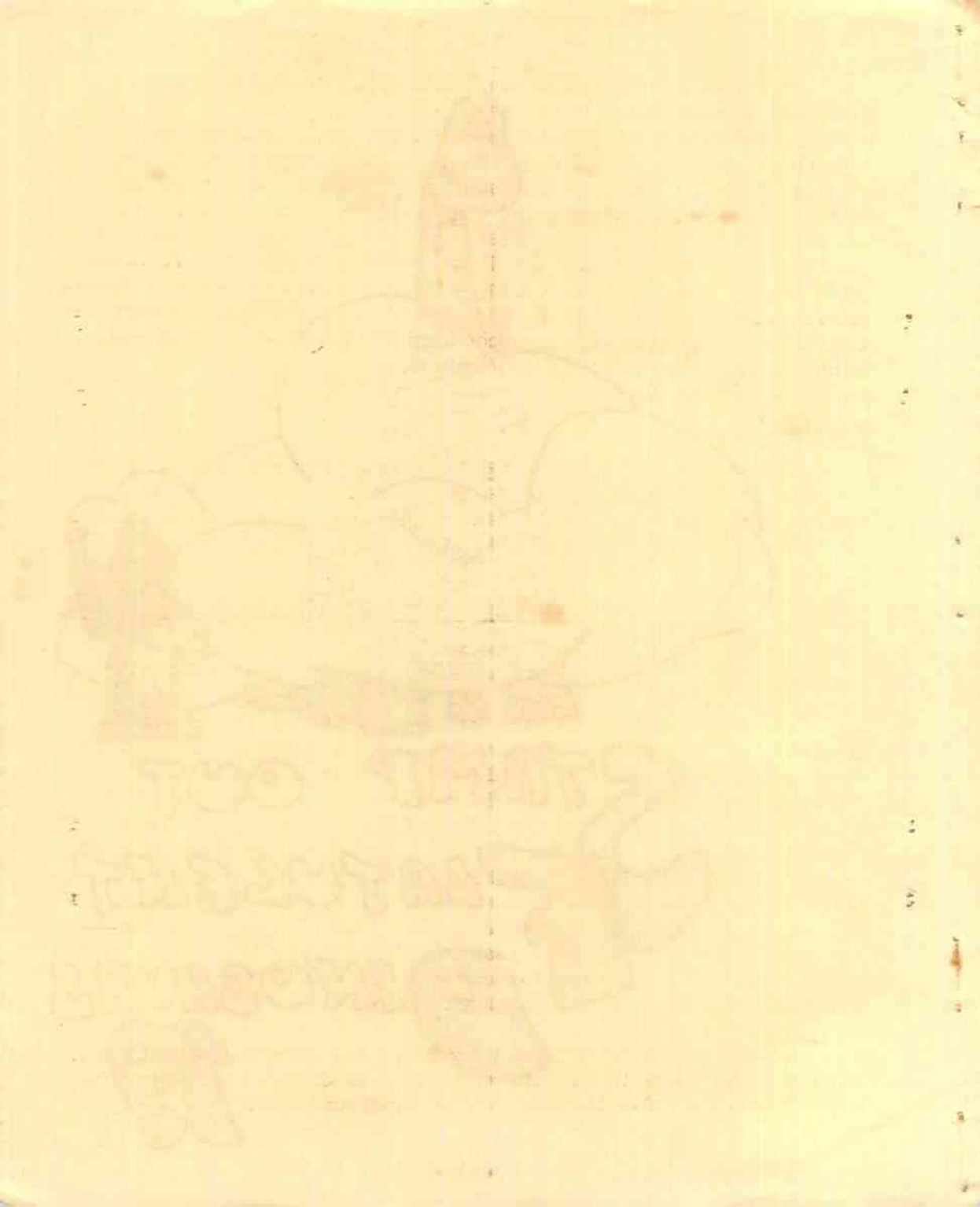




STAMP OUT
 OF LATULENT
 DINOSAURS
 19



"Here at 25 Bowland Close, Offerton, Stockport, Cheshire, SK2 5NW, a hush falls over the expectant multitude as Skel sits down and attempts to get the nineteenth issue of SMALL FRIENDLY DOG underway. SMALL FRIENDLY DOG, you will remember, is the fanzine that is never nominated for anything. So, it is not only a question of whether he can start the next issue, but also of whether he can successfully maintain the standards of mediocrity so unerringly set in the previous eighteen.....and yes, yes he has, I think...yes, he has definitely started typing and.....it's looking good, that is to say it's looking very ordinary. So, with SFD 19 successfully underway we hand you back to Ivor Foulmouth in the studio."

6 May 1980 (Skel)

...and Boy-Oh-Boy have we got a show for YOU today...only trouble is it's supposed to be a fanzine. But never mind... Ladies and Gentlemen, a big hand puh-lease for our first guest. LET'S HEAR IT FOR THE DEAF MAN!

DAVE LANGFORD 22 Northumberland Avenue, Reading, Berks;RG2 7PW.

Bloody hell, Skelton, you can push a fan only so far. It was bad enough when you went on about not being able to hear me (and no wonder when you spent all your time on your knees looking for interesting syllables rolling about the floor: my expression of alarm and disbelief was mainly because you went into this performance before I could get further than a nervous "Hello")---but now your mearoid minions are perpetuating the story and before we know what there'll be some legend about babbling Langford standing in front of a whole fanroom full of people genuflecting and searching the carpet for fragments of conversation while I study them with Olympian condescension. Any more of this vile innuendo (pause for you to insert pun--- oh sorry, was I typing too fast?) and the heavy boys are coming round: there's only room for one Deaf Man in **UK** fandom, and Langford alias L Sordo alias Mort Orecchio is the one.

Except Chris Priest just wrote to say he's going deaf too. Bloody hell, have to ask the enforcers to drop in on Harrow by way of practice for the big job up Stockport way.

Bloody hell.

(I am practising a style of fanwriting I found in a "How To Be a Ratfan" handbook, but I don't seem to do it so well. Let us attempt the vastly more sophisticated Dorey/Nicholas approach:)

Bloody fucking hell, Skelton you turd...(No, I don't seem too good at that either.)

TRUE, YOU SPELLED THE NAME RIGHT...

...but I don't think you need worry too much about the starting of false legends. After all, who would believe a fanroom full of people with Langford at the microphone!?! However, speaking of 'enforcers'...

MARC ORTLIEB 70 Hamblynn Rd; Elizabeth Downs, S.Aust 5113.

I thought I might write with news of recent developments in Australian Fan Funds. As you must by now realise, there has been a minor proliferation of these fannish charities of late and they are getting a little boring. To enliven proceedings a little, during dinner with DUFF candidate Keith Curtis, Helen Swift suggested the instigation of a fannish hit fund. What happens is that any people who wish to vote send in \$500, and the name of the fan they'd most like to see presented with a pair of concrete wellingtons. "What does this have to do with SFD 17?" you ask. Well, nothing, except that I'm nominating Harry Andruschak for the award following his "Purple Papal Heater".

The fact that the extinction of the dinosaurs seems to coincide with the rise of the flowering plants once gave me a marvelous idea for a story. You see dinosaurs suffered from hay fever... I'm sure there's some conspiracy here in the fact that I also started the 'Cluster' series with 'Chaining The Lady'. I enjoyed it though and went on to finish the series but I didn't think much of the second trilogy centred around Paul of Tarot. However, with yet another trilogy in the works, evidence that Piers Anthony is a Raman continues to mount.

STARTLING NEW EVIDENCE REGARDING DINOSAUR EXTINCTION...

...revealed by our antipodean correspondent. No Marc, not that prattish theory about the flowering plants but rather the fact that it was all tied up with Piers Anthony. The dinosaurs flourished through all three periods of the Mesozoic era, the Triassic, the Jurassic and the Cretaceous...and three periods makes...TA-RA-TA-RA...a trilogy. Obviously therefore the dinosaurs were written by Piers Anthony and were then remaindered in some Cenozoic Woolworths, a fate sadly avoided by his later trilogies. Little realising that new breakthroughs in scientific thought have solved the whole business others too wrote in on the subject...

LAURINE WHITE 5408 Leader Ave; Sacramento, CA 95841, USA.

A theory concerning the extinction of the dinosaurs was recently printed in the newspaper. The Arctic ocean was once entirely enclosed by land. Continents continued to drift, making sea openings, so the cold waters mingled with the warm waters of the other oceans, changing both the temperature of the oceans and the climate of the land. The proponents of this theory say it answers more objections than rival theories, but it hasn't been widely accepted. Have you given up reading Piers Anthony novels yet?

HOWEVER ONE CAN'T EVEN TRUST THE FOSSIL RECORD...

...if one reads the Langford/Smith DRILKJIS 5 in which Peter Nicholls reveals that Peter Roberts has been spending his time collecting dead seagulls from Devonian beaches at £1 an hour. Now according to accepted scientific dogma the Devonian period of the Palaeozoic era was very much into fish with ~~maybe~~ just the occasional creature crawling up onto dry land in a bid to become 'amphibian' which was like their version of 'president'. There are no birds in the fossil record of this time. Why are there no birds in the fossil record of this time? Oh, because they haven't evolved yet...say the scientists smugly. Wrong! There are no birds in the fossil record of the Devonian period because Peter Roberts has been going around picking the fuckers all up before they could become fossils.

Isn't that typical of scientists, destroying the evidence which conflicts with their theories? Notice too the way they conceal from the public the existence of a cheap method of time travel in order to carry out their reprehensible schemes. Hell £1 an hour would make the final moments of Pompei cheaper entertainment than 'The Towering Inferno'. Boy, disaster movies would really be passe. Mind you, then we'd have to come to terms with a very serious question. If people dying in real life is not entertainment, why do we think it's so groovy when it's on celluloid?

In reference to EGEO SEXTARIUS Laurine also asked "What is 'nesh'?"

'Nesh' describes people who are more susceptible to the rigours of nature than oneself, and is generally applied to persons from nearer the equator who are used to more temperate climes. People who use an umbrella simply because the rain is coming down like stair-rods are 'nesh'. People who don a wool-len outer-garment whenever the temperature falls below zero are 'nesh'. People from places like Reading are 'nesh'. THAT'S NESH YOU DEAF TWAT! 'Nesh' is sometimes deemed to be synonymous with 'sensible' by such southern persons. I hope that answers your question Laurine.

