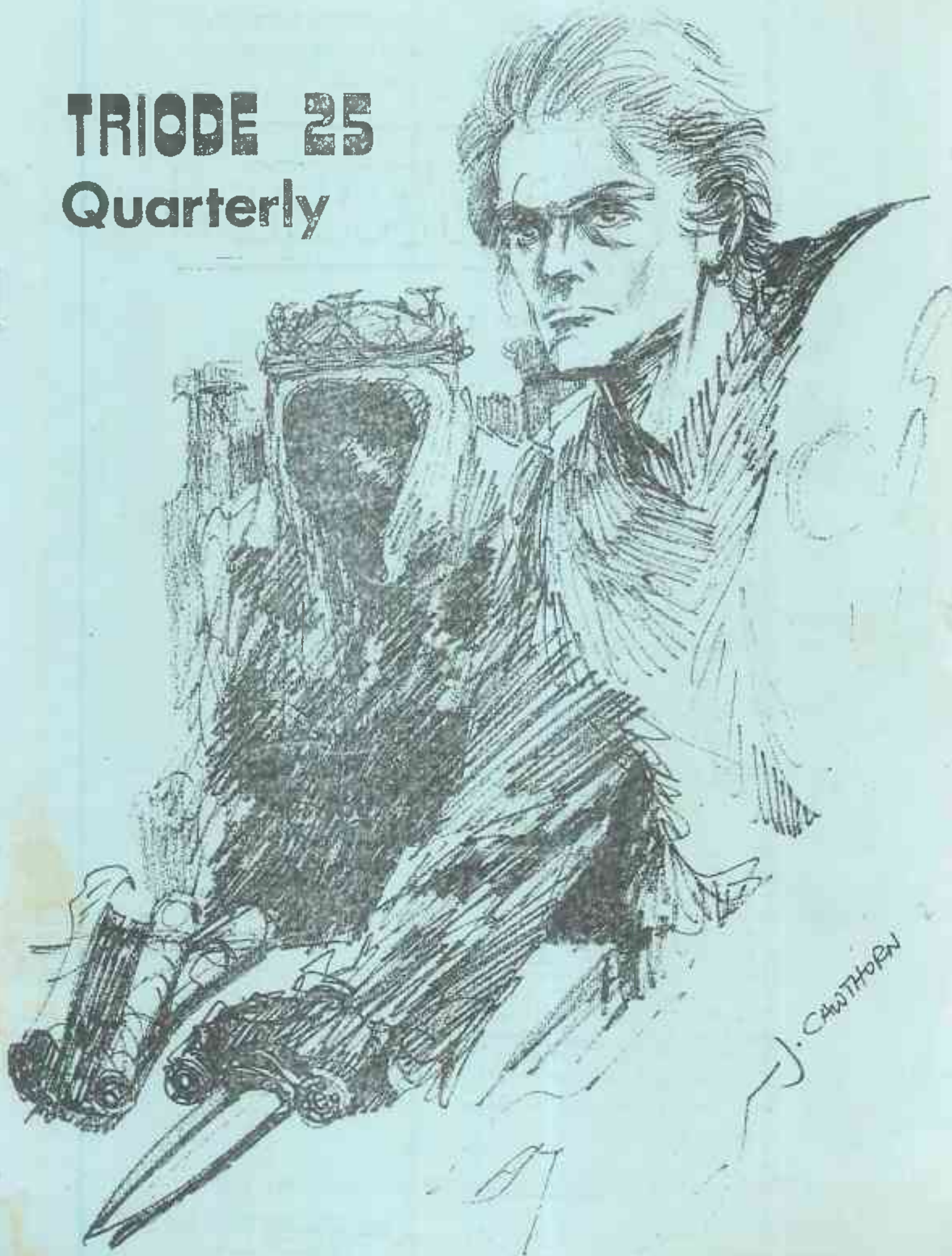


TRIODE 25

Quarterly



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CONTENTS

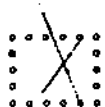
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HAIR OF THE GREEP.....	Eric Bentcliffe.....	Page 3.
WE HONKED LIKE SEALS.....	Mal Ashworth.....	7.
THE FAN HUMOUR SYMPOSIUM.....		11.
ADVENTURE OF A TIN EAR.....	Eric Mayer.....	19.
THE DEHYDRATED GOLDFISH.....	Eric Needham.....	22.
FANSARD.....	Letters.....	26.
INTERLUDE.....	Terry Jeeves.....	34.



