

INFERNO



Beware
the Ides
of
Eastercon !!



This is INFERNO 7 (What? Already? Number seven? Doesn't seem like that many issues.....) dedicated to total trivia and nothing of any consequence whatsoever, excepting of course the twin dogmas of 'BRITAIN'S FINE IN '79' and the somewhat more parochial 'OWENS PARK WILL BE FANSPASTIC IN '76' (He never could rhyme worth a damn anyway!) This issue is, as usual, brought to you with the good graces of Skel 'n Cas from:-
25 Bowland Close; Offerton; Stockport; Cheshire; SK2 5NW.

5 JANUARY 1975 (SKEL)

Oh well, it wasn't to be. Last issue Cas insisted that she was going to start the ball rolling and ended up not even in the zine at all. This time she was definitely going to set things in motion. She even started writing something. So what am I doing here? Well, she started writing something, but she never finished it. A cold spell set in and she went into hibernation or something. Every so often I would stumble across her curled up form, snoring snugly in some remote corner of the skelhouse. Time passed but unfortunately desultory kicks only brought forth such grunted remarks as "Change Bethany's nappy" or "Stop it George". More time passed and still nothing. Alas I could wait no longer. When it was time for America the founding fathers were not found wanting; when it came time for a nice ride in the country the Light Brigade were swiftly into the saddle. Could I do less when it was time for INFERNO 7?

However, whilst still hoping against vain hope I committed several bits to paper and this is the explanation for the apparent reversal in the time-flow between this piece and the next one. First though let me take this opportunity of wishing you all a reasonably happy new year, though of course one that is no happier than mine.....nearly as happy.....but if I catch one of you having a happier new year than I it will be the last time I ever wish him anything. You have been warned!

2 DECEMBER 1974 (SKEL)

It's almost a month since I last typed anything up for INFERNO. Everytime I detected the impulse to get in typing

again I would pummel said impulse to a pulp and kick it into a corner where it would cringe and snivel for a while. Unfortunately this impulse bears a startling resemblance to the skel-babe, Bethany, who's development is showing signs of becoming arrested. So, no greater love hath any man than to give up his soul for the child he loves. Besides, according to her size as of now, she is going to be over three feet tall when she is two years old which, according to some theory or other, means she will be about six-feet-some when she grows up AND SHE WILL BE HUGE AND ENORMOUS AND SHE WILL HATE ME AND SHE WILL HIT ME AND THUMP AND BASH ME AND STOMP ME AND GOUGE MY EYE OUT AND KICK ME IN THE GOOLIES and generally not be friends. So I will leave her alone and she will love me. Trouble is, The Impulse will get me. Here it comes now.....or is it Bethany? Please ghod let it be Bethany! Here, come to Daddy. That's a good *GHURK*....."What's this? Nearly a month gone and this is all you've typed? C'mon c'mon, get with it or I will be forced to reveal to the world what you did with that putrid banana." Oh ghod no, not the putrid banana episode.....I'd never live it down. I'd have to gafiate, even though Cas said it didn't hurt at all. Well, not much, anyway.

Actually what kicked me back into gear again was getting STARFIRE 4. It's obvious Bill that you just don't have the talent for true fannish writing. Why, in your editorial you give us several pages of totally interesting and unboring personal reminiscences and all the time you had available a subject of such unsurpassable tedium as you skipped over on page three....."I have always lived my life among adluts."

Oh, what scope was there. The Adluts, that little known race from the hinterlands of the Orinoco basin who are so shy and secretive that even I haven't heard of them.....and you have actually lived among them, broken bread with them, so to speak, observing all their strange tribal rituals. There are innumerable faannish articles here for the writing, Bill, ranging from 'Turd Hurling Among The Juvenile And Pre-Adolescent Adluts' for RITBLAT/GRIM NEWS, on through 'How The SFWA Brought New Meaning To The Sacred Writings Of The Adlut Peoples' for THE ALIEN CRITIC, to '30,000 Assorted Adlut Poems' for MADCAP. If you needed the feelthy lucre you could even have gone as

far as 'Dirty, Perverted And Exceedingly Rude Physical Practices Among The Heterosexual Adlut' for PENTHOUSE or PLAYBOY. Then again, thank ghod everybody isn't as doolally as like what I am.

Before I go onto something else though Bill, would you mind settling a bet for me? In what language was STARFIRE written? It bore a passing resemblance to English-as-she-is-~~misdeyed~~-spoken, but there were so many points of disimilarity that this couldn't really be more than coincidence. Yonkish? Serbo-Adlut??

Hey looky folks, I found someone who spells worse than I do and who doesn't hang her smalls out to dry in Whalley Range. Mind you, it took over three years.....

31 DECEMBER 1974 (SKEL)

Yes, 'tis the eve of the year nouveaux (nouvelle? Who knows? Who cares??) and here I sit typing INFERNO for you. No, that's a lie. I'm typing INFERNO for me. This fanzine is an ego trip, and no ego trips over its own feet more than mine. Here I sit (whoops, I already said that, didn't I? The reason will soon become apparent) drinking Cas's vodka (what'd I tell you? Cas says, "Thanks, Mike and Pat". I just say "Hicc!!" and make an incredible number of typo's).....listening to, of all things, Melanie blasting 'Ruby Tuesday' and 'What Have They Done To My Song, Ma?' through my headphones at a truly incredible volume. Cas is watching 'Star' on TV and I wanted to watch the cowie on the other channel. C'est la guerre!

Actually the reason Cas got her way for a change is that I had this commissioned artwork to do. My brother said to me on Christmas Day....."Can you draw me a vampire snail?" Not an unusual request. Well, the skelmother goes to evening classes for to learn how to paint china. As a sideline she does these incredibly kinky pot mugs with a name and a prippy transfer upon them. Instead of a transfer I had her put one of my original illo's onto mine. Such one-upmanship! Only now I've had to perpetrate a skelish original for my brother's cup (I hope it runs over) and if it comes out OK no doubt I'll

have to do one for the other skelbrother, any number of skel-relatives and anyone who lives within two hundred miles of the skelresidence. Ah, such is fame.....

THE INKREDIBUL LIMERICK PHENOMENON

Well, les Mearae were here this weekend and we played cards. Unbelievably, considering the number ow times we have gotten together, this was the first time we'd played cards.... if you could call it that. After all, any evening that starts off with nine fluid ounces of Tequila (between three), two tablespoons of honey, sod-it-no-lemons-try-a-bit-of-lime-cordial, hmmm, too sweet...try a bit of gin, hmmm...more gin, hmmm...maybe, try a bit more gin. It's getting there, just a bit more gin. Cherry vodka? Ok....hmmm, yes, but it would take too much vodka, try a bit more gin. Hmmm, that's better, just a bit more gin. HMMMMMM

That was the first drink.

Since the rule seemed to be that one drank half this and then topped it up with anything that was going it's a wonder we got any further. Then, after a magnum of Italian dry red wine, it wasn't too surprising that Mike should come out with the first two lines of a dirty limerick, then sit there inscrutably studying his cards whilst the drink befuddled mind of someone who's name we won't go into here, completed it as follows.....

There was a young lady from Genoa
who's knockers sank lower and lower
'til suddenly one night
she got one hell of a fright
when her nipples rubbed off on the floor.

..... Pat and I won that rubber, but one bottle of 'Chateau-Neuf-du-Pape '71' accompanied by.....

There was a young Girl from Vancouver,
liquid parafin never could move her.
On a Saturday night

she would try dynamite
then clean up the mess with a Hoover.

.....and we were level, one rubber each. A bottle of an incredibly cheap Portugese dry red wine enabled Cas and Mike to take a temporary advantage by winning the third rubber but also provided the best limerick of the night in.....

There was a young girl from Toronto
who said "Get your trousers off pronto."
For what could be stranger
than to fuck the Lone Ranger
'cept maybe cunnilingus with Tonto?

A bottle of medium-dry hock failed to provide any limerick at all, but did leave the evening all square at two all. It was then turned three-thirty and as I (why just me?) had to get up at seven o'clock the next (same?) morning to go to work, the evening was brought to a premature close.

I always seem to enjoy myself tremendously when we manage to get together with Mike and Pat. It is a terrible pity therefore that if they don't hurry up and produce the last issue of LURK and my verdammt artverk I will probably swing fer dem.

I will also swing fer Chone Sharpe, if she doesn't get zoon into print der artverk I did vor her over eighteen months ago. Hey Chone? Zod dis verks magazine, uh?

I also spent part of this weekend (I'm a lousy host) doing a cover and a couple of interior illo's for CYPHER. If your next issue of CYPHER doesn't have a skelcover then you'll know that Jim must have slung it back at me. About time too. This will be the first skelstuff rejected since that occasion when I was just coming into fandom and that cruel, heartless Terry Jeeves rejected an incredibly bad poem of mine, thus arresting my development for several years (it comes out next week) and causing me great pain and disgronfment. I have achieved this phenomenal success by the simple expedient of not doing anything for anybody, thus ensuring that they couldn't reject my

stuff. Rejection hurt. I wanted to swim but I didn't want to get wet. Excessive immaturity, but to this day the memory of how much that rejection hurt me has made me exceedingly wary of risking such rejection again. Aha, but along comes Jim Goddard and suddenly the cobwebs are all blown away. The prospect of Jack Gaughan following Kevin Cullen and then in turn being followed by.....Skel??? It's so bizarre that after I'd stopped laughing I noticed the absence of fear for the first time in years. Just like that, I don't care anymore. It's good to be free again.

A QUOTE

"History divides, without being forced, into epochs."

John J. Alderson - CHAO 15, August 1974.

What it needs is some of that new-fangled 'epochsy resin'.

JAMES GODDARD Plovers Barrow; School Road; Nomansland; Wilts.

Here I am at last writing to thank you for the artwork you sent for CYPHER 13. The stuff you sent is eminently suitable and I'll feel privileged to use it. If you feel like doing a couple more I can certainly find a use for them?

SKELBROTHER, VERBALLY.....

No, it's not quite what I had in mind. I want a vampire snail that's much more evil looking, one that's about to pounce, with saliva dripping from its fangs and its cloak billowing out behind it.

15 JANUARY 1975 (SKEL)

It's kinda like having a rattlesnake leap upon you and smother you with kisses, and then while you're recovering a prippy butterfly flits lightly down upon your toe.....and chews your foot off.

Somedays one definitely shouldn't bet on horses!

DAVE ROWE 8 Park Drive; Wickford; Essex; SS12 9DH.