TYPO OF THE MONTH...

...this issue comes from Brian Earl Brown's MAD SCIENTIST'S DIGEST 7 in which Brian is talking of his marriage to Denice... "We...met that evening for the wedding feat." OK Superstud, no need to rub it in. Just wait while you're getting on a bit.

ELI COHEN 86-04 Grand Ave.; Apt. 4D; Elmhurst; NY 11373; USA.

Just wanted to let you know I got SFD. I scoured the greeting card stores looking for an appropriate response, but they were all out of "Thank You for Naming a Dying Guinea-Pig After Me" cards.

I'm glad I got to meet you at Seacon. If you ever find yourself in New York, you've got crash space here (please

depth of characterization. I thought that part of the point was that the forces of nature, inhuman as they are, don't pay much attention to character. A person is gonna get blown away by 175 mph winds whatever his philosophies might be. But then the reviewer in question probably would've liked to have the characters worrying about Oedipal complexes while in flight.

I suppose I have told my guinea-pig story. Probably used that up at your first mention of the devilish creatures. I'm not like Harry Warner who probably has many guinea-pig stories if he needs them. (In fact, considering Harry's ability to come up with an anecdote related to any subject at all, I wonder if his collected letters, if alphabetized, might not rival the Encyclopedia Britannica?) Anyhow, the little brutes I had didn't get along well. There were three and I woke up finally one morning to find one gutted, one with its head chewed off and the other fat and sassy. I deported him to the wilds out by the railroad tracks. I've wondered since if I was despatching into the wilds some sort of super rodent which will breed and come back to haunt civilization.

YOU'LL BELIEVE A GUINEA-PIG CAN FLY...

...but only if you're thick. Your comments on zines that burst upon the zine-scene and then vanish as quickly as they appeared has prompted an attack of 'All Our Yesterdays'. I haven't been around that long but I do recall some perfect examples. Paramount is probably Mike Gorra's RANDOM with Dennis Quayne's NOTES FROM THE CHEMISTRY DEPT. in the same category. Over here we had John Piggott's THE TURNING WORM which was an earlier and more literate version of the current ANOTHER BLOODY FANZINE of Alan Dorey and Joseph Nicholas. They seemed to be people whose commitment to fanzines was so total as to promise a kind of Fourth Reich, a fanzine that would last a thousand years. Where are they now? They and others...where the hell is Ella Parker...Vinc Clarke? God there are a lot of fans who've simply vanished one night.
~~David Vincent has been there.~~

Eric also mentioned the Hugos:- "Never mind the Hugos. They're crap, like all mass taste tests. I doubt if all that

many voters had read much by Shaw either. Probably just recognized his name as a pro author. Actually I've enjoyed the Shaw books I've read. My only criticism is his habit of wrapping every novel up with a lot of lame and inappropriate head cracking and/or shooting in the last three paragraphs."

I hadn't noticed that myself Eric. I wonder if the next LoCer might have any ideas on that subject...

BOB SHAW 3 Braddyll Terrace; Ulverston; Cumbria; LA12 0DH.

This should give you a laugh... The hero of the novel I'm working on at the moment is suffering from progressive paralysis! I don't think it's part of a continuing trend, though-- of the 14 novels I've published so far 12 have had heroes who were all-purpose men of action.

I suppose you've noticed that most chemists stock diabetic pastilles called Skels? They have only one calorie each and, as they have the consistency of Michelin ZX radials, the effort of chewing one up must use about ten calories, which means they are good for anybody on a slimming diet.

Like other would-be intellectuals, I go around openly despising television, but secretly I think it's great and I watch far too much of it -- so I was intrigued by the correspondence about TV. I do agree with you about the sketches in 'The Two Ronnies' often being too long and not having sufficiently punchy endings. The show is generally good, except for Barker's pointless Spooner skits, but it suffers from having such a rigid format. The fixed format must give the writers a reassuringly clear goal each week, but it sure as hell takes all the freshness out of the show. One of the reasons I like 'Not The Nine O'Clock News' is that one just doesn't know what's coming next.

I passed through Stockport for the first time the other day -- are they pulling the entire place down and starting again?

23 May 1980 (Skel)

I suppose having a place pulled down is better than having it burnt down ("~~Forest~~ fire sweeps Bob Shaw" said 'The Nine O' Clock News') which is what I hear has been happening around Ulverston during the recent freak heatwave. I'm not sure I believe 'Ulverston' anyway. It's the sort of place Wilson would go to run a mile in three minutes, or even Alf Tupper, 'The Tough Of The Track'. It has the same 'fake' ring as 'Grantley' and 'Grimethorpe'. It's the sort of town where all the heroes of the old comics used to come from. Bernard Briggs would have kept goal for a team like Ulverston United. Limp-Along Leslie would have graced their pitch, when he wasn't out herding his sheep on the fells. Oddly, the first time I came upon a character called 'Skelton' in fiction it was in a 'Limp-Along Leslie' story. Skelton was a traditional centre-half of some other team. A bites-yer-legs type, a fouling bastard who kicked Leslie from arsehole to breakfast-time. I remember that I felt ashamed that someone with my name would so mistreat a cripple, even if that cripple was the greatest thing since sliced bread as a footballer. God, when I first discovered the old comics...the old written comics(no pictures, just pages of print with just one illo per story like an 'Astounding' novellette) I was wiped out. It was very similar to the way I felt when I discovered SF at a later stage. How did I get into this? A dose of the 'All Our Yesterdays' seems to be pretty hard to shake off.

There were four comics in those days, of that type. The 'Rover', 'Adventure' (these two later amalgamated to the 'Rover and Adventure'), the 'Hotspur' and the 'Wizard'. Mine was the 'Wizard' which I switched to from my kiddy picture comic (the 'Beano') as they were giving away free picture cards of famous footballers. In those days they were not Football Stars, they were simply 'famous footballers'. Anyway, I got the 'Wizard' every week from the newsagents, but I got all the others at irregular intervals from my friends. Ulverston would be the sort of town that would have the sort of Air Force Base from which Braddock of the Bombers would take off to stomp the piss out of Hitler's minions. The pages of these comics were filled with towns like 'Ulverston' and 'Ironbury'.

The old comics made a come-back recently, filled with the same old characters but now they were in picture-strip form, a change which I consider a searing indictment of current educational standards. The new pre-packed, imagination-unnecessary versions aimed at a generation of TV-crippled minds. I am concerned about this. There has been a lot of talk about the supposed effects of TV but until now the people watching that TV had at least been brought up without it in their formative years and had therefore acquired the ability to think and imagine prior to being subject to the influences of television. Today's kids however never get the chance to pick up this ability. Private fantasies and worlds are out. Everyone now has exactly the same imagination because imagination is now external, a switch-on, plug-in faculty...and it will get worse because soon the people producing the fantasy will be the very people who were brought up to be unable to do it properly.

Fortunately TV is still nowhere near this eventuality. The main reason why I've allowed you to re-open the topic of TV, Bob is that I want to mention 'Not The Nine O'Clock News' myself. It is odd that 'The Two Ronnies' should be so restricted and structured whilst 'NTNO'CN' is so 'free' because basically they both hang on a similar framework, that of fake newsreadings and sketches intermixed. In fact 'TTR' is more varied because it also includes a guest artist and stand-up comedy (by Ronnie Corbett sitting down). Yet, despite this, 'NTNO'CN' is much the better, fresher programme. Much of this freshness comes from the fact that 'NTNO'CN' is a live programme and based on topical events. In fact, on the night of the storming of the Iranian embassy the programme had five minutes material ripped out because it was too topical and had to run at a shorter length as there wasn't time to substitute anything else.

Reactions to 'NTNO'CN' invariably bring forth comparisons with 'Monty Python's Flying Circus', yet the two programmes are in no way similar in anything other than that they are both very good indeed, and both are boldly going where no TV show has gone before. 'NTNO'CN' in fact does not go as far in this direction as did 'Python' and as a result maintains a much more 'even' quality than did its predecessor. However, it also means that whilst the lows are never as low, the highs are never quite

as high. This lack of quite the same 'high' is compensated for by the element of topicality. However I suspect that this is one programme that will not sell to America, for it is already too late. The topicality has dated the programmes and already some of the effect would be lost. The part of the shows in which British TV is parodied would also render the programme unsuitable for foreign viewers (despite the fact that it won a 'silver rose' at Montreaux) who would be unfamiliar with the persons being parodied. A large number of the sketches would still be viable of course, like the one where the two men are out on the moors, apparently shooting grouse, blasting away above their heads...and then down from the top of the screen come the 'Spave Invaders'. But what about the time when the programme ended with a fake advert for solid fuel central heating that started "Come home to a real fire.....buy a cottage in Wales."? No, it seems that here is the perfect case for US TV to buy the idea (a la 'All In The Family') and rescript it based on american subject matter.

Getting back to the night of the SAS attack on the Iranian embassy, I was rather proud of our TV coverage of that event. There it was, live coverage of a sudden event and the quality of the pictures was just like watching a travelogue at the cinema. Superb quality which compared excellently with similar footage from other countries where the colour would fade in and out, break up or be simply lousy (I didn't know there were so many green-skinned people in Israel). This bore out something George Paczolt was saying in FRANCIS X. CHEEP-CHEEP. Usually when one hears british television praised it is because of the quality of the programmes, the content. It is nice to hear that the actual technical quality, the picture on the screen, is also first rate, especially as I have to shell out £34 a year to be allowed to watch it.

It took six days to get Bob's letter the hundred miles-or-so from Ulverston to Stockport, during which time I had mailed out SFD 18, just to start making him feel guilty again, for as Bob also said in his letter:- "As anybody in fandom will testify, I am just about the world's worst locsmith. I read and enjoy all the fanzines I get, and while I'm reading them I mean to write a letter in response, then time wears on a bit and

and somehow the magic moment slips by and the pile of unlocced zines gets bigger and my guilt complex does likewise. Every now and then I'm stricken by the sight of that pile, and mumbling "Forgive me, forgive me," I pull a zine out of it and dash off a LoC to its editor as a sort of pledge to the gods that I'm still a true fan at heart and that if they refrain from striking me down I'll become more and more like Mike Glicksohn in every way."