TRIODE is published almost every time your editor gets the old fannish urge (he's interested in new fannish urges if you have any to spare...). These are generally brought on by receiving inspired fannish writings and drawings. If there is a cross (or a perverted squiggle, even) in the box to you left he feels you can help inspire the next issue.

TRIODE Apart from inspiring fannish urges in the editor, you can get this fanzine by writing a printable letter-of-comment; sending a Fine Fanzine or, money (50p or \$1.00 per copy - this magazine has a unilateral exchange-rate) to the editorial address. Or, to our American Agent, Terry Hughes, 4739 Washington Blvd, Arlington, Virginia 22205. (editor of that very fine fanzine MOTA); or Canadian Agent, Mike Glicksohn, 141 High Park Ave, Toronto, Ontario M6P 2S3 (who also puts out fine fannish publications when the mood and the scotch take him...).

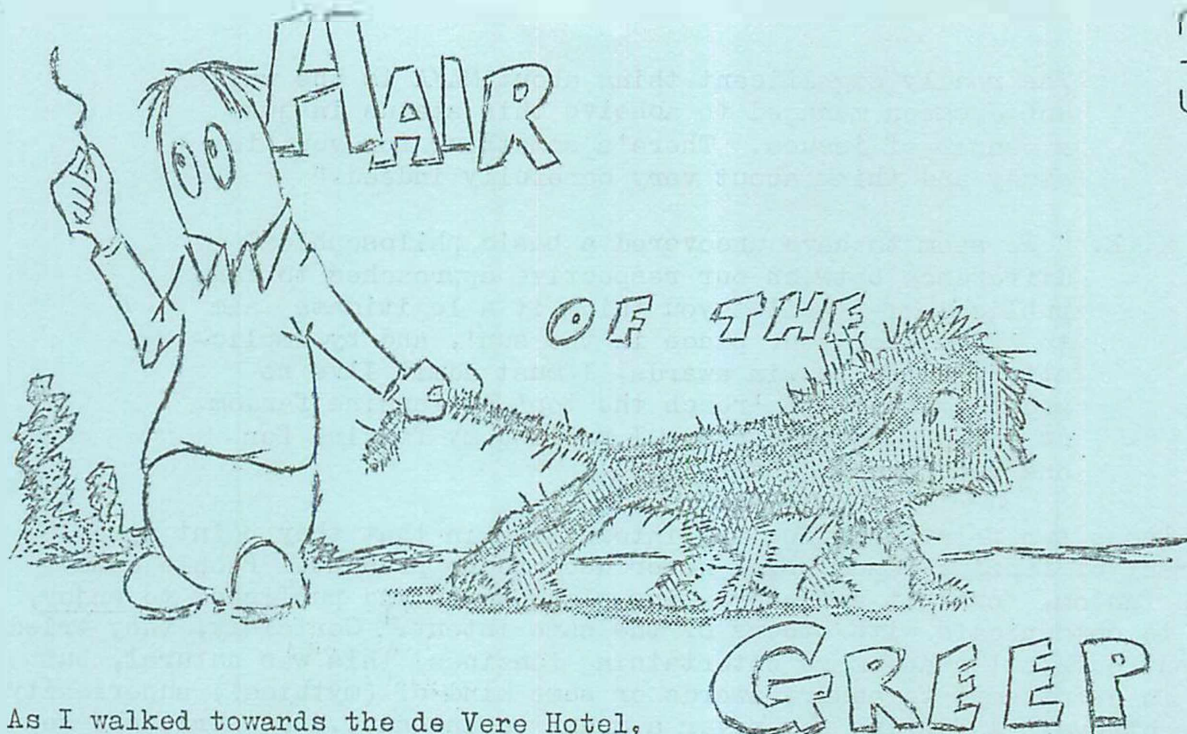
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MINNEAPOLIS IN '73
FLUSHING IN '80.

and 79'S THE YEAR FOR
BRIGHTON PIER....





