he snarled. A waiting room? I looked around. Sure thing -- the room, supposedly the lounge of a bar, was an exact copy of a thousand Greyhound and Trailways bus depots throughout America. Bad lighting, uncomfortable seats, rickety tables, cheap chairs, full ashtrays.

The Ratfans were holding a competition to see who could be the most bored. For some reason I couldn't get interested in this, so I went upstairs despite Peter Roberts' taunt: "Only fakefans attend the program, Tom."

In the con hall the Mastermind competition was under way. Pete Weston was posing as an expert on Heinlein. He rattled off the answers until confronted with the question: "What was the unpleasant profession of Jonathan Hoag?" Then he began an awful waffle. Something about the Sons of the Bird, the fourth dimension and I don't know what all. "It's really terribly complicated," finished Pete lamely. The moderator gave him a cold eye. "Hoag," he said, "was an art critic."

But surely the highlight of the competition was Bob Silverberg, who was enlisted as an expert on Bob Silverberg when the real contestant, Malcolm Edwards, failed to show up. He breezed through all the questions with an ease which would probably be impossible for anyone else, given that Silverberg's work falls into two periods with strikingly different characteristics (on the internal evidence, the change was probably influenced to some extent by LSD). An element of humor entered when he was challenged with identifying several goyische male names: "I refuse to answer on grounds it would tend to incriminate me," he said. They were, of course, Silverberg pen names.

But then came questions on General Knowledge -- in this case, other people's sf stories. Silverberg disclaimed any knowledge in this area but the questions came anyway. After turning aside several with statements like, "Am I supposed to answer these ridiculous questions?" one came along that was worded so that he could answer it. "Name the dog in 'A Boy and His Dog.'"

"Rover," said Silverberg quickly.

The moderator looked nonplussed, but after some urging from the audience marked it down as correct. "I can see I'll have to change the wording of the next question," he said. "Let's see. What did the dog call the boy?"

"What did the dog call the boy?" said Silverberg.

"Victor."

"Victor?"

"Correct," said the moderator, marking down another right answer.

Silverberg never approached this high again, and the Mastermind competition was won by Ian Williams, the expert on Farmer. A few minutes later, going down the staircase into the bar area, I saw Silverberg at the bottom. "I first met you in Harlan Ellison's apartment in New York in 1955," I told him. "My name's Tom Perry." I knew he wouldn't remember, but I didn't want him to think we hadn't been introduced.

He gave me a keen glance. "Ah, yes. You've changed a lot. Back then you had a crewcut." I stood there staring at him until he decided that I wasn't going to pick up my cue, and delivered the next line himself, though in a slightly disappointed tone: "I guess we've all changed a lot since then." I was still staring at him. Too right you've changed, I thought. True, my crewcut had grown out and I had a small beard -- but he looked ready to step on the stage as Jesus Christ Superstar.

"Christ you've got an incredible memory," I said reverently. "How come you couldn't answer any of the general knowledge questions?"

He looked around to make sure no fellow authors were present. "Hell, I haven't read any of those stories."

Then he stared into space and flexed his memory again. "I remember more about your visit now. You came through New York just before Jan Sadler -- or she came through just before you did, and said you were coming."

"That's right," I said quickly, and tried to change the subject. But he was not to be deterred.

"No, wait -- now I've got it. You came through and said you were Jan Sadler, from Mississippi. It was only later that we found out you were actually Tom Perry, and Jan Sadler was a girl."

"Oh gosh, you would remember that," I said, to the laughter of the little group of fans who had gathered around us, and murmured something about the fuggheadedness of youth. I had been 15 that year and like some other fans living in fannish wastelands I thought that hoaxes were the highest form of fanac. The fannish population of Nebraska tended to rise and fall with my moods. For quite a while I sustained an imaginary younger sister, and another of my hoaxes, Jim Caughran, actually took on a separate fannish existence; last I heard he was a member of FAPA. It took Dean Grennell to finally cure me of this tendency. I had submitted an article to GRUE which bristled with Laney-like sneers at all sorts of fans I considered fuggheads. Grennell sent it back with a tactful note saying that he didn't think GRUE's letter column could sustain the barrage of comment it would generate, and then added impishly: "There's one sort of fugghead you left out of your catalog, which I mention only for reasons of completeness. That's the fan who switches sex with every letter like some sort of hapless hermaphrodite. This trend seems to have been inspired by Lee Hoffman (who did the same thing unintentionally) and now every neofan, on hearing about her, declares that whatever he/she was before it's the other thing now and isn't this the most delicious joke ever? Answer: '(yawn) No.'"

Grennell was wrong in one particular: it wasn't LeeH who was the model for my hoaxes, but John Courtois and his imaginary sister Jean, and they lived in Appleton, Wisconsin, only 15 or 20 miles from Grennell's home in Fond du Lac. In retrospect it seems quite appropriate that it should be Dean's old pal Agberg who reminded me of this forgotten aspect of my early fanning. In a sense the convention seemed to be forcing me to knit together the threads of my fannish existence, which I had deliberately torn apart at intervals -- a clear case of sewing what you rip.

That afternoon I heard Silverberg read aloud from Dying Inside, after which I immediately went to the huckster room and bought a copy of the book. Despite Silverberg's rather flat intonation -- or maybe because of it -- the power of his writing came through dramatically. It seemed

a sorry commentary on the sf publishing world that the book was originally issued with a bug-eyed monster on the cover, thus virtually assuring that no one who would read it would like it, and no one who would have liked it would read it. Silverberg has managed to get it reissued with a cover that bore some relationship to the contents.

I ran into Willis on the way to dinner and we walked into the dining room together, only to be motioned to two vacant chairs by Dave Kyle. After sitting down Willis turned to me and said quietly: "In fandom today you never know what era your audience is familiar with. For instance, if I had said, 'Dave Kyle says we can sit here,' I wonder how many people would have noticed." I had to scan my memory banks for a full minute before this allusion to the Chicon in 1952 registered with me.