MIKE GLICKSOHN 141 High Park Avenue; Toronto; Ontario; M6P 2S3.

We may have a record being set here. A fanzine which was typed on March 23rd, mailed on the 24th, received on the 27th and is being LoCced on March 29th and only the fact that I've been pissed out of my head for the last two days has caused the delay on my part for which I'd humbly apologize if I weren't still over-indulging in copious amounts of scotch substances. However, the chance to be among the first to reply to SILLY FUCKING DINGO is enough to force me to attempt to impose a momentary facade of near-intelligence over my traditional nature and send you off some reactions to opus 18. But first, another glass of scotch...

...that's much better. Say, I bet there's something about the cover that even you didn't notice! It just goes to show that there are aspects of the human brain (and even of the drunken fan brain) that we haven't fully understood yet. I'm willing to bet that while you were playing around with various acronymic possibilities for SFD (how is it that you haven't come up with the obvious fannish variant which is so appropriate to the way you type fanzines? I refer, of course, to STOP FALLING DOWN) you probably didn't even notice the significance of those SF authors you thought you were picking at random! Take a closer look and you'll be amazed to note that the first letters of the writers you picked are actually an anagram of TEN LOKS!! And accepting the nononym, that's really remarkable when one counts the number of people who had their letters printed in no. 18. Yes, you guessed it: there were eight LoCs in this fanzine!! I ask you, isn't that an incredible coincidence?

If it's any consolation to you, the inflationary cost of convention attending over here (where distances tend to be an

order of magnitude greater than in the UK) is going to be changing the nature of fandom as well. I've only been to three cons in a quarter of a year and that's pretty low for me. There are several traditionally "standard" cons I'm thinking of skipping this year because even I can't afford the \$42-a-night room rates (at least, I can't afford them in conjunction with attending fifteen or more cons a year). And whereas I had been hoping to drop in on Silicon in August, the six hundred plus bucks it'd cost to fly to England for a couple of weeks is too much even for me. And all of those decisions were made before the prime lending rate here in Canada was raised to 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ % so what's going to happen to the previous patterns of convention attendance in the next few months is anyone's guess. I'd suggest an increase in fanzine fanac except for the fact that increased supply costs and postage have made that difficult too: perhaps fandom's days are numbered? Perhaps, but I hope not and I doubt it: we're too damn stubborn to knuckle under to something like poverty!

If anyone ever doubted that all knowledge is contained in fanzines then certainly pages eighteen and nineteen of SUPPLYING FANNISH DILDOES should eradicate that doubt. All I ask is that, knowing Cas's penchant for naming the things she holds near and dear, you drop this entire topic of the ten inch vibrator immediately...

I held off buying a colour TV for many years but once I had bought one I found it hard to imagine how I'd survived without one for so long. Specials such as the National Geographic or PBS produces, sporting events, movies, all are amazingly enhanced by colour. (Even the Atari games are set up to be played on a colour set.) The only problem is, now that I have the VTR and can sit back and enjoy 'Alien' or 'Wizard of Oz' or 'The Good, The Bad and The Ugly' anytime I want, I need a bigger colour TV! Pernicious is the word for this electronic affluence we indulge ourselves in...

Your reply to Terry Jeeves on the changing impact of language just about sums it up perfectly. I'm sorry that your natural style makes it hard for Terry to enjoy SWEARWORDS FORTIFY DIALOGUE but when it comes to your choice of words, frankly, Paul, I just don't give a dash.

I really like the way Mike Meara admires me for my ability to "rationalise the fact that I'm a callous uncaring bastard." It's nice to have supportive friends and I'll do my best to live up to Mike's expectations of me; in fact, I may even work out a few more imperfections to rationalise away just to keep him amused. Nothing's too much trouble for a friend, eh? And for you Skel, I'll try to write a paragraph that doesn't mention alcohol although you must admit that since the response is governed by the stimulus, that's a tall order. However, please note that the following small paragraph totally fails to mention alcohol in any form whatsoever...

"The queen bee rose humming into the air. "The martin is a fine bird," she opined as the Scot chew his key, fighting epilepsy. Tea leaves swirled as the guru mumbled and a new dull age reigned supreme."

NO PRIZES ARE OFFERED...

...for the person who finds the most references to booze "hidden" in that paragraph. Mike claims seven but I reckon that you could get ten if you accept the "reference to booze" to be a trifle loose in interpretation.

You know damn well Meara was referring to himself with his "Callous uncaring bastard" remark but I grant that you know your own cap size better than anyone else. Perhaps I should subtitle SFD as 'the journal of CUB fandom'. Trouble is...I feel I should be concerned that the people with whom I best resonate are such CUBs.

The ten inch vibrator has already been christened 'Vincent' after a famous painter (Vincent Van Cock) who also cut off a piece of his anatomy to prove his love for someone. A thirty minute session with the vibrator is now known, rather breathlessly, as "...uh-uhah Van Cock's Half Hour" (special esoteric old-English-TV-show-joke...US readers please substitute "I Love Loosely").

Because of my desire to keep SFD small and inexpensive I feel I have not always played fair with my LoCers, printing only a very small proportion of the LoCs I receive each issue. Not

only that but owing to SFDs irregularity of late it has meant that any LoC not printed couldn't very well go in the next issue as not even Donovan's Brain has that good a memory. However, as the main purpose of your LoCs is for you to humbly and abjectly grant me my rightful response this has been no big problem. Also, quite a number of the LoCs are not really reprintable for whilst every single LoC I get interests me, I'm only going to consider reprinting the ones that I feel will interest and entertain the bulk of SFD-readers. Evenso, I've had to be extra-selective in the past. The trouble is that whilst I've succeeded in keeping SFD 'manageable' I also want every one of you to feel involved with SFD. I don't want anyone to bolt to the door when they hear the rattle of the letterbox, only to find "Oh, it's SFD. Oh-hum." That is why there are already nearly as many LoCs printed in the first 15 pages of this issue as were printed in the whole of SFD 18. That is also why I am now aiming for sixty pages and a six-monthly schedule. However, I may have problems because...

30 May 1980 (Skel)

EEK EEK EEK OOK EEK EEK and GOSH WHOW GOSH WHOW BOY OH BOY and OOK EEK ICKEY-OOO and YIPPEFY SHIT and CORRRR WHOW GOSH HECK WHOW YESSIRREE-BOB and LAWS-A-MERCY and EEK OOKY EEK and TOTAL GOBSMACKMENT and SHEESH and GEE WHIZ and OOK EEK and GOSH!

WARHOON 28 arrived today.

Now what is the 'coolest' chair for Cas to discover me reading WARHOON 28 in? ("Any post today dear?" "Oh, just one fanzine, luv." Whow, the 'kool', the savoir-faire.) She should be home from work any minute...in fact here she is now.

"Hello luv. Hard day?"

"Where's my coffee? Any post today dear?"

"EEK OOK OOK ICKEY OOK EEK EEK..."

OK, so you try and be 'cool' when your copy of the special WILLISH arrives! This has got to be the single most important fan-publishing event of all time. More later.

8 June 1980 (Skel)

At dinner today Bethany mentioned that she'd had a drink of bitter today. Subtle questioning (*WERE YOU OR HAVE YOU EVER BEEN A BOOZER?*) led to the following conversation:-

"You are too young to drink beer outside!"

"But I wasn't outside, I was in the club."

'The Club' is the Offerton Social Club and to get inside you have to be a member and you have to be eighteen years old. Bethany is neither. She is six. Not even a near-miss.

"How on earth did you get into the club?" I asked.

"It was open" she said.

I decided to quit whilst I was behind. With some people you can quit whilst you're ahead but the best you can manage with Beth, if you're quick, is to quit whilst you're still on the same lap.

I swear I will never understand kids. When I was a child the only fly in the weekend ointment was Sunday School. I hated Sunday School! Even as a six-or-seven-year-old I was smarter than all those grown-up Sunday School teachers. I could see how stupid and unbelievable the whole schtick was. The only thing I couldn't figure was...if I didn't believe in it and my mother didn't believe in it...why the fuck did I have to go to the damn thing? I never did figure it out though I suppose it had a lot to do with a very religious maternal granny and a mother who didn't quite have the courage of her convictions, at least in this sensitive regard. My father believes in God but I don't think this could have had much effect on my upbringing ("Didn't we used to have four children?" "No dear, that's the Johnsons. Oh, aren't the pubs open now?" *W*H*O*O*S*H* "Close the door after your father, Paul.").

I swore I would never force any kid of mine to go to *yeck* Sunday School. Nope, I was scrupulously honest. When they asked me if there was a God I replied that I didn't think

so but I didn't know for sure. Nobody does. I also said that some folks thought there was a God. All this was fair enough but it failed to make proper allowances for either children or true-believers. Children are true seekers after knowledge. If they don't get a definite answer from you they will ask someone else. Also, a died-in-the-wool true-believer will not answer their query with such impartiality as I showed. Nope. A true-believer will tell them that by damn yes there is a God and they had better believe it OR ELSE ALL THE SNOT UP THEIR NOSES WILL EXPLODE AND BLOW THEIR HEADS OFF! Young children are too unsophisticated to ask why a so-called God-of-Love spends so much time inspiring fear and terror.

Thus, I was worried when Bethany asked her grandad, one lunchtime in the pub, whether or not he believed in God. I need not have worried however because after listening to his answer with polite courtesy she told him, somewhat pityingly, that she didn't believe in God. It seems that Bethany really wants to be a fairy and one night she prayed to God to turn her into a fairy so that she could fly and like that. But, when she awoke, she was still an ordinary child so now she knows there is no God. God would have made her a fairy. She didn't become a fairy therefore there is no God. Q E D (Odd that a lack of demons and hob-goblins should prove the non-existence of God. Truly a case of "Quad Est Demon strand 'em").