INTERNO arrived a month ago but owing to many reasons I've only just got around to reading it and I still have about six weeks' magazines and correspondence to catch up on. If you haven't guessed already, this also means no cover. 'Watership Down' arrived from the library and then 'Shardik'. Now that's 400 and 525 pages respectively and I'm a slow-slow reader. Result.....very little done in December except reading. If I can get things going I might get your cover done, but the way things are don't expect it 'til after Season.

I really enjoyed INTERNO, your writing is clear and highly enjoyable, although to be pedantic, you did end the piece about 'Forbidden Planet/Star Trek rather abruptly and you should have credited Kevin Hall with his piece at the beginning, otherwise it gives the impression that you wrote it. I also mistook Phil Payne's letter for one by Terry Jeeves and nearly had a heart attack.....and cut my finger on one of the staples, something which hasn't happened since RITBLAT 2. Ghod! I expect that from Pickershit, but from you?!!!?

I saw John and Pete about the non-arrival of your copies of BIG SCAB, EGG and PR2, but they were both in a pre-Xmas drunken haze, so whether or not it sank in I couldn't say. Cas asked me to give Fred a hug. I did so verbally, being at the One Tun at the time - it would have started unseemly rumours if I'd done otherwise.

Thanks for the Xmas card by the way. I didn't send any, except to Bob and Mary who kept saying it would be more economical to send last year's Xmas cards.....so this Xmas they got one signed "Auntie Alice & Uncle Stan....& Dave".

"WHAT AN INCREDIBLY FAAANISH IDEA!" HE THOUGHT.....

But it's absolutely shit-brilliant! (I'm just getting round to reading 'Bug Jack Barron' so please excuse any over-spill.....if you can work out which bits are foul-mouthed me and which bits are foul-mouthed Spinrad, that is) I'm surprised it isn't already a fanish institution to send out the

Xmas cards one recieved the previous year. There's a poetry of the soul in that idea. Imagine getting such a card..... not only has one got the card, but an interesting time seeing where it's been ('Look, Dave got it from Fred - that'll be Fred Hemmings, don't you think? - who got it from - what's that say luv? Can't make it out, looks a bit like 'Turdhead'.....must be a ratfan.....). Then there are all the non-fannish cards that are just names without faces.....'Aunty Glad and Uncle Julius', 'Mrs. Nurtscratcher, and all at number 46'. Enigmas all. Much better, don't you think, than just saying, "Oh, it's from Dave Rowe.....about time that sod sent us one."

Then again, there's always the pleasure of bucking the system. After all, if one accepts the idea of sending Xmas cards there is nothing therein which would preclude the use of a card which has been used before and it would be a great blow against conspicuous and ostentatious waste. How much of our resources are squandered simply so that we can all send out new christmas cards each year? Not only the trees that go into making the paper, the hard energy squandered, but also the wasted time of everybody involved in such an unproductive triviality. 95% of these people would then be able to do something worthwhile, always assuming that there is something worthwhile for them to do. See, I knew it all the time..... Xmas cards are a social evil, probably invented by some dirty commie rat just to undermine our society.

The reason I didn't get the 'Britain In '79' progress report seems to be simply that they sent it out with the Seacon stuff and I'm not yet registered for Seacon. I still feel that it's a downright liberty though. They were eager enough to take Cas's and my money, but they can't be bothered keeping track of who's paid what. It's especially diabolical when Pete Presford does get a copy of the progress report and he isn't even a supporting member. I'm really pissed off about this. I think it is rank bad manners.

I don't know who is responsible for sending out the progress reports but I can't help tying it in with Pete Roberts because he seems to have a mental block when it comes to sending me anything. Despite a personal approach on my part and

his assurance that he'd send me a zine "Right after the Con", I have never, in the 3-4 years I've been active in fandom - repeat never, recieved anything from Pete, with the sole exception of a copy of EGG postmailed to my first OMPA mailing. Mind you, this is no longer confined to Pete of course. In the last year the only zines I've recieved from south of my downstairs toilet have been SPI and THE WRINKLED SHREW. Oh, for the sake of complete accuracy, add to that two issues of CHECKPOINT and a WARK. Hive of activity down there isn't it?