On the other side of Dave Kyle was one of the four men who had refused to speak to me in front of the Tower Friday. We were introduced over the length of the table; he turned out to be Keith Freeman. I remembered the name from a BSFA flyer distributed at the con that had urged me to seek him out and give him money for a membership; I wondered idly how this membership drive could succeed if he wouldn't speak to people he didn't already know. If we had been within speaking distance I might have needled him a little, but since we were at opposite ends of the table needling was impossible -- it would have had to be a shouting match, or nothing. I settled on interpreting his faint look of embarrassment on being introduced to me as an apology of sorts. In all likelihood it was really a symptom of indigestion.

For me Mancon came to an end Saturday night. I had an absolute unbreakable commitment to return Sunday to see my inlaws, who had then been in England a full week without my having laid eyes on them. It was unfortunate that they had chosen the two weeks over Easter for their visit, but they came by a cheap chartered flight booked months in advance, so it would probably have been easier to get the Pope to change the date of Easter than to alter their plans.

I finally got to spend a little time -- not enough -- Saturday evening with Eric Bentcliffe and his wife Beryl. Together we attended Dr. Shaw's learned discourse on the newest developments in rocket propellants. I ducked out of the room parties early that night, exhausted from having got so little sleep the previous night, or morning, or whatever the period between falling asleep and waking at cons is called. (There seems to be material for a fresh fannish neologism here.)

Early Sunday, while everyone else slept, I left the key to my room where Eric could find it (he would use the room to sleep over Sunday night at the con), packed and left. As I departed from Tree Court for the last time, I noticed that its buildings were distinguished by the hexadecimal digits A, B, C, D, E, and F. These are the equivalents of the decimal numbers 10 through 15 and are used in computer programming because base 16 numbers concisely express base 2 numbers. In this sense then the court was a binary tree, a thought that gave me a smile as I carried my luggage to the parking lot. It seemed only fitting that this con, which had put me through so many changes invisible to others, would end with a private joke.

+ Tom Perry +

PETER ROBERTS FOR TAFF

Before too long the 1977 Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund contest will take place, determining which European fan will be brought over to the United States to attend Suncon. Most of you are well aware of the benefits of TAFF and what a grand idea it is. The alternating exchange of fans between North America and Europe enables fans to meet one another in person, something which would not be possible without the financial aid of such a fund. TAFF draws these fandoms closer together and makes each more aware of the other. It is not yet known who all the candidates for TAFF 1977 will be, but Peter Roberts will definitely be one of them.

In all honesty, I can think of no other fan I am more eager to meet than Peter Roberts. In the contact we have had through fanzines and letters, he has impressed me with his quick wit and his writing ability. He seems to be such a great person on paper that he would be a lot of fun to meet in person. Most of you will need no introduction to Peter Roberts for he is one of the best known British fans. If you pick up any fanzine, you are very likely to find a loc from him in the lettercolumn, be the fanzine British, American, Canadian or Australian. He is an active loc writer because he is aware of how important response is to fan editors. He gets that awareness in part due to the fact that he is a faned himself, having done fanzines with such bizarre titles as: MOR-FACH, BYBYN-BUBYN, KRUMHORN, CRONOGAS, TIKKY-DEW, SCRIBENDI CACOETHES, EXPRESS TOAD, 30% BRAN, and who knows what else. He founded the British newszine CHECKPOINT, which, under the present editorship of Ian Maule, continues to supply fannish news to its readership. The fanzine Peter Roberts is most well known for is EGG, which he began back in 1970 and is still going strong if not frequently. It was by doing EGG that Peter became the patron saint of Aarvark Fandom. I think EGG is the best British fanzine being done today. It has talented contributors, one of the best-edited lettercolumns in any fanzine, and most of all it has Peter Roberts and the sections he writes are the highlight of any issue. Any topic is fair game for Peter and the subject matter has ranged from aardvarks to Claude Degler to a piece titled "Great Science Fiction About Pigs".

He by no means limits his writing to his own fanzine. Since Peter is a vegetarian he wrote a piece for GRANFALLOON on how to cook various edible fungi; a piece filled with real information, sure humor, and stomach-shuddering recipes. In one installment of "The Comfy Chair", a regular column he does for THE SPANISH INQUISITION, he told the readers how many times cucumbers are mentioned in the Bible (2) and also gave out facts about the Biblical outlook on carpet beating and ossifrages.

In addition to his wild sense of humor, Peter Roberts has a more serious side as evidenced by the fact that he has done THE LITTLE GEM GUIDE TO SF FANZINES to inform new fans of what fanzines are being published and what kind of material they contain. It also gives them some information on how to produce their own fanzines.

British fandom honored Peter Roberts by making him Fan Guest of Honor at the 1976 Eastercon, an honor well deserved. He also deserves to win the 1977 TAFF race and we deserve the opportunity to meet him. When the time comes -- and I will include ballots when things are finalized -- do yourself a favour and vote for PETER ROBERTS.

MY COUNTRY

BY JOHN BERRY

ILLUSTRATED BY *dan STEFFAN*

Every boy, nay, every man has dreamed that he would like to play football for his country. Most especially when some of the inept performances on television have shown that the selectors favour the 'old boy' network for picking players, who, in notable cases, have been relegated to their own club's second team. It has been rumoured that one or two England players were on the verge of getting their pensions and were still getting international caps. It is in these circumstances that even a middle-aged man like myself feels that he should have got his chance. I definitely feel that I could have done better than some England players I've seen, and certainly no worse...and I'm referring to the present day, not when I was a strapping young man whizzing down the wing with my bootlaces ablaze, sometimes even with the ball.



I've written in depth about these thoughts that every Englishman gets at some time or another, because my comments must be taken in the proper context so that you'll feel the tremendous thrill that I got when I was asked to represent my country at football.