Thus you can understand my bewilderment when, last Sunday afternoon...imagining Bethany to be safely playing, we heard a rattle of the letter-box through which was then shouted "Mum, I've been to Sunday School. I've got to go again next week. Mind my colouring, I'm playing out." Through the letter box there came a pamphlet for kids to colour, complete with lots of homilies about "Daddy God". "Shit" I thought, "a true-believer's colouring book. They don't miss a trick!" Next I suppose we'll have a 'learn to read with Jesus' book. "Here is Jesus. See Jesus rout the money-changers. Run money-changers, run."

However, despite all their assurances from all their child-psychologists, Bethany never again looked at their colour-God-yourself pamphlet. This Sunday we asked her if she was going to Sunday School again. "Oh yes" she said, "I'll tell them I lost

my colouring." The concept of the prospect of going to Sunday School causing someone to LIE to get nearer to Jesus caused the collapse of two stout parties. So we explained to the sundance kid how she could tell the truth and still go to Sunday School (Tell them you gave it to your mother and she doesn't know where it is, so you couldn't colour it. "Yes, but it's in Deborah's bedroom." Look, smartarse, they don't know that you knew where it was all the time. Tell *THE TRUTH* just don't tell all the truth.) So she went to Sunday School and she brought back yet another pamphlet to read and colour and this one is so mind-bogglingly gobsmacking I must quote from it:-

"Jonathan Mark knew that his Mummy and Daddy loved him. They sent him a postcard and told him so."

Boggle-boggle-boggle-boggle.

"Jonathan Mark learned that Father God loved him too."

Presumably Jonathan Mark gets pactsacrcds from Father God too. Bet the stamps are worth something.

Actually, the fact that some stamps are worth something is one of the proofs that fans are slans. Yes, fans do have paranormal abilities, some fans at least. The problem is, we have not noticed it before because we were looking for the wrong psi powers. Take telepathy. Who wants to send out the same thought over two-hundred times? Obviously fanzines are more convenient than telepathy. OK, but what about telekinesis? That's moving things physically by the power of your mind. A waste of time, this. Much simpler to put a stamp on your fanzine and let the Post Office move them. There's always teleportation of course, moving your fanzine instantly from point A to point B...but what's the point when Bob Shaw has already admitted that he's only going to let the buggers pile up anyway?

Obviously to be fannishly slannish we've got to look for a whole new range of psi powers. Take Glicksohn for instance (please!?!). What psi power would be most useful to a letter-hack? Well, what is the limiting factor on a letter-hack? Obviously not intelligence. Postage, that's the limiting factor

for a letter-hack. Now there's not a lot Mr. Darwin can do for your average common or garden letterhack but for an international letter-hack it's a whole new ball game (cricket...). Obviously if an international letter-hack developes some strange mental power like the ability to cloud the minds of the postal authorities so that they do not cancel his stamps then the faned who recieves these stamps, being unable to use them himself, will send them back to the hack and thus earn himself great karma. Thus letter-hacks who develop such a power will prosper by being able to send more letters than their less fortunate brethren. Thus their LoCs will be seen in more places and they will become bigger BNFs and Lo, all the young dolly femmefans will flutter around them like moths unto the flame and they will have more and better opportunities to breed and to pass on their favourable mutation. Indeed the origin of the specious.

I know this for a fact because it was recently drawn to my attention. A certain hirsute provincial chappie, misinterpreting my remarks about his christmas present guiltily rushed me the US hardback edition of John D. MacDonald's 'The Green Ripper' (which I incidentally enjoyed immensley and thought one of his better books although I suspect that upon re-reading it will seem more simplistic than some). The envelope bore several dollars-worth of unfranked stamps. Glicksohn 1 - Post Office 0. The latest in an unbeaten run stretching back into prehistory. Yes, the truth will out. Mike Glicksohn is a mutation...the next evolutionary step for fankind. The greatest argument for FLJAGH ever. Why do I resent him? You fools, if it wasn't for all the postage it costs me sending back his unfranked stamps I could afford to become a letter-hack myself and then I'd get some of that action.

So dear fan, if you are cursing his name and wondering why you haven't got a LoC from Superglick, be patient. He hasn't forgotten you, he is merely waiting impatiently for the stamp to come back from someone else. Why, a letter-hack as famous as Mike might even have as many as *S*I*X* stamps on the go at the same time. Sit tight and keep the faith, baby.

The remark about re-reading my Travis McGee novels should not be dismissed as the ravings of a drunken mind. I regularly

re-read my Travis McGee novels. Somehow Trav seems more 'real' than the realest of folk. Thus when I read 'The Long Lavender Look' (the best) after 'The Quick Red Fox' I see a different McGee than when I re-read it after 'A Tan and Sandy Silence'. Apart from references to the very earliest novel in the series, 'The Deep Blue Goodbye' the stories rarely if ever cross refer so that there is a timelessness about the series...any story could follow any other story and as any story you read is an amalgam of story and reader then the book becomes different when the reader becomes different. Thus there aren't 18 Travis McGee novels, rather there are 18 x 17 x 16 x etc. It is this multiplicity that fleshes out McGee, for the various novels are not about the events that take place in them, they are about McGee. Also, it beats me how anyone can complain about MacDonald's books being a series of mini-lectures for the mini-lectures contained within his books are a delight. They transcend the time and space of the novel whilst permitting the novel to come back at you through different layers of your own perception. The lectures are not only an insight to MacDonald but they are also an insight to McGee. All knowledge may not after all be contained in fanzines, but if the series goes on long enough, all knowledge will be contained in 'McGee'.

JOSEPH NICHOLAS Rm 9: 94 St. George's Sq; Pimlico; London.

Of course I knew that your joke about me in SFD 17 was a joke, you cretin! You weren't so hot yourself in failing to spot that my response to it in my previous letter was also intended as a joke. as its tone of manufactured sarcasm not immediately apparent, or do I have to write bloody stage directions in the margins, or something? And that too is a joke as if it wasn't obvious.

***Ah, but I saw you see me see you but you didn't see me
see you see me*****

Anyway...your response to Terry Jeeves was far too moderate — and also, given the self-contradictory manner in which his complaint was phrased, largely unnecessary. Look again, for example, at his first paragraph, which bleats reactionarily of the offensive nature of those vile Four Letter Words — and then at

his second, which makes the perfectly valid point that such words, when overused, lose all their impact and cease to shock. Such illogicality virtually condemns itself out of its own mouth. Or: what the fuck is he getting upset about?

Geis's poxy SFR has of course been nominated for the fanzine Hugo again this year, but it could well be the last time that it appears on the ballot, mainly because his bookshop distribution has now fallen off to almost nothing. (Certainly you can't find copies in Dark They Were and Forbidden Planet for either love or money....) Apparently he decided that, what with rampant inflation and the energy crisis and the New York Democrat conspiracy to turn the world over to the forces of communism, he was no longer going to let bookshops get away without paying for the copies of the magazine they had sitting on their shelves, and demanded that they pay in advance instead. The bookshops, operating on a cash-flow basis and seeing no reason to pay for what hadn't even been delivered, not unnaturally told him to go fuck himself -- and his sales have consequently slumped by some ecstatically drastic figure, leaving him with lots of subscribers, several trades, and large unsold print overruns. Ho ho.

But then Geis's removing of himself from the running merely allows such as LOCUS and STARSHIP and SF CHRONICLE a crack at the award....in point of fact, the May 1980 LOCUS has a long, self-justifying and utterly hypocritical piece by Charlie Brown explaining why, despite removing it from last year's ballot, he's allowing his nomination to stand this year.... "The fans have decided," appears to be his main excuse, which raises a number of interesting points. Like, for instance, does this mean that the fans can now decide that F & SF is also a fanzine? After all, Ed Ferman wouldn't keep working away at it if he didn't enjoy what he was doing, so therefore...

Ah, toads, the lot of them. Porter, Brown, Geis -- take the buggers out and shoot them, thereby demonstrating what sort of treatment any other huge circulation moron can expect to receive if he starts getting ideas above his station. But who cares about the blasted Hugos anyway? They are moronic lowest-common-denominator crap of the most tawdry and forgettable kind

and should be dispensed with as soon as conceivably possible.

TELL ME JOSEPH...

...apart from military models with enough firepower to completely obliterate 97% of the known universe, what do you like? You seem to have read more into my remarks on the fnz/fanwriter HUGOs than was intended. My own opinions are much more ambivalent or, when following those as misanthropic as yours, 'wishy-washy', ~~especially not that Dick has decided to trade with us.~~

Now I must first admit to considerable ignorance. I do not know who pays how much for what, nor...and more importantly ...do I know who obtains the greatest portion of their income from sales of their magazine. This latter I do consider important. If your single biggest source of income is your magazine then you aren't an amateur publisher and it isn't a fanzine. Other than that I reckon just about anything goes. The simple fact is that without knowing about any of the above I consider SFR to be a fanzine. I know this because when I saw the subscription rates I thought "Hell, that's cheap!", and considered subscribing but not for long. "What am I doing?" I asked myself. "I've never subscribed to a fanzine yet and I don't intend to start now!" There it was. Without any deliberate intent to make such a judgement it was simply there. Deep down I considered SFR to be a fanzine.

Look, is it Geis's fault that Langford only produces, say, 250 copies of TWLL DDU?...and yet...

In some ways SFR is indistinguishable from a prozine. In one important way it is indistinguishable from a prozine. Each issue its copy count is larger than the membership of the worldcon. In this respect he stands equal with every single pro SF mag. SFR can compete on equal terms with every professional magazine when it comes to grabbing votes. So why are you futzing around in the 'fan' categories Dick? Is it a lack of guts? I know you claim to feel that being nominated in the fan categories is important (see 'Alien Thoughts' in SFR 35) but actions do speak louder than words and one must take Mike

Glicksohn's point that you didn't appear to care enough last year to nominate someone to collect your award at Seacon. The simple fact is though that whilst you, and all the others like you, compete in the fan categories you make it impossible for anyone else to compete. Accepting, perhaps with better grace than Joseph, that the Hugo awards are subject to vox populi rather than vox fani one is still left with the unacceptable face of fandom...the fact that the majority of fans think that 'no award' is an excuse for ignorance. How can 'no award' be more popular than Dave Langford? Sorry to keep bringing this up Dave, but small friendly dogs can be embarrassing at times. Ignorance used to be bliss. Now it is Hugo. Surely even you must be aware that a vote for SFR/Geis is not a vote that you are better than them, simply a vote that you are bigger than them. Where the fuck is the egoboo in that?