Are the publishers using subliminal advertising nowadays?
~~~~~read 'Watership Down'~~~~~  
Could be, everybody seems to be reading it. Somehow it's just never appealed to me but this evening I noticed that it is out in paperback, so maybe I'll have a word with my bank manager and see if I can arrange a 60p overdraft to finance the broadening of my literary horizons.

You cut your finger on one of the staples??? Now that is the criticism that really hurts, Dave. It hurts because all other faneds bung in the staples and send out the fanzine. I don't. I have more regard for the safety of my readers than all those other guys. In order that you don't catch your fingers on my staples I take every fanzine that I produce, turn it over and hammer down every staple individually. This I do for you Dave, selflessly, without thought of reward, knowing in my heart of hearts that Ghu is watching and is noting my consideration and is reserving me a turn at the handle of The Heavenly Mimeo so that I too can produce a Golden-Age Fanzine for that great APA in the sky.....and you go and cut your sodding finger. ~~I hope it turns septic!~~ No Ghu, I didn't say that, honest.....it was just a joke.....honest, Dave'll tell you, won't you Dave? Won't you?? .....Dave???

21 JANUARY 1975 (SKEL)

OK folks, just stack the chairs around the sides of the room and push the table into the corner. We gonna set the scene a little. Just got this tremendous letter from Mike Meara which I want to share with you, but in order for you to really appreciate it and laugh your guts out I'm going to have

to fill in some of the background. Hope I can do it, 'cos I really got a charge out of and it would be the crime of the century to waste it on an audience of two. So let's try.....

## SYNOPSIS

THE SKELENTITY, in an attempt to exert his evil domination over the duplicate tau-cosmos, is collecting whisky labels. Not even the Dons of the Interstellar Institute of Wombat Throttling, secret masters of the Six Galaxies, have been able to discover the method by which he intends to exert his dark dominion. Unable, because of the sheer enormity of what is at stake, to work on the assumption that he is just a cretinous snot-sucker who's booze-sodden brain has finally given up its last vestiges of sanity, the Dons have secretly sought to discourage THE SKELENTITY by substituting a glue of extra-galactic stickyness for that normally used by terran distillers.

After two attempts to float the beautiful red/gold/black label off a bottle of 'Glen Flagler 8 Year Old Pot Still Malt Whisky' had ended in abject failure and resulted only in a handful of soggy pulpy shreds, it looked like the universe would be saved. Frustrated THE SKELENTITY withdrew into himself, beat the Skelwife, shouted at the Skelkids and so full of self-doubt, didn't dare to make the attempt with his third and last empty 'Glen Flagler' bottle.

At this dark hour in the fortunes of the skelplan along came the hero, ELRIC of SPONDON, and his trusty wife, STORM-BRINGER (it always pisses down when they come). That night after the feasting ELRIC, in his cups, boasted of his prowess at soaking off wine labels. Sensing once more a chance to become all-powerful and do naughty things (and maybe rude things too-YUK-yuk-yuk) THE SKELENTITY took advantage of ELRIC of SPONDON's generous nature and persuaded him to soak off his whisky label for only a few hundred pounds.

ELRIC hastened back to his fortress and by the means of much arcane lore and majiks, and with great difficulty, he managed to overcome and nullify the extra-galactic stickyness of the Six Galaxies glue.

Remembering this Tricky-Dicky-Stickyness THE SKELENTITY did not even attempt to float off the different black and gold label from his 'Glen Flagler Ghu Knows How Old But Definitely Cheaper Pot Still Malt Whisky'. He gave it straight to his dread companion who had again travelled up from Spondon (in order to pick up his trusty wife STORMBRINGER whom he had forgotten in the haste of his previous return). Right, now forget all this crap and read on.....

MIKE MEARA 61 Borrowwash Road; Spondon; Derby.

Paul, here are the whisky labels what I have soked off the botule... At a water temperature of  $57.3$  degrees Centigrade, the anterior label adhesive strength fell below that of the intramicrostructure of the cellulose fibres, allowing simple manual removal with a peel angle of  $23$  degrees  $\pm 10\%$ , in a time of only  $17.4$  seconds. Colour degradation by high-temperature hydrolysis was negligible when checked by reflectance spectrophotometry at  $4153$  angstroms. One may theorise that prevailing economic conditions have necessitated a transition to an inferior but less expensive adhesive, and/or a reduction in the coating weight ( $\text{g}/\text{cm}^2$ ). Conversely, the less important posterior label displayed considerable resistance to the aqueous immersion technique; water at  $65$  degrees Centigrade for  $10$  minutes had little effect apart from a serious deterioration of cohesion at right-angles to the fibre orientation. Attempted manual separation at any peel angle quickly resulted in  $100\%$  loss of cohesion and the separation and subsequent loss of several small fragments (approx.  $1.2\%$  of label area). Experimental verification confirmed the presence of the Szvairvtrdz effect, viz. that the atmosphere within a radius of  $93\text{cm.}$  of the experimenter's vocal apparatus was radiating strongly in the blue region of the visible spectrum. Removal was eventually effected by the insertion of a tungsten-edged steel micro-separator, Gillette Safety Type 2, or 'Razor-Blade', whereby with rapid oscillatory motions (amplitude approx.  $3\text{mm.}$ ) parallel to the axis of symmetry of the container, the paper-glass interface was induced to traverse laterally at an average rate of  $2\text{mm}/\text{hour}$ . Unfortunately the stress pattern set up had a maximum amplitude in excess of the intramicrostructural strength, resulting in dimensional in-

stability, and a type of induced non-planarity known as 'crinkling', with resultant shrinkage at right-angles to the major axis. Leading scientists have proposed three theories regarding the differential adhesivity of the two labels:

- (a) The greater exposure of the anterior label to ultra-violet radiation found in sunlight and certain types of fluorescent shop-lighting causes stress-cracking and eventual de-polymerisation of the adhesive, resulting in severe strength loss.
- (b) For some reason so far unknown, the manufacturers regard the posterior label as more worthy of preservation than the anterior. Government departments are at present working on the theory that recent shipments of the product behind the Iron Curtain may have been used to transmit classified information in the form of a microdot concealed in a comma after the word 'whisky'. Possibly the label may be rendered easily detachable by the application of a secret formula known only to the intended recipients of the information.
- (c) The sodblasted glueing machine put too much damned glue on the fucker!

This last is regarded as unlikely.

N.B: Earlier samples of the product have carried a humeric or shoulder label bearing the legend "YEARS 8 OLD". This is believed to be an ancient Gaelic dialect of unknown origin. Linguistic experts have offered the following as possible translations:

- (1) "Not for Human Consumption"
- (2) "Here's Aytholde" (early Gaelic prince: 239-273 AD)
- (3) "Ye Arsey Tool" (trad. Scottish greeting and insult)
- (4) "My Hovercraft is Full of Eels"

Notwithstanding that '(4)' may indicate a hitherto unsuspected development in the mechanised inshore fishing of the early Christian era, '(1)' is considered my many to be the

most likely explanation. The absence of this label from the current sample has two implications:

- (1) It fell off.
- (2) The manufacturers have developed a process for removing various toxins found in earlier samples.

Nevertheless, it is clear that much remains to be learned about these strange transparent containers full of amber fluid, floating down our eastern coast in the grip of the West Scandinavian Drift. Where do they come from? No one knows, but I believe that one day we shall trace the origin of these amphorean anachronisms, and learn their exotic secret. (Fade up puzzled but oddly triumphant music. Roll end credits. Slow fade.....)

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22 JANUARY 1975 (SKEL)

No one will ever convince me, 'til the day I die, that the foregoing was not in the great tradition of true-faanish writing. I didn't think anyone could say "The front label soaked off quite easily, but the little one was a bastard like the last time." with such style. If you don't agree it's probably because I didn't set the mood and background well enough to let you into our private little world for a page or so. Letters like this I should get every day. No doubt about it. It's probably the best letter I've ever received. It's extremely personalised, original, humorous, bags of reaction to INFERNO 6, and damn long. More from this letter later, so's you can judge whether or not I'm getting carried away (mutter mutter...he should be carried away...mutter mutter).

PUBLISH AND BE SLAMMED

I seem to have taken a bit of stick for my piece on pornography, being accused of not knowing the difference between pornography and sex.....and even if I do know the difference I've got it all back to front (pause for groan from readers),



of doing perverted things with copies of 'Men Only' and of generally being a bit of a cretin. Those who agreed with me did so only up to a point, sort of....."Yes, you are so right, but where you are going wrong is.....".

Gee, but it's nice to be noticed!

30 JANUARY 1975 (SKEL)

OOOOH! Naughty words! (Nope, that's not strong enough) Very naughty words! It's not fair! It's not, it's dead rotten and horrible. Just a couple of days after unburdening my soul and whining at Pete Roberts he sends me EGG and the progress reports for 'Britain in '79'. Now I suppose I shall have to send him a snivelling apology. He's a right sod that Roberts.....how dare he send me his fanzine.....I mean, who asked him.....?

PETE ROBERTS 6 Westbourne Park Villas, London W2.

Well, look, there's no need at all for a "snivelling apology" - an abject, boot-licking one will do fine.

Actually you've got me pretty worried with all this seeing and festering; it means there's probably a bunch of other people also fuming and boiling out there - all unknown to me, as yet. Mea culpa - indeed, the UK79 PRs should have gone out earlier, or at least at roughly the same time. To save postage, I put them in with the Seacon reports - the two lists are almost identical for the first couple of hundred members (ie, those taken at Tynecon); the handful of Seacon members who hadn't joined the 79 bid also received copies to jolt their consciences (it worked quite well, in fact).

Exhausted by producing and posting off the reports, I couldn't face the task of going through the two lists and discovering the few people who still required UK in 79 PRs - I only got round to that last week and it turned out there were only five such in the UK; in other words, the task wasn't as difficult as I'd thought and I might as well have done it earlier. Ah well. I think you'll agree that the PR doesn't contain any vital and urgent news, but I suppose people waiting



for their copies weren't to know that. Oh dear.

As for the CP poll - I don't remember anything about that, I'm afraid. I usually try to write such requests down at cons, otherwise I'm bound to forget. I didn't and I forgot. Belatedly enclosed.....

I recently discovered something even better than a silverfish for the Mesklinite stakes. The only problem is that even I, with my vast and untapped knowledge of odd creatures, don't know what it is; I rather suspect that it is blessed with no more than a cold Latin tag. Silverfish-sized, this creature inhabits the bog along the landing. Not the nicest of habitats, but I'm able to observe it at my leisure. It's small and brown and looks much the same at either end - rather like a very compact millipede (the small, portable version). It has a friend - exactly the same, only smaller. It also has a device to protect itself from large-footed people: it exudes happiness. Honest, I could swear it does. I was delighted when I first saw it, though I'd normally object to Things crawling around the house. After that, I looked forward to seeing it again and chortled happily whenever I caught a glimpse of it. I even thought it a pleasant and wonderful thing that it had a buddy to go round with. I am not, nor ever have been, a loony. It's no more than a defence mechanism possessed by this nameless creature. Lovely beast. What price silverfish?