Miguel, the crippled Spanish waiter, broke the news to me.

"Senor Berry," he shouted, rapping the door with his crutch. It was two o'clock in the afternoon in the month of August 1973. My wife and I were having a siesta in our hotel in Ibiza.

"Just one second, Miguel," I said, looking feverishly for my trousers. I found them, zipped up too quickly. Wiping the tears from my eyes, I opened the door. Miguel looked very excited.

"Three o'clock this afternoon, Senor," he said. "You are centre forward. Many people watching. See you at the bull ring."

"You'll have to come and watch me play, dearheart," I said to my wife. "This is my wildest dream come true, playing centre forward for England."

"At your age you'll get a heart attack," she said. "It's going to be very embarrassing if you have to return to Belfast in a wheelchair."

I shrugged at her pessimism. It wasn't as though I was in a dream world about my football prowess. How about the time I had that big write-up in the Little Snittering Reporter after I'd scored nine goals in one match? 'Magnificent - highly talented - superb physique - wonderful ball control.' These were some of the adjectives they didn't use, but they would have done if the editor hadn't rejected my account of the match in favour of the one written by the geriatric's captain.

We went down to the reception, where the two teams were gathered, and we strolled down to the bull ring. The sun of course was blazing down without mercy, and we played in bathing costumes...the team captains gave out armbands: white for the England team, red for the Rest of the World. I went over for my white one, but they'd all been used up. I went over to Carruthers, the English captain.

"I'm definitely playing, old chap," I insisted. "I put my name on the list last night."

He looked at me with a sneer.

"You come from Ireland, don't you?" He turned away and looked distastefully over his shoulder as he walked away. "You're playing for the Rest of the World."

God. What a disappointment. An Englishman of my calibre playing against my fellow countrymen, just because at that time I was living in Belfast.

"Herr Berry," I heard a deep voice shout out. I turned round and saw the big blond German waving to me with a red band in his hand. I staggered across to him, looking in bewilderment at the Rest's team. A few of them I knew were really good footballers -- the goal-keeper was alleged to have had a trial with Real Madrid. And the German always monopolized the hotel football games because he was a big man and we used his ball. We walked to the centre of the bull ring to start the match. I waved to my wife in the crowd, but she looked behind her as if I was waving to someone else. I admired the sporting spirit shown by the organisers in playing Miguel, the crippled waiter, on the right wing.

The whistle blew, the English team kicked off, but I said to myself as I ran forward, "England will win this match."

For twenty minutes the ball swung from end to end. The England team could not get the ball past Wolfgang, the big German. Every time the ball was centred, his huge body burst forward, and he sent accurate passes to the inside forwards, both Frenchmen, both very fast. Their cross-balls to me were so superbly accurate that at times I was so thrilled with their skill that I had to use strict discipline to stop myself from accepting the half-dozen chances they gave me to score. But after half an hour I really did have an open goal present to me, and my ball control was superb. The German crossed the ball to the inside left, a fast mover with a mous-

tache, Clement. He ran forward into the penalty area, drew the goalkeeper, who floundered in the sand. Clement then passed the ball in front of me as I shambled forward. I was a few yards out with an open goal, and I knew that Wolfgang was getting very annoyed at me missing so many clear chances. So I minced forward like a ballet dancer, and as the ball crossed diagonally before me, I hit it sweetly with the outside of my right foot. It shot towards the open goal, and as the spin took over, it veered away from the goal and headed for the corner flag. My heart blossomed within me as I noted how superbly I had talked to that ball, and how it had behaved as if I had mental control over it in flight. I was congratulating myself on a magnificent miss, when I saw Miguel hobbling down the right wing. I watched, fascinated but immobile with shock as he desperately threw himself forward, swung his crutch like a hockey stick. I shall never forget the noise of the pad of the crutch hitting the ball. And what alarmed me even more was the size of the ball....how it seemed to swell like a super-nova as it flashed towards me. The pain in my head throbbed unceasingly for three days, and I shall never forget the way the keeper threw himself away from the missile as it blasted into the back of his net.

"Wunderbar, Johann," shouted Wolfgang, giving me a kiss with rather more intimacy than I thought the situation warranted. One of the Frenchmen excitedly patted me on the backside all the way back to the centre of the pitch. An Italian, who could speak excellent English, said it was the finest header he'd ever seen. The whole team gathered round me, offering congratulations, and there were tears in Miguel's eyes as I ran across and helped him repair his crutch.

Just before half-time, I made a half-hearted attempt to tackle Carruthers.

"Sorry, honest I am," I pleaded. "I couldn't help it."

"Show-off," he hissed. And then the whistle blew for half-time.

During the half-time session, Wolfgang gave a tactical talk about how the Rest of the World would beat 'der Englanders'...and he intimated with a huge knotted fist what he



would do to his team if they didn't give of their best in the second half. I tried to whisper to Carruthers that Wolfgang would kill me if I did anything else to assist the English team, and yet I felt a flush of nationalistic pride flow over me as I heard Carruthers tell his team, "When I said break their legs, don't do it to him (pointing at me)...he's English."

My second goal for the Rest of the World will haunt me forever. Once more Clement sent me a superb pass...I was in front of the English goal, the English defenders were all at the other end of the arena, pressing for the equaliser. I kicked the ball forward, and whispered to the English goalie, "Come forward and I'll lob it to you." A gleam of triumph came into his eyes, because he knew that I wanted England to win, and he knew he could trust me implicitly. He stalked out of goal, giving the clever impression that he was intimidating me. When he was six feet away, I duly scooped up the ball and lobbed it directly to him, throwing myself sideways, so as to give Wolfgang the impression that I had mis-kicked. I was horrified with what I saw. As the ball slowly floated to him, so did a mass of sand I'd kicked up at the same time...and the sand travelled faster. I shall always recall those wild hands threshing hopelessly in front of sand-filled eyes, and the oh-so-slow way the ball drifted over his head, and rolled agonisingly slowly for the line. Just as half a dozen desperate English footballers got to the goal line, it dribbled over.