Fortunately if we can't have sanity in the Hugo awards it does look set to prevail in the Fan awards (and about time too) if what Harry Bell says in SNORKEL is to be believed. Whoops, got it wrong boss. I'm sure I read somewhere that the voting fee in the Fan awards is to go for a ball of chalk and I associated this with Harry's wonderful piece in SNORKEL in which he says what needed saying to such delightful effect that the subject should henceforth be closed. Fandom is supposed to be a hobby and I resent having to pay money so that someone can receive justified egoboo. If you can't operate an award that doesn't cost an arm and a leg then you'd better design one that is relatively thin and smooth and easy to vaseline. Maybe I can excuse my confusion in this paragraph as being the inevitable result of actually receiving a fanzine from Harry Bell.

DENNY LIEN 2528 15th Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55404, USA.

Actually, the year 1979 did not end upon the 31st of December, but upon some day in late February for those of us who follow Medieval/Renaissance dating systems (I, for example, ask out people of the appropriate sex only for bearbaiting, boar hunting, and opening nights of Master Shakspeare's plays). Of course, there were very few 1979s in Medieval/Renaissance dating systems...

I know that Mike Glicksohn used to have a pet snake and that Linda Lounsbury and Ken Fletcher have a family of pet gerbils but I had not previously realised that Leroy Kettle had a pet so important as to be taken with him even to con bars: a fly. I presume he keeps it leashed.

Of course 'Hitch Hiker's Guide To The Galaxy' would have won in any properly run universe and would be at that one of the damn few bits of dramatic SF able to hold up its, er, radioknobs?...oh well, head...up with the printed winners. Given the large number of American voters who did not and could not hear it before voting, we see proved the following propositions: (a) There Ain't No Justice (b) There Are Too Many Americans in Fandom (c) This Universe Is Not Properly Run. All of which are self-evident...

Personally, I haven't voted for most Hugos for several years now. I prefer that the winners be decided by those fans more qualified than me, by virtue of reading and of objectively judging all nominees in all categories. I estimate that there must be at least 20 and probably 75 of such out there. Only problem is that even though I refrain, most categories seem to draw 500 or more voters. There seems to be a glitch in the system there somewhere...

Dave Piper? Nonsense. Dave Piper talked of coming to the Worldcon to meet me and I didn't show up. Therefore he didn't either and I am not impressed by your pathetic pretensions otherwise. I share some of your problems viz freezing up/being Ghawful boring and shy and all that at cons. Which is another good reason for me not making Seacon. Why spend all that money to make a bad impression thousands of miles around the world in front of 3,500 people, when I could instead spend it attending regional conventicns and for the same amount make a bad impression on the same 500 people seven times in my own backyard?

Jack Vance is probably my favourite currently-active SF author (Heinlein is still producing books but not in any sense that I would consider "active" in other than a clinical biological definition shared with crystals and rock lichens).

I wonder if your, and to some extent my, disillusionment with his recent books is due to a natural human tendency to be bored with/tear down heroes?

Nope, it's because they were fucking awful

Previous to three or so years ago when I suddenly decided Vance was my favourite that post was held by Lafferty, whom I now find all but impossible to read. Clearly this means that subconsciously J. G. Ballard and Barry Malzberg are already my real favourites, since I already find them more or less impossible to read.

I'm in general agreement with Arthur Hlavaty on most points. The Pohl and /or Kornbluth non-SF novels are not impossibly rare, though most are fairly scarce. A good source for a lot of this sort of information (besides Tuck) is L. W. Currey's 'Science Fiction And Fantasy Authors: A Bibliography' from Gale of Detroit...unfortunately about \$40. This Tells Me Things. I knew, for instance, that both Malzberg and MZBradley had published much pseudonymous porno, but I didn't know just which titles until I bought and read this. What I didn't know is that, say, Harry Harrison ghost-wrote Charteris' 'Vendetta For The Saint' or that Ron Goulart ghost-wrote several 'Flash Gordon' and 'Phantom' novels, plus three 'Laverne And Shirley' paperbacks--I may be sick...and much more.

Don't know about your statement that Once you've tried an electric you'll never go back to the old ways (sorry--might be read wierdly ~~but completely~~ out of context--we were speaking of typewriters)...

NAS. I SING THE BODY ELECTRIC...

...for we are not all talking of typewriters. I am still allowed into the house once-a-month to hand over my salary cheque which I must poke under the bedroom door shutting my ears to the groans and gasps of "Ooh,,, Vincent!" as I do so. Let this be a lesson to all who consider the purchase of certain battery operated mechanical devices that they see advertised in *Certain Magazines*. First of all ask yourself if

you dominate your marriage. Remember, if she can hold her own she won't need you to hold it for her.

Denny also pointed out, regarding issue 17...

"The cover displays an alien in full throes of ethnocentrism. (Half throes are much cheaper and are less likely to spoil in the refrigerator while waiting to be used.) If said alien had realised that being piddled upon while doing fire hydrant imitations was a high compliment paid only to selected aliens of extreme culture, intelligence, charisma and breeding because said Earthdog had read Aldiss's 'The Dark Light Years'."

Wrong, wrong! People who assumed I didn't know how to draw a US fire hydrant are wrong and miss two turns, as do small nunches who assume I can't draw UK dustbins. Only folks who think I can't draw UK postboxes get to pass 'go' and collect £200.

We also got a pchtsacrd from Mike Meara, in Suffolk.

"Suffolking what?", you may well ask. We're staying in a cottage near the coast doing Hunchback of Notre Dame impersonations to avoid bumping our heads on the low beams."

Typical of Meara...couldn't Suffolk in silence.

JOY HIBBERT Knouchley, West Bank, Winster, Matlock, DE4 2DQ.

A workmate went to London last weekend and told us about a cocktail entitled the "Slow Shag Up A Wall". The boathouse cocktail book will never seem the same again, but I still think "Pangalactic Gargleblaster" has a better ring to it. What is all this about Jim Blish's socks? I believe they were in the auction at Albascon. What have I missed out on?

Zahniwhoop probably died of a misspelt name. Hope Zaphod fares better.

THAT IS NOT THE TONE TO TAKE...

...when trying to con me out of £9 for being a member of HITCH-ERCON 1, or even £4.50 for attending (that seems the right way around to me).

Don't tell me that the auctioning of 'Jim Blish's socks' is becoming a tradition at UK cons. Ghod, could Mike have bought a forgery at SEACON? Perhaps they're like Doc Smith's 'Lord Tedric' books...maybe they've been ghost-worn. I think that it's time for all the SF authors who were at SEACON to own up. Come on now, who ghost-wore the 'Jim Blish's socks' that Mike Meara bought there? Does L. W. Currey have anything to contribute on this point, Denny? Nope? God, I hate shoddily incomplete reference works.

Anyone who doesn't know what all this is about...let me refer you to Mike Glycer's SCIENTIFRICTION 12 for which I wrote this SEACON episode up at length. Mind you, STFR 12 was supposed to be out before Christmas '79 so mayhap the Curse of the Skelcontrib has struck again, fafiating yet another faned in his prime.

In a LoC on EGEO, George R. Paczolt (the patron saint of sneezing...if I'm pronouncing that correctly) opines:-

"I especially loved the pages on your television system although I still find your version most preferable to ours - at least you don't have to sit through 'Charlie's Angels' or 'The Dukes of Hazzard'."

How dayuh you suh! How dare you cast aspersions on two such cornerstones of the democratic way of life? How could such programmes not sell to the UK mass-media-mind? Why, they are not only pre-digested entertainment, they are even pre-puked! Not that I watch either. I prefer much more exciting and demanding entertainment...like for instance, sitting and watching a bowl of custard. The bowl of custard is usually far better written, too.

JIM MEADOWS PO Box 1227; Pekin; IL 61554; U.S.A.

SF and fantasy in songs? Oh yes, plenty, though 'The

Moon's a Harsh Mistress' (which is also recorded by Joe Cocker) is probably not SF oriented, despite the title. The same with the song 'Strangers In A Strange Land' recorded by the old folk duo Jim and Jean back in the '60s and written by some guy named Cohen (could be Leonard, but I'm not sure).

BLUE, BLUE, MY LOVE IS BLUE...

...or if not my love, at least the writer of 'Strangers In A Strange Land' is somebody called Something-or-other Blue, at least according to my copy of the Jim and Jean LP 'Changes'.

I don't think I explained myself clearly enough about the songs with SF titles. Ideally the songs will have no SF content at all, other than the title. Tracks like Hoyt Axton's 'Childhood's End'. SF songs would, I expect, be totally and 100% *yecchy*, whereas 'The Moon's A Harsh Mistress' is a very good song. What I want to do is produce a tape of music, the track listings of which read like the contents page of a 'Best SF' anthology.

Clifford R. Wind also wrote, at great length, on 'true' SF music which, whilst of interest, was not what I'd intended although he did mention Ralph Lundsten's album 'Alpha Ralpa Boulevard (as did Frank Denton in 'TRR'29) and 'The Million-Year Picnic' by Nash the Slash...don't sit in the front row for his stage act...

MINISTER'S GAFFE REVEALS BRITAIN SECRETLY AHEAD IN SPACE-RACE!

On the eve of the Commons censure debate, the Chancellor Sir Geoffrey Howe said, of the Government's economic policies:-

"It is undoubtedly hard, but any suggestion of reversal would take us into horrendous areas of outer space."

The americans have been to the moon, but one would hardly describe the lunar landscape as "horrendous". One can only speculate as to which area of outer space the Chancellor has such intimate knowledge of and why it is so "horrendous". What is the Government keeping from us?