That's a mucky piece of shit-throwing at Ian Williams.

31 JANUARY 1975 (SKEL)

I was kind of worried over that 'Ian Williams piece. Shit, I like the guy! He was even staying with us the weekend before I wrote that piece. It was then that he'd asked me how I felt he'd handled it and I told him I thought he'd done pretty well all things considered. Then, a couple of days after he'd gone I changed my mind. Now the obvious answer was to write him a personal letter telling him this but, because I'd already said something in print on this subject, although only within the narrow confines of an OMPA mailing, I also

wanted to set my personal record straight in print. So I did the fannish thing and compromised: I typed out the stencils and then I took them to work the following day, took photocopies, and sent them to Ian with a note to the effect that they would be appearing in INFERNO and would he care to send me any rebuttal that he cared to make and I would undertake to print it later on in the same issue. Anything else seemed to me to be too much like shaking his hand to his face and then stabbing him in the back as soon as he turned around (Et tu Skel?). I still feel that I didn't act dishonourably, but I guess Ian feels differently.....I haven't heard from him since and small shreds of INFERNO 6 keep blowing in on the prevailing wind from Sunderland.

#### THERE ARE SOME THINGS WE ARE NOT MEANT TO KNOW.....

Yes indeedy, and I know just where these 'Things We Are Not Meant To Know' can be found. They are AAARGHH.....no, it's OK, I just spilled my drink, is all.....they are contained within the pages of 'The Fanzines We Are Not Meant To Receive'. That such fanzines do exist has been drawn forcibly to my notice this issue.

Well firstly there was this issue of TITLE that Dave Rowe wrote me about, saying that he'd reviewed INFERNO in a column therein, a copy of which I should have been receiving sometime early in December. I did not receive it. This was a shame because something about the way he mentioned it made me say to myself, "Hmm, must see that...." Naturally, with it not coming this built up into a "MUST SEE THAT!" Then I got a copy of ERG in which Terry chided Dave over that column. Obviously Terry had got a copy of that issue. Now Terry is a ghod man and true.....and because you buggers out there don't send me your fanzines I have this arrangement with Terry that I take off his hands any zines he doesn't want to enshrine in his permanent collection, for the price of the postage. Like I said, Terry is a ~~sucker~~ ghod man. So I wrote to Terry, asking him if I could have this particular copy of TITLE asap 'cos it was like bugging me, maan. (Do you notice the influence of Fred Wedlock there Mike? What an incredible LP.....but I digress). Yes, said Terry, "You can have it.....and a few more besides."

Herewith a mini-bundle of zines." There were two issues of TITLE in the bundle, but neither of them was the damn-sodding issue in question. I did subsequently receive a copy of TITLE but that was an extremely old one and was also not the issue in question. Look.....if anybody out there has got that particular copy of TITLE, fer chrisakes send it to me, uh? It'll never make it, of course, but I'll be interested to discover the lengths they'll go to in order to prevent me getting that particular issue.

All this is of course not proof that there are fanzines which we are not meant to recieve, but it is supported by Pete Roberts' letter.....in particular the bit where he says, on page seventeen, lines four and five, "Belatedly enclosed....." it wasn't. The only thing in that envelope when it reached me Pete, was the letter. Obviously that particular issue of CHECKPOINT is another of those 'Zines We Are Not Meant To Receive'. Mind you, I must admit that it is only conceit that makes me want that particular issue of CHECKPOINT, the one with the poll results. I'd like to have on hand the information that HELL was umpteenth-best British fanzine that Skel was voted joint ninety-seventh--best british fanartist (tied with the Chelsea football team). All is vanity.

MIKE MEARA 61 Borrowash Road; Spondon; Derby.

Hmmmm. This Skelton/Meara Theory of Walls.....first I've heard of it I must say, though it all seems quite reasonable, except.....

how would you defina  
the Great Wall of China?  
If you told its designa  
its significance was mina  
you'd likely get a shina  
or a boot up the vagina.

I found Graham Poole's account of his experiences with local SF groups interesting, partly because I've occasionally toyed with the idea of having a go myself. Pat and I between us know quite a few local people who read SF, or are even avid collectors, but precious few of them have shown much interest

IT'S NOT THAT I DON'T  
APPRECIATE THE AWESOME  
AND TITANIC FORCES  
INVOLVED IN SUCH A  
MAJESTIC PHENOMENON....

**ZAP**

THE IMMENSE ENERGIES  
SMASHING FORTH FROM THE  
BONDAGE OF NATURE'S  
STATE OF DYNAMIC  
EQUILIBRIUM TO  
REVERBERATE ACROSS  
THE HEAVENS AND TO  
DEVASTATE THE  
FIRMAMENT....

**KRAK**

..... IT'S JUST THAT SOMETIMES I  
CAN'T HELP QUESTIONING  
THE FANATISM  
OF IT ALL.....

**SKRIT**



in cons, fanzines or regular discussion meetings. Trouble is, people who have no flair for organising things, like me, would likely end up with a ghastly WI-type thing, just right for turning people off the whole idea, permanently. My own favourite SF discussion goes something like :-

- (a) Get pissed.
- (b) Select some favourite book, preferably one you last read a couple of years ago so you can't remember it too well.
- (c) Select and corner a likely victim.
- (d) Expound and enthuse, preferably inaccurately, using long words, the meanings of which you're unsure.
- (e) Discover that the victim has already read the book in question, usually last week, and either agrees 100% with everything you say, because he's as drunk as you are, or else thinks it's crap and won't budge an inch.....because he's as drunk as you are.

Kevin Hall is a very funny man. Kevin Hall ought to write more for more fanzines (Like fuck he should, Meara! Stop trying to instil this wanderlust into my contributors, uh?). Kevin Hall ought not to hide his not inconsiderable light under a bushel any longer. Reveal your talents to the world, Kevin!!

Well.....maybe not quite all of them.

Incidentally, I did quite enjoy his piece about moles.

Although of course, on Placet, as I'm sure you'll recall, even a mere bird could fly through the ground with no trouble at all. Moles, of course, will tend to disbelieve this and, if pressed, will stroll nonchalantly away, whistling. That's what I dislike about moles, the cocky, arrogant little bastards, oh how I hate them!!!

Another thing moles will do, if pressed, is to make a very tasty dish called 'Pressed Mole'. A little furry, perhaps, but really quite enjoyable.

5 FEBRUARY 1975 (SKEL)

Harking back to page seventeen, Pete, I'd just like to say that when I find things that are small and brown and shaped roughly the same at each end, on the floor of the bog, that's when I get the kids' eyesight tested.....

.....and whilst still vaguely on the same subject I am moved (!) to wonder if there is in fact anything that the Americans won't have air-conditioned. That question, along with a certain obscure puzzlement regarding US plumbing equipment, is generated by my first really serious consideration of the american phrase:-

"That's when the shit hits the fan."

GRAY BOAK 2 Cecil Court; Cecil Street; Lytham; Lancs; FY8 5NN

Hey, look! Gray's writing a LoC! I'd better be careful, or I might start myself off doing things I really don't want to get involved with again, but.....it occurred to me that if I didn't write to you, I might get crossed off your mailing list .....and as you produce the one and only good honest fanzine available in these glorious isles nowadays (Confirmed at the Gannets' New Year party by Rob Jackson, Ian Maule and myself), I do not want to be crossed off your list. More, I want more.

As for actually commenting, however,.....

A VERY PERCEPTIVE ~~of~~ BLOKE, THAT GRAY BOAK.

He knows that I want to keep sending him my fanzine, that I want to keep in touch with him, if he'll just give me some excuse. So he does. Twice now there's been that little note, a few lines no more, simply saying that he does too want the next issue even though he isn't prepared to do anything for it. ....and because he is one of the people I want to keep in touch with, I'm happy. Of course I'd rather have a longer letter, full of pith and moment, but if it comes to the choice of either dropping him or getting just that little request for more.....gee, but I must be a sucker!

There are other people with whom I would also prefer to maintain contact. Rob Jackson and Ian Maule, for instance, but they don't give me that much needed excuse. My records show, for instance, that in the past seven months I sent Rob three different fanzines and have received no response whatsoever. Not a word. Ian received four zines in the corresponding period. He did give me MAYA, but not a word since on INFERNOs five and six.

I aim for a print run of only seventy copies. I deliberately keep it down to this number so that I can't follow the same slippery path I trod with HELL. I've got to keep the deadwood out of my mailing list. It's too easy, when you've got a print-run of 150 copies, to say, "Oh, let's give old So-an-so one more try." I can't do that on seventy copies. No way! In some ways this is a pity.....

.....but it is working. I'm getting more than twice the response I got with HELL, for less than half the copies. However, nearly all this response comes from overseas. With this issue, apart from two editorial copies, two courtesy copies and a couple of MaD group members, only fifteen copies will stay in this country. This is pretty grim. Only fifteen people in this country think getting INFERNO is worth the effort of responding to it. In fact; better make that thirteen people, because I've just noticed that I'd included the two from the MaD group in again. That is a pretty exclusive club. In case you'd like to know who's in the club with you, it's:-

Harry Bell; Gray Boak; Pat Charnock; Lisa Conesa; Jim Goddard; Terry Jeeves; Les Mearae; Archie Mercer; Les Pardoe; Graham Poole; Pete Roberts; Dave Rowe; which only makes twelve but then there are three MaD members, not two: Pete Presford; Les Dunlops; and Kevin Hall.

Somehow I don't think INFERNO stands much chance in this year's CHECKPOINT POLL, although with things being so bad on the fanpubbing side I don't suppose Pete'll bother running it this year, eh Pete? (It did arrive by the way, a couple of days after the letter. You sure fooled 'em that time Pete. I'll bet they're gnashing their teeth and wondering what they can

stop me from getting next.)

Neatly discounting the passage of the last page-and-a-bit I would like to point out to Gray (you still here, Gray?) that the term "...good honest fanzine..." is somewhat ambiguous. I get the impression that I should read that 'honest to goodness fanzine' (Did Rob and Ian confirm that it was 'good' or that it was the 'only', or what?).

I kind of agree with what you say (if not with what you mean) even though there are other fanzines being published in this, our green and pleasant land. Too many of them are like a series of one-shots-with-the-same-title. If it doesn't come out regularly, and at least three times each year, it's one of these. A fanzine needs to keep coming out frequently and regularly in order to establish a personality of its own, separate and distinct from that of its editor/publisher. I find it hard to distinguish between a once-a-year look at RITBLATTTTTT and a once-a-year exchange of insults (read 'conversation') with Greg Pickersgill. (Damn, I've mentioned him again!)

ZIMRI and SCAB are like that. CHECKPOINT and WARK are far too specialised to come into the category of 'honest to goodness fanzine', and EGG and SPI have merely signalled their intentions of joining in. I understand that, by the time you read this, EGG will have had another issue out and will once again be a real live fanzine, but as of this writing it could just as easily fall into the once-a-year syndrome, like LURK (hint-hint). I don't know how frequently CYPHER comes out, on account of only just getting on Jim's mailing list. Jim's only just got onto mine too, but it's still his fault.