Of course, with the English goalkeeper rushed to the nearest hospital, and Carruthers, in a homicidal mood, chasing me round the bull ring, the Rest of the World knocked in three more.

Although I'm English myself, I've got to admit that some Englishmen are very bad losers...

+ John Berry +

(continued from page 39)

TWLL·DDU (Dave Langford, 22 Northumberland Ave., Reading, Berks. RG2 7PW) is the personalzine from a new fan who is quite a word slinger. Dave does the fanzine in a series of brief paragraphs which are somewhat connected as to theme but is not your standard fanzine writing style, but it works because Dave knows how to do it. This writing style and Dave's optimistic nature make a very pleasing blend. Just Dave and the lettercolumn but it is very good for a new fanzine. Dave doesn't say what to do to get a copy, so try something.

I am sorry this list has been so sketchy, but I have run out of both time and pages for this issue. As it is, I have listed some of the British fanzines I enjoy most and ones which I think you too will enjoy. If you are not getting these fanzines, you are missing a world of reading pleasure and a plethora of laughter provoking items. These fanzines and their contributors make British fandom the intriguing place it is. Join in on the fun if you can.

+Terry Hughes +

SON OF BARF

DAVID PIPER

Y'know when you're having a row with somebody and it's a real slam-bang, up'n'downer and you're laying it down something chronic(?). Y'know? And you get to the gesticulating stage. Forefinger poking away at your opponents chest. Poke. Poke. Poke. 'and furthermore...blahblahblah!' and like that. Poke. Poke. Poke. Well, it's fine when you are able to look him in the eye, on the same level like, and it's even better when you



tower over him and can actually look down on him whilst poking. Very impressive, that. But...when you have to reach up to poke him in the chest ...well, somehow, it tends to ruin the whole bit, like.

On the other hand, y'know when you're at a party and it's at the stage where all the fepersons have discarded their surgical, built-up shoes and everybody's getting real friendly, like, and you're getting all snuggly and friendly with the best looking bit of crumpet in the room(?). Y'know? And you're whispering sweet nothings in her ear to the effect that you have a deep 'desire to have a look at the fish-pond at the bottom of the garden, and how about you?' and she puts her shoes on....and....well, sidling out into the garden with your arm draped, seductively, around her bum might graphically illustrate your reason for suggesting the stroll in the first place but the fact that you have to reach up to lean your head on her shoulder does tend to, somehow, ruin the whole bit, like.

And, on the other hand (What's that? Well, I thought it was common knowledge that all Slans had three hands.) y'know when you're at a football match and you've made the mistake of getting in with the opposing team's supporters and there's only three of you and hundreds of them(?). Y'know? And...suddenly you feel a warm, wet sensation running down the back of your jeans. And you turn around, and all of them are fighting-mean over the fact that their team is playing lousy and fighting-drunk over the fact that they've been boozing since the time they set off from West Bromich and one of them, an extremely large and brutish and mean-looking and hairy Neanderthal of about 6 1/2 feet high, is just zipping up his fly with a satisfied expression on his swinish face and you realise that he's just pissed down your back and you look up at him and....and....weakly grin, and turn around, and seeth inwardly...and...and....

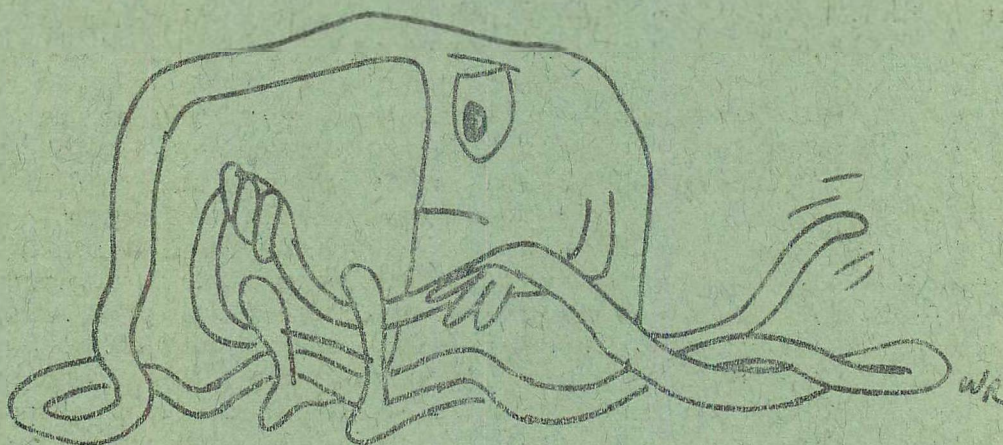
Gee, I hate being 67 3/4 inches low!

+ David Piper +

Once again, I would like to thank all of you for writing letters to me. Because of space limitations, I cannot use every letter I get -- the letter column is huge even with my harsh editing -- but your comments are passed on to the contributors so that they can get your feedback. MOTA is generating a nice reader response which gives me the urge to publish as frequently as I do and I hope you continue to find the time to write ... and to send contributions.

This issue I was not able to use the letters from: Dave Cockfield, Sam Long, Jeff Schalles, Andy Porter, Harry Warner, Jr., Jay Kinney, Alan Sandercock, M. K. Digre, Dave Piper, Jodie Offutt, Eli Cohen, Mike Gorra, John Purcell, Alan Bostick, Eric Mayer, John Carl, Rich Coad, John Hall, Pete Presford, Jim Linwood, Cathy McGuire, and Karen Pearlston (who's name is spelled correctly this time out). There may well be others whose letters I've temporarily overlooked or have not as yet received.