EXCERPT FROM A LETTER TO WILLIAM T. GOODALL

Rob Jackson's MATRIX review has a lot to answer for, but it has revealed to me a dark and shameful secret which has, until now, been closely guarded by the Secret Masters of the BSFA (I presume you saw SFD mentioned in MATRIX because your letter closely follows a distinct pattern). For the last four Saturdays I have received a letter from someone of whom I've never heard, three of them mentioning MATRIX, all asking for a copy of SFD 18. What has this revealed? Well, note that they have all, ALL, arrived on a Saturday. Somewhere in MATRIX is a subliminal message: "Post letters on a Friday." Nothing terrible or sinister about this, you might think, but I suspect otherwise. I think that message is sinister (because it's been left over and forgotten). I think it was the first field trial of their foul technique. I strongly suggest that you search carefully through your other BSFA publications in an effort to discover how else you are being brainwashed. "Renew your BSFA membership" in VECTOR seems a likely example. In fact, judging from the BSFA's current high membership levels, coupled with the fact that several of my acquaintances renewed their memberships after being adamant in their intention to quit....I suspect that the BSFA's insidious scheme has already been in operation for some considerable time. Just think, it would never have come to light if only they hadn't forgotten about their trial 'message' in MATRIX. Fandom must be told of this foul plot. I shall mention it in SFD 19, but be careful. Until the details of the plot are revealed we are both in deadly danger. Until then we are the only two who know. ~~Daria Vincent has seen them.~~ Do not leave the house unless absolutely necessary. Approach all mail with extreme care. Especially, DO NOT READ ANYTHING FROM THE BSFA until after we are safe. Who knows what they might make you do with the right brain-warping message. Ghod, they might even prevent you from LoCing the enclosed fanzines. *shudder*

...BECAUSE, JACKSON, YOU SOD...

...the zines in question were EGEO SEXTARIUS and THE ZINE THAT HAS NO NAME 2. "Don't review SFD" means 'Don't, for Christ's sake DON'T, review SFD'. All these people writing in

for SFD 18 and I have to send them three-year-old fnz. What a pratt I feel! Despite the fact that I go to the trouble of sending a personal letter with all these copies of 'In Search Of Ancient Fnz' I get no response, as to be expected, with the exception of a very hostile LoC from WTG who is somewhat rightfully miffed that I am sending him 'old stock' but who says:-

"Is any LoC I write about TZTHNN (over three years old, I see) going to be used, or have a fair chance of being used, or is this just a private audition?"

The above seems to encapsulate the new fan's basic misconception of the purpose of a LoC. A LoC is not something that a fan can expect, as a right, to have published. I am not going to roll over onto my back and wag my tail (what a concept) simply because you've done me the big favour of asking for a copy of my fanzine. If I send you my fanzine, you owe me! You owe me a LoC (or a trade). If you default on the contract then I am going to be in the 'once bitten, twice shy' category when it comes to the next issue. I'm a bit like a computer in this respect. If you value my fanzine and prove it by responding, I will send you the next issue. If you don't, I won't. A simple binary system.

Eventually, when we get to know each other, we will get beyond this. I don't know whether I owe Mike Glicksohn a zine because he sent me a LoC or whether he owes me a LoC because I sent him a zine...and neither of us care because this is Second Stage ~~Leather~~ fannish interaction...but you can't get to this second stage without passing through the first. I don't think I'm giving myself airs and graces here. If ANYBODY doesn't value SFD 19 enough to respond in some way then that's OK. We will go our separate ways, no hassle. If you do value it enough to respond, then that's OK too, because I've got to talk to somebody...but I don't want SFD going simply on inertia. Let's make SFD 19 a trial. A good time for it actually as I think SFD 19 is the best issue I've yet produced. If you want number 20 respond to this issue, but please, don't just trade because you've got copies spare and don't know what else to do with them. I need to know who values me and who doesn't, OK?

MARK BENNET 67 Austin Drive, Didsbury, Manchester, M20 0FA.

I saw a man chopping down a lamp-post in Manchester last week. I found it difficult to take in at first but no, there he was hacking away oblivious to the small group of people surreptitiously watching him. His endeavours were not that effective really. He seemed to be doing more damage to the axe but then he was using a smallish hatchet. Not the tool I would have chosen to chop down a lamp-post. He really needed a long-handled axe or a chainsaw.

I could not understand why he was doing it. He was trying to cut too near to the roots to be pruning, and anyway it is the wrong time of year to prune lamp-posts. Maybe he was weeding out dead growth but I am no lamp-post expert and cannot tell dead ones during the day. Maybe he collected lamp-posts and this one was different, but no...he would have a much more effective method of felling them if he were a regular lamp-erjack. As it was he made very little impression before two officers of the law arrived and confiscated his hatchet. He drove off with them, presumably to face the penalty of chopping down lamp-posts without a licence.

I suppose I am just careful (some would say paranoid). I used to be quite different; tea-total, generous, trusting, naive even. Then I met Gerald Lawrence, and later, fen. My suspicious mind has its advantages, though. Before Faancon I met Gerald in a pub (where else?) and after several rounds he asked me if I would consider presenting to Celia a token of appreciation for organizing the upcoming con in Cambridge. Naturally I declined and now, thanks to SFD 18, I know what the 'token' was.

GERALD LAWRENCE 14 Pymmes Green Road, New Southgate, London.

On the subject of my oscillating offering...I might add that you're right about one thing - you don't often get to satisfy a life-long ambition. I recieved the item in the post and had it engraved with a suitable message, something like:- "To Celia from the members of Faancon 5, hoping this brings you as much pleasure as you've brought us (PS Please excuse the shaky writing).

As I say, something like that - you'll have to ask Celia for the exact wording. Unfortunately, Celia had somehow found out that Dirty Deeds Were Afoot (or about eight inches anyway) and declined a public acceptance of this token of my esteem. In fact she did collect it on the quiet and I am reliably informed that she finds it incredibly effective for stirring coffee, of all things.

YECCH...

...remind me never to have a cup of coffee if I'm ever at Celia's place. Actually, thinking about the subject of 'Sex-Aids' leads me to think I've discovered a vast, untapped market to explore to my advantage. It occurs to me that there ought to be enough over-sexed people in this world to provide a large body of customers for 'Sex-Hindrances'...things like a form of strap-on headache (either the basic 'Mild Hangover' or our Super DeLuxe 'Blinding Migraine') which has the advantage of being doffable after he's rolled over and gone to sleep. I mentioned this idea to Mike and Pat last time they were here but they weren't awake to the commercial possibilities.

However, they did say we had to call in at a sex shop whilst we were in Stockport as they had to buy a vibrator as a gift for some friends. Bloody Hell! You start something off and before you know it...WHAMMO...the snowball effect. I immediately had thoughts of fandom's own version of the chain-letter, the chain-dildo ("Make out six copies of this vibrator and pass them on. Within six weeks you will receive 7,896 orgasms. Do not break this chain. If you do YOU WILL NEVER COME AGAIN! This chain-dildo is perfectly legal.").

The Daily Express (17/7/80) reveals the reason the UK film industry is dead...all the directors are working in Hollywood. Tucked away in this piece is the news that Ridley ('Alien') Scott's brother Tony has been signed to direct 'Dune'. Ho-hum, probably turn out to be a musical re-make of 'Lawrence of Arabia'. Hmmm, I wonder if that's the next step. When space opera takes over from the cowboy picture will we be far away from our very own 'Oklahoma', 'Seven Brides for Seven BEMs'? Any suggestions for SF musicals, anyone?

LYNNE HOLDOM PO Box 5, Pompton Lakes, New Jersey 07442, U.S.A.

I was another person who was amazed at how much everything cost. About the same as around here except you pay in pounds while we pay in dollars. I mentioned to a NYC cab driver that they charge extra (in Edinburgh) for driving after 11pm or on holidays and now NYC cabbies are asking for the same.

I found that the beer they sell on the Scottish trains (most of which probably should have been in the Railway Museum in York) was almost undrinkable. This is Tanner's Export Ale which has pictures of women on the cans. The Scots do know how to sell stuff providing they are selling it to men. I did become accustomed to lager though seeing people add lime juice, lemonade or blackcurrent juice to it was slightly nauseating.

TRUE, TRUE...

...although lime-cordial in my lager was something I was partial to back when I first started drinking beer. I even carried the habit over and had a dash of it in my bitter when I started drinking that (*TRUE CONFESSIONS time folks*). However, nothing is as nauseating as what I saw an American tourist ad to his Elgoods bitter in The Golden Fleece in Stamford, Lincolnshire. Salt! Real Ale is not generally as fizzy as ordinary beer (unless it is a bottle of my home-brew into which I've put too much sugar) and he explained to his wife that it was a well-known fact that putting salt into flat drinks brings back the fizz. I notice that when he left his glass was still nearly full. Of course, I could have stopped him. I could have told him it is sugar that helps a flat drink pass its fizzical, but the last thing he would have wanted was a know-it-all local yokel showing his wife what a pratt she was married to. I'm sure he would rather have wasted nearly a pint of good ale. Vanity, thy name is male.

I've been having a lot of production problems with this issue. I've been unable to get genuine Roneo ink and the thin ink I've been using, made thinner by the hot weather, resulted in problems of off-setting. To cure this I've had to slip-sheet every damn page which has meant running very slowly and

isn't going to read your fanzine then OK, go ahead and almost tell it like it nearly is. Otherwise...well, picture the events as they transpired...

Cas has come home from work, read XENOLITH, and gone to bed. Cas, you will note, does not lead a terribly exciting and eventful life. I, on the other hand, have come home from work, read XENOLITH, and gone to bed. The 'In-Crowd' we are not. I have also however, somewhere in amongst that hectic evening, gotten thoroughly smashed. Well, after all, I do have to go to bed *with Cas*. It is three o'clock in the morning.....

nudge-nudge-shake-nudge

"Whufnfl...flnf."

nudge-nudge-shake-POKE

"W?ss?mum???mumphnphmmmm..."

nudge-POKE-SLAM-SLAM-KICK

"Wuh? Wozzup? Wezzafire?"

"Do you think it was Whatsername?"

"Uh?????????"

"Whatsername...you know...with Bowers and that inflatable thingy in XENOLITH."

"Aw, for Christ's sake Cas - I was only a-bleeding-sleep, wasn't I!?"

"Yes, yes...but do you think it was?"