But that still leaves ERG, Gray. ERG is an honest to goodness fanzine (even if the magic does seem to be missing of late.....probably just can't find its way back through the maze of book-reviews).

The only other british fanzines I can think of that aren't defunct are MADCAP and MALFUNCTION (and of course FART, but I don't reckon I'll be publishing the second issue of that for a couple of years yet).....and THE WRINKLED SHREW. Y'know, I



[illegible]

"Runs in the family."

[illegible]

.....and a last minute entry application for the INFERNO 7 club.....

KEN BULMER 19 Orchard Way, Horsmonden, Tonbridge, TN12 8LA.

I trust that I am writing to the right bloke, with the right name and address, to thank this semi-anonymous person for the welcome copy of INFERNO 6. I must say I think this new attempt at faanishness is much to be encouraged, as I've said before; but to omit the name and address of the editor or to hide it away in a LoC, ~~or to give the impression that the Skel~~ rather than the other Robinson feller is doing it, is more than confusing, it is carrying ingroupishness to ludicrous lengths and should be chopped off. Tell Cas to wave whatever it was in the right direction next time.

..25..

cause red ink is foul at the best of times and on green or gold paper it is downright camouflaged, at least to my old eyes. I recall the old underground papers of a few years ago were printed in awful colours with illos twining in the text, all done so that old folk with bad eyes couldn't read what the upcoming generation were doing. S'fact.

This bit about Hadrian's wall is interesting. Yes, we toddled along there after Newcastle. I am collaborating in a new series upcoming, about Gladiators, which is a quality series and not the cheap stuff that may also be seen floating about, so the trip around the Wall and environs was work as well as pleasure. It is an interesting theory about the wall being built to keep the hairie's of the legions in - or the auxilia, I'd think. If an opportunity offers, and I promise nothing, I will make an attempt to incorporate this theory, with all due respect to the names of those involved (although I've heard whispers of the story before, in the army, for instance) in the book of the series I do first. So don't expect to find a Centurion Skeltonus - rather some miserable Pict with one-eye called Skelblade.....or something.

I'm not writing any SF just at the moment. 'New Writings' is going great guns with a lot of good stories around from new people - in fact the issue I'm now putting together I imagine will scandalise some parts of fandom. I look forward with some enjoyment to the comments to follow.

10 FEBRUARY 1975 (SKEL)

Until you mentioned it I hadn't realised that I hadn't put our address anywhere in the colophon of number six, or even stated for definite that it was Cas and I who published it. I tend to forget that some new people get each issue. I sort of think that if you don't know who's sending you INFERNO by now, you never will, but if this is your first INFERNO, it don't apply, do it? Just a minute though Ken.....my mailing records show that this wasn't your first INFERNO, and number five stated quite definitely from whence it came. How dare you insinuate that INFERNO 5 was something less than memorable? Shame on you, Ken!

I don't claim that the idea about Hadrian's Wall is original, only that it is not knowingly filched. It may be that I too have heard it somewhere before and that the fact became lodged somewhere in the recesses of my brain, without knowledge of its source. It's possible.....my brain has lots of recesses.....in fact my mind is one big recess.

I cannot however accept your criticisms of my reproductive system. After all, a man is only as big as his mimeo. Egged on by the fact that my red drum is short of ink and also by the fact that I only have this grotty white paper at the moment, I have been trying a bold new experiment.....black print on white paper. It'll never catch on. It lacks character. I only wish I could record this fact for posterity, permanently, in red and blue.

The only Ken Bulmer books I've bought are the SF ones. The 'Fox' books, as by 'Adam Hardy' are not my scene. They are the wrong period for Cas too. She tends to cleave closely to the Third Dick and such (although she is showing innordinate interest of late in Victoria and Edward the thingy). My period is rather earlier. The only historical novels that have ever grabbed me were the Marie Renault books (Mary Renault? - however she spells it she is definitely rear engined) 'The Bull from the Sea' and I think it's called 'The Last of the Wine'. (It's quite a long time ago - I had this 'period' when I read about two dozen novels dealing with Classical Greece, and since then the only novels of hystorical interest I've been able to finish were some by L. Sprague de Camp). S'funny really. Cas reads the historical novels, but when John Brunner got talking to her about that same subject it was the Mary Renault books he mentioned, which she hasn't read.

Sometimes there just isn't anything down for Cas.

Afore I go Ken, let me make a startling admission. I have read my digit copy of 'Earth's Long Shadow' four times. If my SF library were restricted to just one hundred books it would be one of them. I accept the fact that it isn't a particularly well-written novel, but the theme/story tugs at my soul-strings, letting me get far more from it than you ever put in. Thanks!!



18 FEBRUARY 1974 (SKEL)

'My little parakeet keeps a callin' his name.....'

.....which has nothing whatsoever to do with anything....  
whatsoever, but it just came in over my headphones at gale-  
force five and seemed too incredible to consign instantly to  
oblivion. That could have something to do with the fact that  
I'm sitting here drinking this tremendous steak.....nope, it's  
white wine - 'Martini', which is of course a wine blended with  
herbs (ie vermouth, no?). Seems they use the same herbs that  
Cas uses when she's cooking that red meaty stuff we manage to  
afford once every other year.

Nothing much has been happening here of late. Nope, that  
is a lie.....an incredible amount of occurrences have occurred,  
it's just that they've all been as incredibly tedious as they  
normally are. Well for a kick-off there was the skelorgy which  
was supposed to take place back at this address ( see colophon  
on page three, Ken) after a small, select group of us had re-  
turned from a meal at The Little Village ('Only genuine Can-  
tonese cooking this side of Canton' or somesuch.....((Ghod!!!  
Skel, not brackets within brackets! They'll never follow your  
devious mind through such a maze.)) ((Piss off back to Geis,  
Alter!)) (((What I was going to say (((eh, eh)))) was that  
the only trouble with 'Gale-force 5' record volume is that one  
takes so much longer to type a stencil, on account of wasting  
50% of the time typing on long after the little pinger has  
pinged out the fact that you've had it, line-wise. (((Bet  
you've forgotten where you're up to with the brackets, uHGhg  
.....((((Get stuff)))))) (((((((((((Wow, like freaky, maan.....  
)))))))))).....))))).))))).)).....according to all the notices  
they had plastered on the ((Can ya dig it?)) walls and other  
such vertically placed planes.)).

The meal went down OK, but hardly anybody turned up to  
orge. That alone will give you some idea of how incredibly  
boring skelparties usually are. If you ever get invited to a  
skeldo.....do yourself a favour and stay away. Just send the  
bottle. Whisky will do. Any sort of whisky. I am not prous.  
(True! My un-proussness has never been called into question.)

Nor, come to that, has my pride. I am no prouder than the next vain pillock. I'll drink any whisky you set before me, except

#### A HEALTH WARNING DONATED FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD

that bottled grunty-juice currently being offered for sale as 'Passport'. To my mind 'Long John' cannot be said to be even a decent blended whisky, but at least it does have some aura of whiskyness about it and as such it is infinitely superior to 'Passport'. Don't just take my word for it. In the opinion of myself, my brother John, Kevin Hall and Mike Meara 'Passport' whiskey is not even fit for removing excess pubic hair.....from a camel.

Pause while Skel takes in 'You're no good' and 'It doesn't matter anymore (keep using the ointment)' from the Linda Ronstadt LP 'Heart Like A Wheel'.

Anyway, don't get conned into buying 'Passport'. The name is short for 'Pass(This)p(iss up in favour of a pint)o(f)-r(ancid)t(urps)' This is not a 'sipping' whisky.

Having pissed on 'Passport' (and thus improved its flavour) let me even things out by giving praise where praise is due. Most definitely due. For just three quid one can buy, and I've no idea how they do it, a seventy-five proof 'fifteen year old self malt Irish Whiskey'. And it is magnificent. It also is most peculiar. When I first saw it I thought it was in a brown bottle. It wasn't, it's just that it's as dark as rum. It doesn't taste like rum, but then it doesn't taste at all like Scotch either, not at all. In fact, I'd say it was more like rum than scotch. Whilst it isn't like rum, there is an element in rum that is also present in this whiskey. It is so good that I'm tempted to send you a sample Mike, but not quite tempted enough (Toronto would take too much postage).

Whilst on the subject of whisky I would like to ask Frank Denton (Hi Frank) why, if you drink your scotch with (ecchh!) ice, why waste your money on Chivas Regal. Surely your numbed tastebuds could be fooled by something less expensive? Or don't you believe in fooling numbed tastebuds? I am speaking



as one who religiously warms the glass before pouring himself a whiskey so as to bring out the full flavour and bouquet and like that. Mind you, my only chance of tasting Chivas Regal is if I come across it in a pub. I can't see myself ever buying a bottle. It is after all dearer than many older and probably finer self-malts. Gee, after reading BY OWL LIGHT, BRENDON COMMON (can I still have a copy please?) and ASHWING, it's nice to find something that I consider a flaw. Ice? Yeuch!!! Nobody who drinks his scotch on the rocks can be all good.

Gee! The radio has just informed Cas, who has just informed me, that Linda Ronstadt is currently top of both the US singles and LP charts. This chuffs me up no end. Not that it improves the music ('You're No Good' and 'Heart Like A Wheel', incidentally) but it does mean that she is likely to make more LPs than if she bombed out every time.

#### TV INTERVIEWER CARVES UP TWO SF AUTHORS- ROBERT ROBINSON SOUGHT

Now before I start let me point out that David Frost is to Robert Robinson like a balloon is to the Graf Zepelin. Evenso, I wouldn't have expected Brian Aldiss and Harry Harrison together to put up such a feeble showing on 'The Book Program' which was screened on BBC2 tonight. Bloody abysmal! It isn't even as if Robert Robinson was hostile in the interview. Throughout he stuck to a totally unbiased approach by asking Aldiss and Harrison to tell him 'Why SF?' Harry did alright by himself, or would have done if Brian, who got in first, hadn't dug a deep pit for him to speak from.

Robert Robinson started the ball rolling by underlining both his own and the popular impression, that SF is more concerned with machines and technology than it is with people. Now Harry Harrison did partially refute this by pointing out that SF is a literature of change, but in trying to avoid the mines Aldiss had lain for him he failed to point out that, being a literature of change it seemed to concentrate more on man's technological environment because Man himself changes so little that the medium has to magnify that change by the glass of 'society' which is increasingly technologically oriented.

But like I said, Brian Aldiss had gotten in first and had virtually pleaded guilty as charged. Every word he spoke could have been taken from a hypothetical speech entitled "In Defence Of 1930's SF". The trouble is that Brian writes such wierdo stuff these days that he feels a need to equate with all the old crud in order to 'anchor' himself in the SF field, if one can be said to anchor oneself in a field, that is. (Heave-ho me Hearties, cow-pat on the starboard bow!)