Thanks to one and all.



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

Goddamn, but this is getting ridiculous! Every issue of MOTA has an article I have to list in my otherwise cobweb covered notebook of Best of the Year notations. Yup, just added it on and there's nothing between it and LeeH's piece in 16; you're cornering the market on Great Stuff, Terry,

and I hope you feel terribly guilty every time you get a crudzine in the mail that doesn't have a brilliant article in it because you've got all the brilliant articles locked away in a matzoh box in Arlington guarded by a Dan Steffan driven to manic ferocity by constant exposure to every Phil Foglio cartoon published anywhere in fandom. I hope your nose turns grey and your hair starts to run for this uncharitable act.

As it happens, I'm planning a longish article for the next XENIUM all about the days around the time when I became thirty, just a month ago, and while it won't be as brilliantly written as Grant's or as well illustrated, I'm pretty sure it won't be as interesting either. Hmmmm. Anyway, what I was getting at was that you could expiate this Deadly Sin of Avarice by sending me one Brilliant Article from your files, upon receipt of which I shall start sending locs to all the fanzines being published telling them what a great guy the real Terry Hughes is, how generous and fannish he is, and how the last few issues of MOTA were forced out of him by David Hulvey, a dope-crazed hippy Jesus-freak with the vocabulary of a hippy-Jesus freak-crazed dope. Then all will be well again. For both of us.

Grant once again proves that he can use a pen with the best of them, whether it be writing iwth the sharp end or drawing cartoons with the blunt bit. I've never seen a Canfield article that wasn't extremely well-written, funny, entertaining and interesting. And considering the number of times he's written about getting/drawing/selling cartoons and gags, that's quite a testament to his writing ability. For this I present him with this genuine sheepskin: my last woolen testament, of course.

MOTA probably can fool all of Cleveland, Ohio fandom with a borrowed morsel of humorous intent from MP (Monty Python). After all, name two fans from Cleveland, Ohio. Go on. I'll wait If you've been silent for more than three days, you've proven my point. And if you said Ro and Lin Lutz-Nagey, you proved my point!

(This issue's back cover is an unsold Canfield & Hughes cartoon. In fact it is the 500th cartoon Grant referred to in "Point 30".)

DICKY HOWETT
118, Sunrise Ave.
Chelmsford,
Essex CM1 4JR
United Kingdom

So Grant Canfield is thirty and has drawn 501 cartoons? Ah, these youngsters. Hardly moist behind the inkwell. Or inked behind the moistwell. Thirty-one year olds like myself with 8000 cartoons drawn and 4000 sales in eight years can afford to be patronizing, so watch it, Canfield. Actually, Grant's article was amusing and illuminating. A beacon to all cartoon metaphors. And I too have had trouble with Penthouse U.S. They are a bunch of vaginas, all 909 Third Avenue New York of them. Indeed, the Cartoonists Guild has stated that since the days that Guccione (owner) was in London, he has treated cartoonists with disdain and frequently ripped them off. Well, he's not ripping mine off, and in any case I can't afford the postage. That magazine may have held three of my best jokes for a year, but balls to you you stinking Wop. I'll just re-draw them and sell them elsewhere (which I did). I'm a subtle cartoonist really.

PAUL SKELTON
25 Bowland Close
Offerton, Stockport
Cheshire SK5 7EY
United Kingdom

Both features were exceptionally good this time. That's the thing about getting articles from fan-artists. They can illustrate them themselves and marry the text and illos perfectly. Dan's was good but Grant's was terrific. It also speaks wonders for Grant's fannish spirit to know that he can get over 100 dollars for a little black and white cartoon

and yet the vast amount of stuff he sends out to faneds, for the sheer fun of doing them, just kinda *choke* gets ya right *choke* right there, doesn't it. Grant is definitely fandom's biggest art asset and if he is ever driven away by the pressures of making a buck it will be a different microcosm without him.

(Now for some comments on MOTA #18, starting off with the previously unknown Abner "dubious" Doubleday.)

ABNER DOUBLEDAY
34 Greenbriar Dr.
Jacksonville, IL 62650

During the war years 1941-44, I was the passenger ticket agent at Harrisburg, Penna. I was overworked because someone down the line refused to sell tickets to North Cupcake, Nevada, and instead sent several dozen customers to me.

As a result of the overwork I was forced to retire early with bursitis in both arms.

Thanks to your publication I have just learned who was the cause of my problems. Revenge will be sweet.

JOHN D. BERRY
1000 15th Ave. East
Seattle, WA 98112

Reed Waller's illustrations for Harry Warner's article are brilliant, one of the reasons I've been increasingly thinking of Waller as one of the very best new cartoonists in Fandom. And I wonder, after reading Harry's railroad reminiscences, if Harry isn't about to launch a new and hitherto unsuspected -- but brilliant -- career as a fannish humorist? Not only is the article well written, which I expect of Harry at all times, but it is also quietly witty in a way that elicited snorts of laughter from me every few lines. Harry Warner, Best Humorist of the Seventies? What is the world coming to?

("--Philadelphia North Station, everybody out!")

BOYD RAE BURN A fascinating vignette from the Early Life of
189 Maxome Ave. Harry Warner, with illos in beautifully fitting
Willowdale, Ontario turn of the century style.
Canada M2M 3L1

Leroy Kettle's comment "drink is for drinking, not boasting about." touches on something I have been thinking about lately, as a result of reading this and that here and there. Why, I wonder, do some people talk about how much they drank on an occasion or habitually drink, or how smashed they got, or how bad their hangovers were? Do some consider this a macho thing, or do others do it as a subconscious defense of their incipient or actual alcoholism? In some "comedy" novels, heavy drinking by the protagonists is presented as a ha ha funny thing. How often have you read a food addict talking about how much he has been eating and how fat he's getting, or a tobacco addict writing something like, "Boy, I smoked three whole packs yesterday. Coughed my head off all this morning. Bet my lungs are a real mess. Yuk Yuk."?