"What?"

"You know...Whatsername?"

"Bloody Hell Cas, it's...it's...JEEZUZ! IT'S THREE O'CLOCK IN THE SODDING MORNING, YOU STUPID DILDO!!!"

"Then again, perhaps it was Whatyercallher. Hmmm, what do you think? Where are you going?"

"For a piss. Want to come?"

I exit, shambling, stage-bogwards, stubbing my toe on the

vacuum cleaner that has been left on the landing, trip over the flex and, stumbling, stand hard upon the upturned prongs of the plug. Now, too late, I grope blindly for the lightswitch. With the glare comes full realisation of the headache caused by too much beer and too little sleep. I stagger into the toilet and sit down on the bog. The way things are going I'm not going to take the risk of pissing all over my feet. Returning I balefully note the positions of the various elements of the vacuum cleaner before switching off the light. Darkness however does not descend. Light now spills forth onto the landing from our bedroom. A nameless chilling dread clutches icy fingers upon my heart, a sensation only partly attributable to the indigestion caused by too much beer and too little sleep.

In the bedroom all is chaos. Cas sits cross-legged in the centre of the bed amidst a jumble of what were once alphabetically filed fanzines. Cas has taken down all the copies of XENOLITH, in which Bill might have mentioned Whatsername. Cas has pulled forth all the copies of OUTWORLDS in case Whatyer-callher is an old flame. Cas has dumped on the bed every copy of every fanzine to which Bill might have written a letter mentioning Thingummy. Cas is doing research.

I know when I am beaten. I might as well go downstairs and do some typing. Perhaps I can salvage something from the wreckage of this night. But first I swear a solemn and a mighty vow:-

"Bill Bowers: One day you will get yours!"

12 August 1980 (Skel)

Today's 'Daily Express' reveals that the BBC are to screen a TV version of 'The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy' in the new season. I look forward to this more in hope than anticipation. At least with a radio play the listener doesn't image cardboard sets.

I've just discovered another poptsacd detailing further the journeyings of the Mearae:- "Here we are in scenio Gloucestershire, along with half the American nation and billions of flies."

One can only wonder at the intelligence of so many Americans, that they should flock to a county that is such a dead-and-alive hole that the height of excitement is counting the flies. It certainly is a ~~pretty~~ wonderful thing.

JONI STOPA Box 177, Wilmot, Wisconsin 53192, U.S.A.

Funny thing happened the other day, I found a small friendly dog on the dining room table. I removed it quickly lest it make a mess. It's bad enough to constantly chase the cats off the table, let alone a dog.....not that the dining room table isn't a mess, it looks like a hybrid between a garden centre and a book shop. My husband litters it with books and I add in seed packets, fertilizer and flats. We clean off just enough area at mealtimes to put down our plates.

I know what you mean about being shy. Most fans laugh when I tell them that I am shy. I am...in a strange sort of way. I can become tongue-tied when I'm in a roomful of people I don't know (Who are they all and what am I doing here?) and even if I know some of the people I am hesitant to break into their conversation. I'm always afraid it might be private, or that I might not be wanted. Particularly the latter. Not to mention the fear of what you call the Dave Langford Effect, watching other peoples words spill over the floor like marbles, while I sit there like a marble...statue.

Strangely enough, I can talk to neo's to make them feel more comfortable among fans. That personality trait has gotten me into more conversations on their pet topics like 'Media SF' (yawn) or even 'Comics'. These conversations usually end as soon as I spot a familiar face that I've got to talk to immediately!

You mentioned that you hardly noticed we yanks at Seacon. To what then do I attribute the fact (undeniable) that a small friendly dog ended up among the seed packets, flats, books etc?

SURELY YOU REMEMBER...

.....that ~~pretty~~ handsome fan who sought refuge in your

post-con room party when the hotel started to re-assert its muscle and throw out non-residents. Come to think of it you were probably too busy necking in the corner with Ian Williams. (*flashback* : "Has she kissed him yet?"

"Yup."

"Oh, she already knows then..."

"What? Knows what?"

"That he doesn't change into a handsome Prince.")

I do however, have one question: "What the fuck are 'flats', when they are at home with their boots on?"

Joni also offered to pay postage on future issues, as have one or two others in the past. The offer is appreciated but 'No Thanks'. Getting the zine to you is my part of the deal. There are some things a man has gotta do...and paying his own postage is one of them. How could I stand on my own two feet if I were a kept fan?

NEWSFLASH - COLOPHON PRE-EMPTS WOFAN/ANSIBLE POLL RESULTS STOP

Not a bloody mention! And look at some of the stuff that's in there. "Surely SFD is better than some of this stuff, uh Cas? Why does nobody love me?" "Perhaps it's because you're such a loathesome creep, dear." "Oh." Exit subdued faned, between *sobs*. Have you ever tried to exit between *sobs*? You get these terribly wet shoulders. What we have here is an incipient identity crisis. If I didn't think SFD was a shit hot fnz I wouldn't be producing it, but if you buggers don't hurry up and appreciate me I'll...I'll...I'll pick all the bogies out of my nose and...and...I'll flick 'em at yer. That is what I'll do. I'll flick 'em at yer. Then I'll jump up and down and scream and shout lots and I'll have a heart attack and I'll die and then you'll be sorry...(won't you?)...(uh?).

MARY MUSHLING LONG 1338 Crestview Dr, Springfield, IL 62702.

I've only scanned through the mag, but something that stuck in my mind was the account of the purchase of the - er -

prepared to shave my manly chin I discovered large chunks of wood embedded in the blade. Closer examination revealed these to be shards of pencil. Who, in their right mind, would use my razor to sharpen their pencil when the house is full of sharp knives? "Not me" chorused three small voices. On another occasion my razor was jammed with bits of a red substance and slid waxily over my stubbled countenance. Now that same person had taken to sharpening a wax crayon with my new twin-blade razor. "Not me." in the same three tones. I told them that instead of spending all their time sharpening pencils and such with my razor they should do some useful jobs around the house. "Oh, no." came the chorused reply. A perfect example of three-toned sloth.

I never did discover who was misusing my razor and it remains a mystery to this day. Then it dawned on me that this was nothing new. Exactly this problem had plagued married fans with children in previous decades, to such an extent that it had been fannishly enshrined as 'The Shaver Mysteries'.

ALYSON ABRAMOWITZ . 33 Sylvia St., Apt.2, Lexington, MA 02173.

I don't believe that I'd heard about the fan room at the Seacon before. It sounds like an idea we ought to try here in the States. Tho' I've begun to wonder if fanzine fans just haven't given up large regionals altogether. I put on the fan-nish programming over my birthday weekend at Bosklone. If I hadn't been so involved in getting things to work right at the con, I'd have had a pretty bad time. As it was, I never had time to think about it. Most of the people that I'd have wanted to show up at the con (fanzine fan-wise) simply weren't there.

Ah, it looks like Rick Sneary can pronounce at least part of my name right. But I bet he'd pronounce it ABRAMowitz rather than ABROMowitz (which is really how it's pronounced).

Skel, you really don't project any sort of shyness on paper yet one of the things that surprised me when I visited your home was that I spent most of my time talking to Cas (who

I really hadn't had any sense of print personality of). It's one of the things that I regretted about my trip. I got the impression, at Disclave, that Terry Hughes had found you other than quiet and was very surprised at my description. Oh well.

You, however, should have it VERY easy with Dave Langford. At least your accents have some vague similarity (not much, but some). Dave and I were hopeless. Have you ever met our George Flynn? He may be the American equivalent of Dave for he too has this - to me anyway - funny accent and he also talksvery-fastandallblurredtogether. I'll be interested in seeing the two of them together at the worldcon this year.

AH, BUT...

...does George cock his head to one side and carry on the whole breakneck conversation with an invisible parrot apparently perched on your left shoulder? If so, the confrontation should really be something.

Aw c'mon now. You didn't spend all that time talking to Cas. What you really mean is that you spent so much time being talked to by Cas. Actually it's odd that Cas's nervousness and mine are so opposite in their effects. When confronted with a 'stranger' I clam up and Cas talks incessantly, as many will testify...and yet can I get the bugger to type up any of her 'Astounding Stories of Supermarket Management' for your edification and delight? Can I hell! Another odd thing is I don't recall having much to say to Terry at the con, which is one of my chief regrets...although this wasn't so much from shyness as from the awe in which I hold someone who can edit a zine like MOTA with such ease and panache ("Er, er, Mr. Hughes, sir, er, hello..."). Scintillating stuff, uh?

I'm glad we've finally got the pronunciation of your name sorted out...but you've still got it wrong. Thank god we here in England stick with simple names like 'Cholmondley Featherstonehalgh' (pronounced 'Chumly Fanshaw' as any fool can see).

Alyson's copy of SFD had crossed the atlantic more times than Sir Freddie Laker's Skytrain in an effort to catch up with

our wandering jewel, causing her comment:- "I always thought that the PO simply threw away any fanzines that weren't able to be delivered overseas. I've never gotten any back myself."

Not so, at least not in this country and maybe the US Post Office daren't throw away one of my fnz for fear of causing an international incident. After all, they don't know how insignificantly unimportant and worthless I really am. Look, for all they know it could be the Queens fnz, couldn't it, published from her Cheshire estate?

MICHAEL ASHLEY 86 St. James Road, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 2DB.

First off, the shyness thing. For me at least fanzines provide a cure for this insidious disease in several ways. The major one is that I can simply communicate as I'm doing at the moment. To be honest, if I was face to face with you I'd probably run out of things to say and either go red or run away or do both. Sitting calmly on my own I can collect my thoughts and say what I have to say...perhaps not very well but a damned sight better than I could in conversation. Take my last letter where, I recall, I was chatting away quite nicely about the odd way Mitcham bar staff pour Guinness and ways in which underage drinkers can get away with being underage drinkers. None of it particularly relevant or world-shattering stuff of course, but I could hardly have expressed it at all as well verbally without resort to my stock phrases of "Um", "Er" and "You see". More than likely I'd have kept my mouth shut.