They both failed to point out that when you invent a new tool you get a load of crude work initially, but later one finds material that is more refined than both the earlier material using the new tool and than the even earlier, sophisticated stuff, perfected with fewer tools. Modern SF seems to concentrate almost entirely on people rather than the technology that surrounds them (except perhaps ANALOG) that they only had to point out that anything new tends to acquire a massive 'craze' following in its initial stages. After that it will be used in its proper perspective.

Here's hoping that Brian Aldiss sticks to trying to seduce young femme-faned at Seacon and lets Harry Harrison alone to get on with the 'Guest Of Honour' bit.

DRUNKEN FANED DROPS CODS - A SKELCREEP IS HELPING THE POLICE WITH THEIR ENQUIRIES.....ALSO THEIR LAUNDRY.

Yup, back there some cretinous snitgobber failed to identify the 'magnificent' whiskey he was a speaking of. It was of course 'Yates'' or 'Addison's' (It depends on which labels they have handy when they bottle the stuff. Come to think of it, although I've bought bouth Addison's and Yates' versions of the equivalent scotch, I've only ever seen the Yates' label for the irish whiskey).

THINKS.....WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF I SENT ROBERT ROBINSON A COPY?

We can but find out. Incidentally, if you were asking a non-fan to read a new SF book for such a program, would you select "Flow My Tears, The Policeman Said."? If not, which novel would you have picked?

I wouldn't have picked a Dick (sounds like some particularly obnoxious habit). I have my 'Dick' periods. I read a novel of his, like it, read another, like it, read another, ad cretinum.....until I get fed up to the teeth with him. No power on Earth will then get me to read another of his novels until I feel like a 'Dick' again. I am currently about halfway through a four year period of Dickphobia.

25 FEBRUARY 1975 (SKEL)

I don't feel like typing Cas's bit yet.....

I thought I'd better leave that out there all on its own to let you get over your state of total throngement and any other state that statement brought about. Yup, after n years of chivying my dear, sweet wife, that paragon of all things bright and beautiful, who is incidentally standing reading this over my shoulder as I type, has deigned to do her thing. She did her thing. I burntit and buried the ashes at the bottom of the garden. She has done another though and such persistence, coupled with that look of bewildered-hurt-puzzlement, well what else could I do? I promise to give you fair warning before I stencil it though, so that you can go and roll a joint or something.

The Daily Express is running a competition the prizes for which are 1,000 Slade LPs. \*S\*H\*U\*D\*D\*E\*R\*

NEVER CHANGE A WINNING ~~NAVY~~ TEAM

INFERNO seems to be doing pretty well as far as reaction is concerned,,but the trouble with doing a zine like this is that one tends to forget exactly what one has put into it. The balance goes all to hell. This zine is supposed to be split in roughly equal thirds between The Editorial Personalities, the letters we get, and the zines we get. Nothing hard and fast, and subject to flux and so on, but something like that. In this and the last two issues though I've noticed a definite trend away from reaction to the zines we recieve. This is not a Ghood Thing. Partly for the selfish reason that I prefer getting trades to LoCs. I must hasten to add here



that this must not be taken the wrong way (musn't hurt the feelings of my Locers.....sensitive buggers might stop writing) but merely means that ideally, if I was getting seventy responses per issue I'd like trades to predominate roughly two to one.

I also want other faneds to feel somehow 'involved' in INFERNO on the assumption that this will make them more receptive to it. If they do, they will like it more and will voice abroad their love for all things skellish and I will get lots of trades and be famous and be interviewed in SF monthlyandandandandandandand.....

.....so I want to get the fanzine element back in here without being too cut-and-dried about it. I have decided that the best way to do this is to carry on as before but to keep giving myself little reminders about the fanzines-side of things. I will do this by knicking an element from IT COMES IN THE MAIL. I will simply list all the fanzines I recieve on the date I recieve them. A simple statement of receipt, no more. So, even if I do not go on to react to them elsewhere, you guys will still know I've received your zine.

This system didn't ought to get in the way of anybody else though, because I just don't get that many zines. Only nine so far this month. In fact, I'll clear up that backlog and put the new order into operation as of the first of February. The zines I've received between then and now being :-

11 /2/ 75 - ASHWING 15; GUYING GYRE 1; FAN AWARDS FLYER:

12 /2/ 75 - MAD MUSES 3; FANZINE FANATIQUE vol 2 no. 11:

18 /2/ 75 - IT COMES IN THE MAIL 13:

20 /2/ 75 - GODLESS 9:

25 /2/ 75 - KARASS 10; ZYMURWORM 21H:

I will always list the date I actually got the zine because I know some faneds like to know how long their zines take to get from A to B. I was narked to find out that HELL 10 took exactly six months to get to Harry Warner Jnr.. I know 'surface

mail' is supposed to be slow, but that is ridiculous. Still, it's nice to know why Harry didn't LoC my zine. I was beginning to think my mimeo didn't use Lifebuoy, or something.

YES, LYNDALOVES ME.....

Well, I thought she did. It all started when I got this begging letter from douglas barbour (Hi doug, I'm talking about you) saying he'd seen these tremendous reviews of INFERNOs 5 and 6 in KARASS 10 and could he have copies? Gee, I thought, Lynda must like me.

Now I get my copy of KARASS 10 and I find that it isn't Lynda who likes me, it's Bruce D. Arthurs. Somehow it's not the same. There is an indefinable something to having nice things said about one by a female. Still, I can console myself that You are a faned of impeccable taste Bruce. One thing though.....and it's my fault. INFERNO is basically available for all letters, published or otherwise. I only said 'published' letters so as to leave my options open, in case someone sends me a Gray Boak type of letter, and isn't someone I particularly want to keep in touch with.

Having a zine available for 'published LoCs' is about on a par with 'selected trades'. There's a 'superior' attitude I attach to them both and which I find off-putting in the extreme. I will not send my fanzine off on spec for some far off faned to sit in judgement upon. I know I do this every time I send a copy out to someone new but it's different. I send it out on the assumption that they will trade, not that they might trade if I'm not found wanting.

I'm probably not getting this across. Even I can see the distinction is very fine, but it's one I'm hung up on. I suppose that deep down I must feel pretty inadequate.

By the way Bruce, I'm glad to see you like Monty Python. I've got you mentally pigeon-holed as one of the Good Guys, and how can anyone be a 'Good Guy' and not like MP? See the trauma you saved me? Now if you have a cassette recorder and wanted some MP recording merely for the cost of the blank

26 FEBRUARY 1975 (SKEL)

GANNETSCRAPBOOK 2 - Harry and Irene Bell. 9 Lincoln Street,  
Low Fell, Gateshead; NE8 4EE.

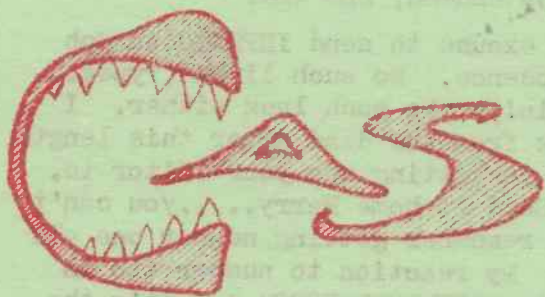
Aha.....an excuse to send INFERNO to Rob Jackson, thunk I in all my innocence. No such liuck (Typer... you have been on the booze again!). No such luck either. I suppose that when you come back from the dead after this length of time you can be excused for forgetting who your editor is. Go home to Rob, little zine. Send it home Harry.....you can't want to keep it. Odd this. I remember getting number one all that time ago and enjoying it. My reaction to number two is very akin to Terry's reaction to GANNETSCRAPBOOK 1. It's the format I think. There are even a couple of real gems in this issue (Ian's and Gray's) although they were really too in-groupish. Gannet publications have always been somewhat over obsessed with Gannet.

It was a bit of a laugh reading all that stuff about the MaD group feuding with Gray Boak and fandom in general. All it really amounted to was Gray over-reacting to some fugg-headed remarks by Pete Colley and Pete Presford rushing to the defence of his little friend. Maybe and maybe not compounded by me being a little touchy and overly sensitive to some remarks Gray addressed to me. The whole thing got blown up out of all proportion.

I am just a teensy-weensy bit annoyed about the shit heaped on the 'Mad Group zines'. Especially when people then go on to talk exclusively about MADCAP and MALFUNCTION. I won't get involved in any argument over the relative merits of those zines but even if you don't like 'em one can't use that fact as a basis for a 'Mad Zines Are Crap' stand. Lisa was a founder member of the MaD Group and even if she now considers MaD meetings beneath her she is still considered to be a member of the group and ZIMRI is ipso facto a MaD Group zine.

Why don't you come to MaD-meets any more Lisa? Is it 'cos we don't talk SF? Well, hardly. If so why not try the SaD Group meeting? If you're interested give me a ring for details (456 4766). It's all happening here, folks.





26 FEBRUARY 1975 (CAS)

Now then, pour yourselves a stiff drink to get over the shock. It is me, yer actual Cas. Some of our newer readers won't know me so to them I say "Hi there." As for you other lot, you can go and (now refrain from what you were going to say Cas, you know we need our friends out there)..... Many thanks for all the letters and zines we've recieved. It's marvellous to know that you enjoy INFERNO. Mind you, now that I'm back we'll soon put a stop to that. Now I suppose you'll all be wanting to know what I've been doing for the past Ghod-knows-how-many months. Believe me, you do. OK, if you insist. (You do insist - Ve haff vays ov makink you insist!)

I've finally gotten rid of a very troublesome wisdom tooth. The damn thing was impacted so I had to spend three days in hospital while they chiselled it out, leaving Paul with the relatively simple task of looking after the kids for a mere three days. He was going to chronicle this period in INFERNO under the title ".....Now After I'd Sieved The Gravy....." but \*shame\* prevented such a revelation. Anyway, the operation was successful, but the patient was left with a nasty reaction to some drug which left all the muscles in the top half of her body stiff. Honestly though, I was in agony. Just breathing almost made me cry (altogether now, a big 'AWWWW' for Cas).

Does anybody know why a book called "The First Year Of Marriage" was on the shelf labelled 'Occult Sciences' in our

local library???

With a bit of luck and Kevin Hall's van you should see us lurking (we always lurk, it's SOOOO FAAAAANISH) at Coventry. We have to be there on the Sunday for the bidding. You are going to vote for Manchester aren't you, you dear sweet charming people? How will you recognise me? If you should happen to see this gorgeous, slim, sexy-looking female.....kick her teeth in for me. I hate women who make me feel inadequate. Ta ever so. Hang on.....That Nunch (Bethany) is trying to strangle herself with the wire leading to the typer. "There we are darling, now go and have a little ride in the tumble-dryer, there's a good girl."

### HAPPY ANNIVERSARY CAS

Earlier this month was one of my wedding anniversaries. I've been married, on and off, for nine years. You want an explanation? Of course you do. Nine years ago (on the 19th. of February) I married my first husband. After five years he decided to leave me because he'd fallen in love with another woman, so off he went leaving me with two children.....a very unmarriageable state. So, there I was, looking for a mug. A couple of months later I met ~~one~~ and fell madly in love with Paul. Poor sod never stood a chance. I'd made my mind up that I was gonna get him. He didn't want anything to do with me and especially nothing to do with two neurotic kids (victims of a broken home and all that).....so he moved in and we lived together for a year. After this length of time we decided to get married. Well, we loved each other, were great friends, the kids and Paul got on very well and we were extremely happy, so why not?

The past  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years since I met Paul have been the happiest of my life. I'm not saying it's all been sunshine and corn-flakes. We do have our differences but the arguments are invariably over something extremely trivial. Paul says we must be well suited if we have to go out of our way to find such innane things to argue over. I just hope I've made Paul as happy as he's made me and I'd like to thank him for loving me.