(One cause may be that there are some genuinely funny drinking stories. The sort of story which details an absurd situation and/or comical experiences resulting from an individual getting drunk and thereby losing some inhibitions and some ability to think correctly. These things are funny because the results of this drinking are out of the ordinary, the sort of thing which cannot really be predicted. The drinking is important in that it provides a reason why the individual found himself in the situation and why his actions are the way they are. Some people fail to see that the humor in such stories are not the drinking but the results of the drinking. This is why, perhaps, when one person tells a humorous drinking story, the other person will respond with something like, "Let me tell you about Saturday. I drank three six-packs of beer in one evening. Boy, was I ever sick the next day." Many times the mention of someone drinking such and such amount of alcohol makes the listener smile because he is anticipating a humorous story to follow this introduction. All too often one doesn't because the point of the story is simply the amount consumed. The same is quite true about other drugs as well.)

TOM PERRY
25, Locks Rd.
Locks Heath
Hants. SO3 6NS
England

MOTA 18 arrived while I was in Denmark and I hurried back from Copenhagen today to read it and incidentally jump on my old lady. København is full of beautiful young blonde ladies selling their favors, and bikini tops are doffed at the beaches as a matter of course, and I could hardly wait to get back to read MOTA.

Warner's remembrance of things past are right up to his standard but Reed Waller's drawings are just beautiful, fantastic, gorgeous....especially the one at the bottom of page 7; that's got the wild heady fantastic flavor of something by Tenniel -- a classic bit of art that can stand by itself, timeless and perfect.

(Another satisfied reader.)

ROBERT BLOCH
2111 Sunset Crest Dr.
Los Angeles, CA 90046

Thanks for the all-color upside-down Moebius-strip issue of MOTA with its mind-bending disclosures and confessions by BNFs.

Mind-bending, of course, results in twisted minds, and that naturally brings me to the letter by Chuck Harris. In particular, I note his statement, "LeeH, Ellie Bloch, and Shirley MacLaine are the

three Stateside women I'd like to spend the night with -- simultaneously -- talking our way down a couple of bottles of cheap white plonk."

It so happens that I can comment on this observation with some authority -- two-thirds authority, that is. For I have spent the night, or even several nights, with all of the women he's mentioned except Shirley Maclaine, who chickened out at the last moment when she discovered I knew Bob Tucker.

In the case of LeeH I did spend the night simultaneously with others -- though not with Elly (the spelling she prefers) and she is indeed some talker. In the case of Elly, no third or fourth party has been involved. If, however, the opportunity ever presents itself to the hospitable Mr. Harris, let me offer a word of advice. No cheap white plonk, please. Elly prefers the red. Cheap white plonk, she says, is disgusting.

Hoping you are the same.

CHUCH HARRIS
32 Lake Crescent
Daventry
Northants NN11 5EB
England

"What's all this about you planning a night of bliss with Lee Hoffman, Shirley Maclaine and Bob Bloch's old lady?" said Sue. "You've been at the vitamin E again, dear; another go at the old unremarkable pleasure, infinitesimally prolonged. I just don't know how you manage to keep it up, you wishful thinker, you."

"Hughes wasn't supposed to print that bit," I said, "and anyway, what I had in mind was a sort of cultural thing -- a meeting of cosmic minds -- fascinating, stimulating intellectual conversation."

"As long as it's only the conversation that gets stimulated," she said. "You could stimulate them with your fascinating intellectual riddle: What's the difference between a buffalo and a bison? Answer: You can't wash your hands in a buffalo. Mighod, you'll be a riot at the '79 Con."

"Well, I was going to talk to you about that," I said. "It might be fun to go to a Con again and see all the old fannish faces....."

"Like Shirley Maclaine, Lee Hoffman and Elly Bloch, hmmmmmm?"

"You're not going to be silly about this, are you, dear? At Rainham people used to come and stay with us at Con times. Little fannish get-togethers, -- and with people coming all the way from America I thought....."

"No."

"I don't just mean birds. Everytime I mention houseguests you think I mean just girls who go bang in the night."

"Yes."

"Well, how about Walter and James? Or Harry Warner, Jr.? You like him. How about Bloch? We could take them all out a bit after the Con. There's Warwick Castle and Stratford on Avon just down the road. Some of them have probably heard of Shakespeare since Olivier did that film on the telly."

"No," she said, "I have already thought of all this and all them and made my own arrangements. Pong."

"Pardon?"

"Hoy Ping Pong. Homer J. Eofan. Ol' Arthur Wilson Tucker hisself."

"TUCKER???" I said.

"Shure," she said. "You go for your cultural visit to Stratford on Avon and I'll have my fannish get-together right here."

"Love," I said, "he's geriatric."

"Love," she said, "he's Geronimo -- and after his hands stop shaking I bet he names more than a spaceship after me in his next damn book."

(You might let Sue contact Abner Doubleday if those other three are busy.)

IAN MAULE
8 Hillcroft Crescent
Ealing
London W5 2SG
United Kingdom

coff coff.....I didn't respond to the last issue did I, nor in fact did any of those fans loosely labelled 'rats'. For my own part I can only offer the excuse that the sight of the Glicksohn center-spread in the last Molluscs Monthly so turned me off that I just couldn't associate myself with a fanzine that actually prints his

name. I mean, the sight of a whinkle wearing an Australian bush hat just isn't the thing to look at first thing in the morning after a night on the town. The excuses for the other 'rats' are similarly silly. Piggott, in his climb through the ranks of the Civil Service is standing almost at the peak and should be Prime Minister any day now. He's confided in me that the first acts he'll pass will be to change the National Anthem to Oklahoma and to make the Vole-Shrew test illegal.