The second reason why fanzines are a pretty good refuge for shy people is that, while your average fan in the street may not have much to contribute to the heated discussions that occur about football/cars/motorbikes/etc., he probably will have something to say (and occasionally something worth saying) about SF and fandom...and though he may start off talking about why Asimov is God in some tedious, wide-circulation sercon zine he may eventually end up rattling on and on about - well, almost anything in a small-circulation, friendly personalzine. So fandom can provide the outlet for all that has been previously bottled up due to shyness. Sober and thought provoking stuff but I'd better get on to the real content of this letter:

viz, "Alcohol: Disturbing Trends Among Young People".

You're right when you say that there's a trend among young drinkers to go for tasteless lagers. However, quite a few do graduate onto slightly more substantial drinks as they get older. I suppose I'm a case in point here: I started off my drinking days (it must be at least three weeks ago) drinking lager but have since become generally dissatisfied with the taste, or lack of it. As a rule I now drink whatever the local beer is. But then perhaps the dark ages are not yet upon us. When I went to South Wales for a geography field-trip two weeks ago I noted that of the eight who went from my school, five of us were drinking local(ish) bitters (Allbright and Manns, for example) while only three drank lager.... Civilization may yet be saved.

DANGER COMMENCE EMERGENCY SHUTDOWN PROCEDURE.

This issue was to have been a bumper 60 pages and due out by the end of September, but...I've just made up a dummy copy and tried to fold and staple it for posting and it's no go. So it looks like I'm gonna have to squeeze into a maximum of 50pp which I've just confirmed is OK...and I've got a trip report to squeeze in yet just to please Joseph Nicholas. Hmmm, looks as if some LoCs are really going to have to get trimmed to the bone, or squeeze out altogether. Lets see...

LEA M. DAY has also been on a welsh pub crawl: "When I was in Wales they had this really great 'Felinfoel Ale' and I never saw it anywhere outside of Wales either (it was that lethal) but, oh, it was good." Ah yes, good old 'Feelin'awful Ale'. Ever eccentric, DAVE ROWE sent me some egoboo on GROGGY (boy, is your filing system in a mess, Dave!) and took me to task over my boring reading lists. See, Dave, not a book mentioned this time. God, the things I do to please some people. No, don't thank me Dave, ~~just send the money~~. TIM MARION admires my honesty of expression (shucks) and thinks I'm breaking barriers and like that, but wonders, regarding my 'Thrilling Vibrator Tales Of Sex And Super-Science', "How does Cas feel about your implicating her in all this?" 'Satisfied', Tim, is how she feels. Apropos of nothing at all CHRIS LEWIS, who got

one of those old TZTHNNs I mentioned on page 30, says that the Langford Faancon report therein had "...a certain 'joie de vivre'..." and that it "...made me realise what people mean by saying his recent fanwriting seems forced." Ho-ho, chuckle chuckle. How do you like them apples, Langford? RON SALOMON reveals that the latest trend on US TV is shows about Garbage Men, with at least three different series on the go. Do you think perhaps the programme planners are laughing at us? We had a show over here about six years ago Ron, called 'The Dustbin Men' or somesuch, but it was universally trashed. Ron also says that a 12" mono TV would cost the equivalent of £30 (inc. tax) whereas over here it would be £70 unless you picked a real cheapo. ERIC BENTCLIFFE suspects that Mike Meara's "...apathy towards the teaming refugee millions is due in part to the same reason as mine, their own governments apparent lack of desire/intent to do anything for them, including educating them not to do the things that cause them to become teaming refugee millions in the first place. Asia being a typical example with floods, annual floods causing tremendous hardship and yet the Indian, Pakistan and Bangla-desh governments do nothing to discourage people living in the areas where they know the flooding will take place." LEIGH EDMONDS stands foursquare behind Mike Glicksohn when he says "I particularly appreciated your comments on TAFF. They apply equally as well to DUFF or GUFF. Your other comments on fanzine fans and con fans also relates because as there are more and more fans active in cons alone they will begin standing for TAFF (as you may notice the Americans already are). It seems to me to be a real devaluation of the importance of the funds when they transport people who are not well known where they are going." This seems an ideal place for me to blushingly thank the ~~whiffles~~ three Australian fans who've suggested I stand for GUFF ("Hey Cas, see, somebody likes me.) and to point out the unsuitability of a GUFF candidate who has problems meeting large numbers of new people("Are you a 'new' parson?" "Nope, I've been around for ages.")). Still in Australia JACK R. HERMAN says "My preference has always been for bitter or "old" (ie. very dark beer). Like the States there is a growing influx of the low alcohol beers onto the market in the last year. Most of them have no flavour at all. We've had the weight-watchers beer for some time but it

was never a big seller." Jack also mentioned that he's just recently heard the second series of 'The Hitch-Hikers Guide' and that he's been bed-ridden for the last five weeks. I did not think it was quite that bad, Jack. IRWIN HIRSH has returned alive from three months in the USA and says, "The best beer I tasted in that three months was Dos Equis which is, as Harry pointed out, a Mexican beer. I did like about three other beers, but the only one that I remember the name of is Michelob Light. The biggest surprise was that Coors was absolutely lousy; I had heard many good things about that beer and I was expecting to at least like it a little. But the worst beer I tasted would have to be the 'Export Fosters Lager'. I'm glad that the Fosters Lager available here is not the export quality, because I would be totally off beer if that was the stuff that was readily available." I'm beginning to think that fans should be divided into two categories: 'Inactive Fans' and 'Australian Fans'. One week I got five zines, three LoCs and a PoC...and they were all from Australia. BERNIE PERK says "It is said that inside every introvert there is an extrovert too shy to come out. Are fans closet extroverts?" God, yes Bernie I can talk about closets for hours once I get started. Why, I've got this wardrobe upstairs you wouldn't believe... (which is why I keep it upstairs. Who wants a lying wardrobe in the lounge?). Bernie also revealed the reason he doesn't vote for the Hugos...he is still waiting for his Suncon voting forms.

" About time we started a new paragraph boss. ROGER SJOLAND SJOLANDER wrote, "Your Seacon report was funny, especially the comment you gave to the 'filthy rich' Swedish fen. I'm still not out of debt, even though I don't owe much." PETER CAMPBELL says, "I was intrigued to hear of 'The Curse Of The Guinea Pigs Tomb'. Perhaps if this keeps up you can write a book about your experiences, sell it to the papers, a major book publisher and have a movie made. You can call it 'The Bowland Close Horror' and become a millionaire from the royalties. Also, while you're working your balls off to pay for your new TV I'll be watching our new 22" colour set we 've just won in a raffle - makes you sick, doesn't it?" Of course it doesn't, you snivelling little worm of a lucky turd. No, seriously, I know that my turn will come. One day I will win something...but what'll I do with a lifetime's supply of tinned rice pudding?

not very extensive as yet but they are soon to be increased once the bison, wolf and reindeer bones discovered in a newly-explored side passage have been dated.

Upon emerging from the caverns we had a 4 mile walk back across the top of the moors. The sun was out but there was no danger of us suffering from the heat as the wind was the strongest I've ever known. By the time we got down to Pately Bridge the town in the valley, it was lunchtime and we knew we'd been for a walk, alright. Once out of the wind the full force of the sun became apparent and it was no wonder the others were soon laughing every time they looked at me, calling me 'Tomato Face' and other terms of endearment. As soon as we'd rested we headed back up onto the heath, via a particular 'nature walk' that Cas had read about. We climbed up through a wooded defile and across a stream and came eventually to Crocodile Rock from which could be seen Ravensgill and the surrounding areas of Upper Nidderdale which the guidebook describes as a beautiful gorge with few superiors, a description which is arguably understated. Throughout the day the views just completely wiped me out. We were unable to contact the taxi that had taken us out in the morning so we had to settle for a local man to take us back to Asenby. He ran a firm of building-contractors and funeral directors (an odd conglomerate) whilst acting as a private-hire driver in his spare time so we returned home that evening in a shiny new hearse.

I'd picked up a touch of flu so we only went on a ten mile local walk on the Thursday. We swung out in a large circle through Cundall, Norton-le-Clay out to RAF Dishforth. It was not meant to be a ten mile walk but we couldn't cut across the Dishforth aerodrome because training flights were in progress and so we had to retrace our steps the long way around instead of completing the final (short) arc of the circle. We could tell we were in a country area for whilst walking to work with Cas we only see run-over cats, toads and the occasional hedgehog but here were dead shrews, rabbits, pigeons and grouse, a much better class of carcass. Before we go anywhere, the wildlife of the area appears to rush out onto the roads and die en masse. On the Friday it was time to return to Stockport, via the ubiquitous Ripon, then Knaresborough and back to Harrogate

for the train journey back. I'd been looking forward to the trip to Knaresborough more than any other part of the holiday but unfortunately my flu was at its peak that day and I was at my lowest. A shame, because Knaresborough is certainly a very picturesque town and the weather that day was perfect for a row on the river.

Graffiti from assorted British Railway toilets:- "The meek shall inherit the Earth...if that's alright with everyone else" "Reincarnation is making a comeback." and "Why is Younger's Tartan Bitter like making love in a punt? They're both fucking close to water."

After spending the Saturday resting up I was fortunately fully recovered on the Sunday as we were taking up a long standing invitation to go out to Holmes Chapel and visit with Eric Bentcliffe, Beryl and Lindsey. We all had a very pleasant, quiet day except for the hectic badminton session where Eric took unfair advantage of our ineptitude, displaying consummate skill whilst our racquets circumnavigated the shuttlecock with verve and elan but little success. I gained my revenge at Pick-a-Stick. Eric had such bad luck with his goes that I caught him eyeing me speculatively, presumably wondering if I were using telekinesis to cause the sticks to move when it was his turn to pick up a tricky stick.

I tried my first Scotch pancakes, or 'drop scones' for tea with maple syrup, also for the first time. Delicious. Unfortunately the only part of me not recovered was my appetite and I was unable to take full advantage of Beryl's hospitality. Alas, too soon it was time to return home, even though Bethany hadn't quite managed to drink all the coke and lemonade. We vowed to return and Eric promised to get his balls fixed for the next such occasion...so that we might try our hands at the infamous croquet for which Holmes Chapel is fannishly renowned.