27 FEBRUARY 1975 (SKEL)

\*Y\*E\*U\*KKK\* Nauseating, isn't it? I can't even edit it out because she is co-editor. I knew that was a mistake. She is right about the innane nature of our arguments though. Only today we were arguing fiercely as to whether or not we were going to go to the USA by boat.....or plane. We almost came to blows. All this despite the fact that we're as likely to go to the moon as the USA, with the state of our finances. I was in a bitter mood because my feet taste awful, and they've been in my mouth ever since I received:-

MAYA 7 - Rob Jackson; 21 Lyndhurst Road; Benton; Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE12 9NT.

Yes Rob, you are now entitled to say "BIG DEAL!!!!!"

28 FEBRUARY 1975 (SKEL)

ERG 50 - Terry Jeeves; 230 Bannerdale Road; Sheffield; S11 9TE.

Alan Burns' musings on sociology are a welcome breath of fresh air on the subject. His radically different approach is good because of the alternative it provides. A totally new outlook, whether viable or not, does at least enable us to call into question certain 'self-evident' truths about the basic approach.

There are a couple of points about the application of this new regime. If the sociologists 'on site', the correspondents, are to be supported by local taxes then we are going to come up against the problem that the areas most in need of the service will be those least able to pay for it in an adequate fashion. Obviously therefore the areas least in need of a pan-human Oxfam will be those who subsidise the ones who do. Rampant Socialism. Now charity becomes compulsory. Another area in which the individual's right to decide something for himself is abrogated.

I admire your staying power Terry. I wonder if INFERNO will ever make sixteen years. I doubt it. I reckon I'll get fed up long before then. My current aim is to get past the ten



issues Brian and I managed with HELL. Gee, I was only eleven when you started ERG, Terry.

Cas has just finished doing her exercises and is crawling around on the floor. She does this from time to time. She squeezes six weeks' exercises into one night and then squeezes six weeks moaning and groaning into the following fortnight.

2 MARCH 1975 (SKEL)

NO 16 - Ruth Berman; 5620 Edgewater Boulevard; Minneapolis; Minnesota 55417; USA.

During the past year Ruth, since I moved, I have sent you four fanzines.....each with my new address therein. During this time you have sent me two copies of NO, both to my 'Mile End Lane' address. This proves that you didn't read the three zines I sent you whilst I was living at 'Pendlebury Towers' either, during which time you sent five issues of NO to my 'Mile End Lane' address. I don't know why you aren't reading my fanzines Ruth, but it is very ego-popping.

4 MARCH 1975 (SKEL)

ZIMRI 7 - Lisa Conesa: 54 Manley Road; Whalley Range; Manchester; M16 8HP.

Two copies of this, posted seperately so as to squander postage. Lisa, spending an extra 11p just so you can say nasty things about my writing twice is not fair.

DOUG BARBOUR 10808-75th Ave; Edmonton; Alberta; T6E 1K2.

i always thought that young nantucker was going to use his ear, which is a rude part only if you're a catholic seminarian: God the Father impregnated Mary through the ear, ya know, and the latin 'auricula' has had feelthy connotations ever since (tho' you know and I know there's nothing dirty about it at all; at least i hope you know. i'm pretty sure i do).

i'd been thinking of going into mole theory myself, but i

can see the field has been fully explored. maybe wombats?

ARCHIE MERCER 21 Trenethick Parc; Helston; Cornwall; TR13 8LH

Obviously the Mole Theory is being thoroughly misapplied. If only they'd just make a simple experiment it might sink into their pointed little heads (the Department's, not the moles') that moles are professional earth-movers. Give a mole a run of  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " of soil over reinforced concrete, it wouldn't take him (or her, if a femole) long to reorganise things somewhat so that 50% of the run was bare reinforced concrete, and the remaining 50% had a 3" cover of soil. And if three inches of soil wasn't viable, the mole would continue until it had achieved viability. Now a really practical Dept. of Applied Mole Theory would arrange to have them move mountains for us.

On page five you appear to tell a lie, or at any rate, to perpetrate an error. Shame on you.

6 MARCH 1975 (SKEL)

NOTES FROM THE CHEMISTRY DEPT. 8

NOTES FROM THE CHEMISTRY DEPT. 9 - Denis Quane: Box CC, East  
Texas Sta.; Commerce;  
Texas 75428; USA.

ETERNITY ROAD 1 - Larry Carmody: Eternity Road; 40 Shortride  
Drive; Mineola; N.Y. 11501; USA.

KARASS 11 - Linda E. Bushyager: 1614 Evans Ave.; Prospect Park;  
PA 19076; USA.

Actually Archie, I did both. I told a lie and perpetrated an error. INFERNOs are not usually that (this?) big. How was I to know, when I typed page five, that there would actually be a page forty-eight? The idea was to get everyone to flip from page five on through and then to curse and cry some.

Nice letter here from Tom Roberts explaining that he is going to be awfully tied up on his book until late summer. Doesn't want me to waste my zines and postage when he won't be



in a position to respond until, say, INFERNO 9. This consideration I like. Tell you what I'll do Tom. Postage to the US is not really an item to be considered (it is after all less expensive to mail something to you than it is to send it to the guy down the road) as long as it goes 'surface mail'. I will 'carry' you until your book is writ. I think of you as part of the 'club' and believe me we need members too badly to let you slink off now. Just mail me empty envelopes with the 'University Of Connecticut' letterhead printed on them. My postman must not be allowed to know that I'm not Head of the Dept. of Toenail Picking (Correspondence Division) there. He might never believe anything I tell him ever again.

ERIC MAYER RD1 Box 147; Falls; PA 18615; USA.

Ever notice how screwed up the moralities of the anti-pornography folks are? Just down the road from here someone opened an "adult" book store (an ironic euphemism actually). A few of the more 'moral' community members didn't like it. Someone painted swastikas on the store walls with tar. Finally, the place burned down under mysterious circumstances. Now there's real morality for you.

I've never figured out what sex has to do with morality anyhow. It's a natural function, like breathing, or eating. Why morality should have become attached to it I can't say - unless it's because it's enjoyable. Gluttony, after all, is a sin too. Evidently the more fun something is, the more sinful it is too (well, that's not very original, is it?). But consider this.....isn't the puritanical avoidance of sex actually a kind of sexual masochism? Therefore, by your definition, the anti-pornography groups are the real porno freaks. Anyway, to close this brilliant philosophical dissertation I can only say that, in my opinion, morality should be concerned with human pain, suffering and death - period.

AC-TU-ALLY.....

.....Gluttony is not an analog of sex in this respect. The analog of sex is plain simple wining and dining.....indulgence. Gluttony is over-indulgence and equates with being a

sex maniac. It's all tied in with the Protestant Work Ethic. "It is good to flog ones guts out, it enobles the soul. It can't ennoble the soul if it's nice therefore nice things are not good for the soul. Sex is nice. Sex is not good for the soul. The good of the soul is more important than the good of the body. Putting the good of the body before the good of the soul is wrong. Sex is good for the body. Therefore sex is wrong. WRONG!!!.....but it's too nice not to do, so one does it but feels a certain sense of shame.

Aren't you glad you live in enlightened times like these, where only 75% of the people still feel like that?

There aren't many of us in this little fanzine but I am kinda wondering if even this many of us could come up with a view of 'morality' with which we would all wish to associate ourselves. That might be an interesting experiment.....not now though because I think there are a couple of other letters which may have a bearing on the subject.

8 MARCH 1975 (SKEL)

On page twenty-seven I said, ".....I only have this grotty white paper at the moment.....". That was a month ago. Now when I come to run it off I naturally use a bit of green paper I've since turned up. I really must get back to running these pages off as I type the stencils. Be that as it may, I am thinking of forming.....

A CLUB WITHIN-A-CLUB

.....in order to find out just how many of us dum-dums there really are. 'Us dum-dums' are those of us who suffer the secret shame of liking 'Podkayne Of Mars'. Ever since Oliver Panshin's Roundheads came on the scene and it became fashionable to be overly critical of Heinlein we POMophiles have been driven underground. Then, last year, I got brave. I told the world how I felt about Poddy.....mind you, I did it in an apa-zine with a maximum circulation of thirty-five. I'm not that brave. But.....bravery comes by installments, so I can now tell twice that number, egged on by having seen some

remarks of Harry Warner's in NOTES FROM THE CHEMISTRY DEPT. 8. Harry was replying to something else, so presumably there are now three of us. Let's get this straight. I don't think it's a great book, or anything like that, but I don't think it deserves the opprobrium it's been getting. I enjoyed it, more so than some of his other books which are supposed to be superior (Space Family Stone and Have Space-Suit, Will Travel for a kick-off). I have recently re-read all three of these books, in the reverse order to that in which I first read them (just in case that had anything to do with it.....it didn't) and I still enjoyed 'Poddy' most. Eh, maybe we'll get 'The Snowball Effect' and it will turn out that everybody except Panshin, Brian Robinson and a couple of reviewers for the pro-mags always kinda liked 'Poddy' too. Poddy was fun.

### 8 MARCH 1975 (CAS)

I've been on yet another diet, which was going very well thank you, until last Tuesday. Last Tuesday I went back on The Pill and in one week I've slammed on nine pounds which is not fair 'cos I was getting dead slim and now I will get dead fat and nobody will love me and I think I'll go and stick my head in the gas oven. Who said "That's a good idea."? Just for that I'm not going to, so there! Enough of this frivolity, let's get down to some serious writing, if that's at all possible for me.

Um.....what can I write about that's serious? Well, we could have another go at music. I can't say anything about John Denver 'cos Paul says that subject is closed but how about plugging a few more Americans who don't get their fair share of air-time over here. There's Linda Ronstadt, who was recently doing splendidly in both the LP and singles charts over there. I've heard 'You're No Good' played many times on our local independent radio station, but as for Radio One, with its national coverage, I reckon I've heard it twice and this morning Noel Edmonds played the title track from the 'Heart Like A Wheel' LP, but that's been it. Paul and I have been buying her records for the past four years and she is GOOD. In fact, Paul reckons she is a right little raver. What I can't understand is why everyone else doesn't like her.



I can never understand why, if I like a certain singer, the rest of the population doesn't, why they can't see what I see, the way I see it. I suppose it's a good thing really. If we all liked the same thing life would get pretty boring. Anyway, if you haven't heard of Linda Ronstadt but get a chance, do give her a try. The same goes for Kris Kristofferson, Rita Coolidge and Mickey Newberry. End of sermon.

#### HARRY F. ZANUCK STRIKES AGAIN

The last time Les Mearæ spent the weekend with us they kindly drove us lot to Owens Park where we were to meet as many of the MaD Group as could make it. The reason for this get-together was to make a film to show at the bidding session for the 1976 convention so that you lot might have some idea what you could be letting yourselves in for.