The excuse for Brosnan is more pitiful. As you may know, John willed his body to medical research but failed to sign the clause specifying 'after death'. At this very moment I know that his kidneys are being used to preserve onions in the canteen at the local hospital and his brain is in the Natural History Museum as the only example found to date of a brain with a minus number of brain cells. John, by the way, is still around and due to complete another book soon.

Roberts is busy cleaning and changing the layout of his room. Last week he bought a fridge but after realising that it's four cubic feet capacity was too large for his room decided to dispense with his bed and all the other items required for comfortable existence. Last week I visited Peter and spent a very pleasant time perching on the ice box reading fanzines and watching Peter sitting on the floor of the fridge, with his typewriter nestled on his knees, typing out the next issue of Egg. Unfortunately due to the cold I think the incubation period will be somewhat extended.

GREG SHAW
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Burbank, CA 91510

I sometimes wish I'd been able to keep Metanoia going, because my life has gotten very lively and interesting the last few years, and there are plenty of incidents I've felt the urge to write up. As you know, Terry, in addition to the other stuff I'm

doing, I've recently become manager of the Flamin' Groovies, a rock & roll group who are very popular in Europe, and just beginning to conquer America. This has given me the opportunity to visit Europe several times in recent months, to my great delight.

Last month, while in London for a concert we were doing there, I was sitting in the dining room of the Portobello Hotel. The Portobello is an old, rather small hotel (only a dozen or so rooms) which prides itself on service and a sort of refined, Old World ambience. The dining room has only 3 tables, and is very cozy. I had dropped in on Flo & Eddie (formerly the Turtles), friends of mine from LA who happened to be in London doing some production. They had split and I was having a quick omelette before splitting to the airport to catch a plane back to New York. At the table with me was a rather famous groupie, also a friend of Flo & Eddie's, who had latched onto a copy of Rolling Stone and was reading aloud to me every word of an enormously lengthy story on the Beatles -- mispronouncing every third or fourth one. At the table next to me was a rather dour looking fellow, mid-30s, with unbuttoned shirt and bare feet, accompanied by a girl who looked like a French fashion model. He sat there, expressionless, for about 15 minutes before I realized it was Leonard Cohen. As I was eating, 3 or 4 people walked in and sat down at the table behind me.

I went on with my meal, trying to tune out the groupie's stumbling recitation, wondering if Cohen always tried so hard to look sensitive, and half-overhearing the conversation of the new people, who seemed to be a quick-speaking man and a couple of girls. He was asking the waiter if they had haggis, a Scottish dish consisting of blood and certain unsavory organs cooked in a sheep's stomach. I had never heard anyone order haggis before.

Then I realized that the voice was very familiar. I turned around and saw I was right: it was Harlan Ellison. I noticed some books, new editions of Dangerous Visions, on an empty chair of theirs behind me. When the waiter left, I asked if I could have a look at them. "Certainly," said Harlan, with an aside to one of the girls, "Maybe I'll get another fan out of this."

"Oh, I've already read most of your stuff," I remarked, and mentioned how much I had liked one of his "Star Trek" scripts. We got to talking, and it seemed he was on his honeymoon, having just wed one of the two girls at the table; a voluptuous, but rather straight-looking brunette. He asked about me, and I mentioned that I was a record producer, pop journalist, and manager of a group that had just done a large concert in London. We talked rock & roll for awhile.

Then, as he was getting up to leave, saying nice to have met you etc., I said casually, "By the way, I don't think we ever met in those days, but I was in fandom for almost ten years. We have a few mutual friends -- Rotsler, Ted White, Terry Carr, etc. I let my FAPA membership slide a couple years ago, after most of the good people had left, and I've been sort of out of touch since."

I probably should have said something before, but I wanted to give him a little shock. He looked suitably astonished, laughed and said something about fandom taking over everywhere, and walked out muttering and shaking his head. I was equally bemused, to tell the truth. What were the odds against the two of us meeting, in such a small, out of the way place, on totally unrelated business? Anyway, he was very nice, and I was glad to have met him under such conditions, when he wasn't playing science fiction punk for a crowd of neofans.

Leonard Cohen, meanwhile, hadn't moved or changed expression. The waiter brought fresh-brewed espresso. He took a sip and looked at me, then at the groupie, who had reached the end of a paragraph and was pausing for breath. "You like the Beatles, eh?" he asked. She looked confused. I



OVER THERE

Just a few years ago the British fanzine field was none too healthy. It seemed that every Anglofanzine I read had at least one section bemoaning the death of the faanish fanzine. As it turned out, dearth was more accurate a description than death. Over the years more and more British fans have begun putting out fannish fanzines. There has been almost an explosion of them during the last year and a half. The two most active fanzine publishing groups are the Rats (who are centered in London) and the Gannets (who are centered in Tyne & Wear or thereabouts), each of whom produce a large number of fanzines -- several of them among the best in the United Kingdom -- and are fan centers in a very real sense. Fanzine activity is not limited to these two groups, however, and anywhere in England there is a fan there is a real possibility of a fanzine.

The type of fanzines being published can be broken down into three groups: 1) genzines, which have lots of outside contributors; 2) personalzine, which are written entirely by the editor with the exception of the letter-column; and 3) diaryzines, which are done on a day by day basis with the editor espousing his/her views on anything and everything and commenting on fanzines and letters received. The latter's success depends on whether or not you care for the editor's personality as it is easily the most personal of the three types.

Genzines --

EGG (Peter Roberts, 6 Westbourne Park Villas, London, W.2, U.K.) is available for trades, letters of comment or contributions. As I mentioned on page 27, EGG is my personal favorite of the British fanzines. I have been getting it for several years now and it has never failed to delight me. It has some of the most talented contributors of any British fanzine, including Greg Pickersgill, John Brosnan (who does a regular column called "North Sea Nog"), and Eric Bentcliffe (who has a fanzine review column).