We arrived at the designated time of 2-00pm., to find Kevin Hall waiting for us. We spent the next half hour hanging around the bar lounge waiting for the rest of them to turn up. The rest of them, being Harry Nadler as it turned out, sauntered in complete with camera equipment. As the film also recorded sound Pat, Deborah, Nicholas, Bethany and I had to keep well out of the way whilst Kevin did his Alan Whicker bit. There was one part of the film where we were allowed to participate though. Harry wanted to give the audience a good idea of the size of the conference hall so we had to wander aimlessly around in it. There I was, standing on the stage with Pat awaiting the 'action' signal when I got this uncontrollable urge (not that sort of urge, you feelthy swines) to do something idiotic, so I went into my not-very-good Charleston routine. The first time I realised that Harry was actually filming was when he shouted "Keep it up Cas." Have you ever felt a right twit? Bang goes my suave, elegant, demure, decorous image.....again.

I have this strange feeling that the Beeb have got this typer bugged. A couple of INFERNOs ago I was going on about John Denver not being played and the following week Noel picked Annie's Song as his record of the week and it went on to become number 1. Now I go on about them not playing Linda

Ronstadt and Lo and Behold Johnnie Walker has just chosen her single as his record of the week . I wonder where this wire leads.....?????

8 MARCH 1975 (SKEL)

Mike brought his own cine camera with him that weekend and I thought this was the ideal opportunity for Cas and I to make some extra pin-money by breaking into the HARD PORN film industry. I knocked up a quick script in which Cas had a starring role.....and no lines to say either. It couldn't have been easier. She must have been too shy or something though, because she never read past the title and wouldn't do the film for love or money. So, the script remains unshot, gathering dust and not winning me any Oscars. Maybe I could sell it? How much am I offered for a genuine, never before filmed, film script entitled 'Deep Nostril'? Can't think why Cas turned down this chance at stardom.....

PAULINE PALMER 2510 48th.; Bellingham; WA 98225; USA.

Paul, your definition of porno is interesting, but I wouldn't disqualify category 2 ("everything else") from being considered pornographic myself, as I tend to think perhaps stylistic treatment (competent vs. inept, crude vs. artistic) is of importance as well, not just the behaviour depicted. You make a distinction there yourself when you say, "I think that men are stimulated much more effectively by some well-written porno than by any number of obscene pictures." But what about badly-written and/or really crude (ie. obscene) porno as opposed to any number of artistically handled erotic photographs?

Anyway, your remarks reminded me of an advertisement I saw recently.....a perfect example of the component parts of a suggestive whole not being especially suggestive when taken separately. It featured the photo of an attractive young couple, only showing them from the shoulders up, but he obviously had on a shirt while she did not (still, you could see nothing but her bare shoulders and there are any number of fashions she might have been wearing that would leave her

shoulders bare). So, all in all, it was by no means a pornographic photo, the only possible suggestive thing being her implied lack of clothing (of course the imagination is pretty important in these things). The ad, by the way, was to induce you to send away for some stereo-hi-fi-electronics catalogue or other. Its punch was in the statement attributed to the young man, testimonial fashion (large type, bold faced): "I GOT IT FREE". The kicker, in small, subdued type, was the girl's quiet, "So did I."

If you were to move to the US you'd find yourselves without an August Bank Holiday Monday and hence without an anniversary.....sad thought. No, what I meant to say is that having your anniversary on a holiday always is very ingenious. Lovely even, the thought of staying in bed all day.....almost pornographic (it's the element of the imagination again).

No instant cures for arachnid-phobia, Cas, but I did cure my own fear of snakes by moving from an area rampant with rattlesnakes to where nothing more menacing than innocent garden varieties exist. This worked wonders for my psychic well-being right away, although I admit it was still several years before I began to feel really comfortable when I could hear one obviously slithering by in the bushes. However, the last time the cat brought one in the house, I personally rescued it and even provided safe escort to the door, so you can see how far I've managed to progress. Friends, a couple, both of whom get totally hysterical at the sight of a mere moth, once locked themselves in the bathroom until someone happened by and obligingly did in the nasty critter.

Akin to your lizard collecting days, Jack tells of how, when they were living in Penang, his father once caught him and his brother while they were conducting a scorpion race. Papa John was far from amused.

11 MARCH 1975 (SKEL)

WILD FENNEL 9 - Pauline Palmer; Address on page 45.

Odd coincidence that!



Oh, and.....

CYNIC 7 - Gray Boak: Address on page 22.

Jeeeee!! Hell of a wedding you had there Gray. Cas laughed her tits off. Women can be rotten sometimes. I laughed mine off too mind you, but it was harder.

Mind you, I can talk. The only reason our wedding ran smoothly was that we didn't have anybody do anything for us. Cars?? You're joking, we walked back from the register office, right through the centre of Stockport. Reception?? We held it ourself back at the flat.....bring a bottle. I kid you not. A 'bring-a-bottle' wedding reception must be faanish. Well, it had to be cheap. I already had a non-wife and two kids to support and I was determined that my marriage wasn't going to cost my parents anything. I think it cost me forty quid including booze. Mind you, when I look at Cas I must admit she's nearly worth it.

12 MARCH 1975 (SKEL)

TRUE RAT 4 and 5 - Leroy Kettle: 74 Eleanor Road; London E8.

Gee look.....only up to issue number four and already I'm on your mailing list Leroy. Can this be fame at last, or did you just run off too many copies this time? (True you only get on my mailing list with this issue, but deep in your heart you know that it's not the same thing, and that it's all your fault 'cos I'm nice really).

Britfandom is finally taking me to its heart, but what will Leroy make of this issue of SMALL FRIENDLY DOG? SFD is the fanzine that you lot out there call INFERNO, because you don't know any better.

I called this thing INFERNO in order to maintain some sort of continuity from HELL, but it doesn't fit the zine. The closest I could come in this respect was SMALL FRIENDLY DOG. Therefore, the best of both worlds.....this zine's cognomen will continue to be spellt I-N-F-E-R-N-O, but will henceforth be pronounced "SMALL FRIENDLY DOG". See?

They can't touch me for it!

Anyway, TRUE RAT 4/5 was lotsa laffs. Possibley I enjoyed it more because I've not seen anything really Rattish since RITTLATT 2. Glad to see you've remembered me again.

#### LET'S FACE IT.....

.....I'm not going to keep this thing down to fifty pages. This is a pity because I don't want this thing to take too long to read. Too much and it stops being a light, chatty friendszine and becomes a load of interminable drivel.

#### HAD A GREAT TIME LAST WEDNESDAY.....

.....we burned Cas's Grandad. Well, we went to his cremation. Seems odd to say this, but we really enjoyed ourselves. We spent a lot of time with Cas's aunt and uncle (only a couple of years older than Cas) and Cas's uncle is a great character. Just like a fan. He used to be a vicar until he fell out with his Bishop and told him to "get stuffed" whereupon he went out to Kenya and lived on dogmeat for five years whilst they fed the dog ("marvelously friendly animal, great with the kids.... what breed? A Ridgeback or Lionkiller, why?") on steaks. It seems they didn't know a damn about hanging meat there in those days and the dog-meat was better and more tender than the 'best steak'.

.....and on our way back through Sheffield we called in for the evening at the Crumbling Jeeves Mansion. A pleasant, low-key evening it was. Then back to the station in plenty of time for the 10-19 train, which was a good job really because it was the 10-05 train in actual fact.

We took advantage of the visit to cheat the GPO out of the postage on another bunch of fanzines. We also brought back, very carefully, an inflated balloon that Terry gave our Bethany. It was awkward because it meant we couldn't close the bag, but we got it home without bursting it. Bethany did that herself the following day. Terry also gave us a copy of James H. Schmitz's 'The Eternal Frontiers', suitably inscribed,

to honour the occasion of our first gracing his domicile. Mind you, it's the first time we'd been to his house too. Actually he donated this particular tome on account of the blurb on the dust jacket which mentioned the..."....sinister Swimmer Bethany...." (you've gotta watch these left-handed swimmers). So, that Nunsh is now stefnicaly famous. You'd think that the author would at least read his own dust jackets properly, wouldn't you. James, there's absolutely no excuse for you referring to that character as 'Betheny' throughout the actual text of the novel.

12 MARCH 1975

MOTA 9 - Terry Hughes: 866 N. Frederick Street; Arlington; Virginia 22205; USA.

18 MARCH 1975 (SKEL)

SPI 2 - Graham Poole: 23 Russet Road; Cheltenham; Gloucester; GLS1 7LN.

There you are you Rat, I told you I'd give you a bigger mention than you gave INFERNO 6! Whilst I'm in here I would like to appologise for opening my big yap in one of the letters you ran, Graham. OK, so now everyone at Seacon is going to wonder just what is available at Owens Park. Full Pension, period. No Bed & Breakfast and no Demi Pension. Look, the 'Full Board' is less expensive than 'B & B' at Seacon. I hadn't meant for that to be printed Graham (about the 1975 B & B rates). SPI 2 wasn't supposed to be a 52 page letterzine, from what you were saying in SPI 1. That was just me talking to you. Not your fault though, just one of those things that happen from time to time.

Whilst I'm on the (well, nearly) subject of Seacon I seem to have noticed a general dissatisfaction with the way Seacon is turning out to be nothing whatsoever like the con that was bid and approved. I said at the time that we'd been conned into buying a pig-in-a-poke and now it looks like the pig is poking back. I only said it once though because it might have looked too much like a case of 'sour grapes'. It does I feel,



strengthen the case for two-year bidding. With such a system one can always exercise the 'Bram' option of in effect saying, "Either put on the con we approved or we'll get somebody else who can!"

I would like to know though if it is true that there will be no poetry soiree at Seacon because the committee told Lisa that she could only hold one if real poets reading proper poetry, and no fans.....and Lisa said something exceedingly appropriate. I'm not even sure now who told me this and it may have been grossly distorted.....I may be perpetrating a vile calumny (I theenk) but I don't care. If so I will apologise later. This is too important. I want to know and I will only find out by making a nuisance of myself. If it is so I think it is disgraceful. I normally wouldn't even credit such a rumour, but if even Gray Boak, who was a vehement supporter of the bid at Newcastle and whose judgement I respect, is now referring to it disparagingly as 'Pseudcon' then something must be up somewhere.

I was so steamed up back there I failed to notice the 'poetry soiree' typo, not to mention the fact that I didn't finish the sentence. Anyway, on to fresh pastures.....today I also received a God rip-off which manages to extract large amounts of urine from a touchy subject.....

VATI-CON 3 PROGRAM BOOK - Victoria Wayne: PO Box 156; Stn. D;  
Toronto; Ontario; M6P 3J8; Canada.

19 MARCH 1975

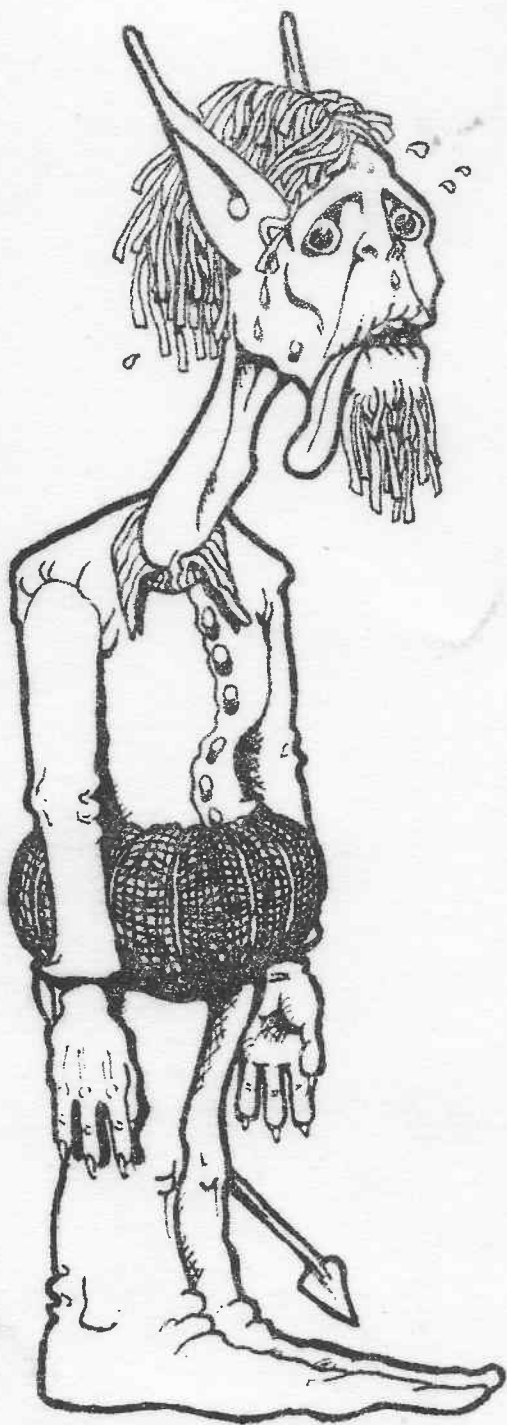
THE GRIMBLING BOSCH 2 - Harry Bell: Address elsewhere.

DURFED 1 - Kevin Williams & Neil Jones: 9 Whitton Place;  
Seaton Delaval; Northumberland.

The latter of which is full of several good two-line ideas that have been worked to death over half a page. From memory it is just a better done version of HELL 1, deserving of encouragement, if little else. I'm being exceedingly brief here because I refuse to go dashing round in the week before the con getting this run off. I'm finishing it this week, which means this has to be the last stencil, dated the twentieth of March in this year of our Skel, twenty-seven.







Wendy Bell 74