EGG employs very little artwork but what is present is used well. The covers are as bizarre as the publishing schedule and just humorous. The covers have ranged from a photograph to a comic strip panel to more standard cover artwork, but each has a special quality about it.

I've already said that the highlight of each issue is Peter himself and here is the opening paragraph from the tenth issue (the most recent): "Once again the year is turning -- time to send my customary Albanian New Year card to John Bangsund, time to purchase another Cornish Nationalist vegetarian fantasy calendar, and time to publish Egg. What's new?"

EGG is the distilled essence of faanishness. Get it by all means.

TRIDODE (Eric Bentcliffe, 17 Riverside Crescent, Holmes Chapel, Cheshire CW4 7NR, U.K.) can be had in exchange for locs, trades, contributions, or money -- 50p @ to Eric in the U.K. or \$1 @ in the U.S. to me as I am his American agent. TRIODE is an old fanzine reborn when Eric decided to resume fanzine publishing a year ago. Eric himself is a fan from the 1950's and a former TAFF winner, not to mention an interesting writer. TRIODE has sort of an aura of the earlier British fandom about it, yet it is a contemporary fanzine in terms of content. The current issue (#23) is its best yet, containing as it does a Mancon report by Eric full of humor, a faan fiction piece by Tom Perry which is first class and filled with puns and fannish references, a faan fiction story by Eric Mayer of excellent quality that would fit in If if that magazine had been a fanzine (it steeped in the flavor of the stories IF used to publish), an okay lettercolumn and column by Terry Jeeves on artistic matters.

This too is a fanzine I'd recommend.

STOP BREAKING DOWN (Greg Pickersgill, 4 Lothair Rd., South Ealing, London, W.5, U.K.) is available for trade, loc, contribution or 20p in English postage stamps. This new fanzine by Greg has captured the hearts of a large number of fans and it's only had three issues so far. Greg is a good editor and chooses the material for his fanzine very carefully and it shows. The writing throughout is tight, clear and well polished. One of its strongest points is the fanzine review column by Greg. He takes the time and space necessary to give each fanzine a thorough evaluation yet he never goes on overly long. Greg can be pretty rough on bad fanzines, but that just makes his praise more worthwhile when he comments on something he likes. Simone Walsh is Greg's partner in this venture and her own writing meets the fanzine's standards. The pieces she and Greg write are always interesting and sometimes deal with controversial matters. The letter column is masterfully edited so that the letters seem to flow from one to the other. Simone says that Rich Coad, Mike Glicksohn and I are the entire American readership of this fanzine, but it is a fanzine you should really try to get. You'll be missing out on a lot if you don't.

WRINKLED SHREW (Pat & Graham Charnock, 70 Ledbury Rd., London, W.11, U.K.) does not list what kind of bride is required to get on the mailing list. You might try begging, the results would be worth it. Pat and Graham are each highly talented writers whose material always has me laughing. I have seldom heard of a couple with such ability to put out a fine fanzine. The material does not deal with Great Controversies but rather with all manner of humorous topics. The contributors are a bit uneven, particularly when compared to the Charnox, but the other strong point of the fanzine is Leroy Kettle's column in which he writes about his early days in fandom. It does not matter if the names may not be familiar to you, you will find yourself laughing out loud from the situations and events. Leroy's fan memoirs really should be collected in one volume at some future date; it would provide hours of hilarious reading. Another feature of WRINKLED SHREW is the series of wildly funny covers each issue has. One had a picture of Karl Marx with the outlines of shrews drawn on his beard and shoulders and hair with a caption inviting to you find all the hidden shrews on this page. The covers are crazy and unique and part of the fanzine's charm. All this and a laugh-producing letter column as well. Get it.

MAYA (Rob Jackson, 21 Lyndhurst Rd., Benton, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE12 9NT) is available for contributions, trades, locs, and one for 40p or \$1, 3 for a pound and 4/\$3. This is the one fanzine from Britain most of you have seen already, and if you haven't it is the easiest to get. The duplication of readers is why I no longer simultaneously publish Bob Shaw articles with MAYA. *sob* He is a regular contributor and along with Malcolm Edwards' indepth fanzine reviews make the fanzine outstanding. MAYA is a fanzine which also discusses science fiction as well as fannish matters, so it is in many ways a fanzine for everyone. It is often called Britain's OUTWORLDS but I think it's both different and better than OW. Get this one too.

QUARK is the title of Tom Perry's old fanzine, which has been a favorite of mine in what few issues I have been able to find. He has decided to resume publishing and if you are wise you will try to get on his mailing list. His address is given elsewhere in this issue.

Personalzines -- [These may be difficult to get, but worth the extra effort.]

SCABBY TALES (John Brosnan, c/o Kettle below) is infrequent but flawless. John is a transplanted Australian who I consider to be the best fanwriter in Britain today. In this fanzine he uses one page conversation-style editorials which can only be compared to the ones Charles Burbee used to do. Yes, that good. The fanzine is filled with joking insults and great writing and loads of laughs. A new issue is well overdue.

TRUE RAT (Leroy Kettle, 43 Chesholm Rd., London, N.16, U.K.) is fairly regularly published and another first rate fanzine. Mike Glicksohn and others consider Leroy to be the top fanwriter in Britain and I can see why. Hell, a strong case can be made for Leroy Kettle or John Brosnan or Peter Roberts or Greg Pickersgill or Graham Charnock, each of whom is a master humorist. TRUE RAT is another of my favourite fanzines. Leroy took the standard Why You Got This Fanzine checklist and altered it so that it would have things like: "There's a big black slimy thing behind you so if you roll up this issue real quick and ram -- whoops, too late." Insane genius.

VIBRATOR is Graham Charnock's personalzine and I rave about it the way I raved about WRINKLED SHREW which he does with his wife. Graham says it is available for the usual so why don't you try your luck?