As I walked towards the de Vere Hotel,
Greg shambling alongside carrying my
old fanzines: I was sure what I would
write about his issue.....

As I waltzed across the ballroom floor
with Pat Charnock to the plaintive
strain of Graham's mandolin: I was
even more certain of my editorial
thesis.....

As Peter Weston knealt before me bemoaning
the difficulties he'd had thinking up the
quiz questions for S-F Mastermind: I sudd-
enly became unsure.....

And as I peered into Don West's third nostril and beheld what
appeared to be an incipient Black Hole: my thoughts became as
nought before the cosmic immensity of it all.....

So, I think I'll talk about fanzines for awhile, instead. Chu knows,
everyone else in U.K. Fandom seems to be doing so at the moment; there are
deeply agonising columns (well 'agony columns', anyway) appearing all over
the place. Hair shirts have become almost compulsory garb for British fan-
zine reviewers...and one wonders if the reason Don West is hollow-chested
is the amount of breast-beating he does!

Don, in THE WRINKLED SHREW, and Greg Pickersgill (Druid Third Class -
failed) in his fanzine STOP BREAKING DOWN seem to be producing the most
agonising of them all treating fanzines as being so relevant and Important
that perfection must always be strived for. I had heard that there had
been awesome-portents about, but with my cavalier approach to fanac being
well-known they'd obviously decided there was no point in floating them
abroad in my vicinity...

The most sensible fanzine comment I've seen in a U.K. Fanzine of late
was made by Kevin Easthope, in a reply to a letter to Peter Weston in his
fanzine LOGO. I don't normally quote comments out of context, and I trust
Peter and Kevin will forgive me for so doing in this instance. Peter first.

P.W. " The essential secret of a top fanzine is the way in which
it generates a sense of involvement so readers almost fall
over themselves to try and get their letters, their names
even, mentioned in the next issue.

4
The really significant thing about MAYA is the way Rob Jackson managed to achieve this status in just a couple of issues. There's something for you to study and think about very carefully indeed."

K. E. " We seem to have uncovered a basic philosophical difference between our respective approaches to fan publishing; whilst you think it a legitimate aim to 'fight for your place in the sun', and by implication, go on to win awards, I must admit I've no great ambition to 'reach the top' in fanzine fandom. As far as I'm concerned, I publish my fanzine for one reason only - for fun."

Those two points of view are interesting in that they point up an element of fanzine fanac which never used to be present. People came into fandom, found it an interesting place to be and published to enjoy, and to communicate with others of the same intent. Certainly, they tried to put out better and more entertaining fanzines, this was natural, but not in an attempt to acquire awards or some kind of (mythical) superiority over others. A fanzine was never a means to an end....not seriously so, anyway, as Peter would appear to imply of MAYA. But this is my extrapolation of his out-of-context quote and I could be wrong....

Although, since elsewhere in LOGO 4 Peter is quoted as having solved the problem of Rob Jackson's Worldcon Committee Membership and his possible HUGO nomination by their (the committee) having a separate Awards Committee, I don't think I'm misrepresenting him, grossly. Fair enough, MAYA is a very good fanzine, featuring excellent material and artwork, its widely distributed throughout fandom and it is the most likely U.K. fanzine to get a HUGO (I hope it does!); but I'm fairly sure that isn't why Rob is publishing it. He's having a lot of fun with the thing.

Publishing a fanzine purely and simply to win an award would be one of the most fuggheaded things any fan could do...any trufan, anyway. Taking fanzines seriously, too seriously, to the extent that you consider only one type of fanzine to be a fannish fanzine - because it conforms to your particular likes and dislikes in fandom - is almost as bad!

And this would appear to be an affliction currently shared by Greg Pickersgill and Don West. Greg puts out a fannish fanzine; a highly involved fannish fanzine which I generally find most interesting and entertaining - its Greg's deep involvement that makes it so. But, SBD is also a fanzine that is often insular and parochial in its attitudes. Deliberately so; Greg having stated on several occasions that he does not wish to trade with American fanzines, that he doesn't find them of any interest....amplifies this attitude better than I could. Okay, he is entitled to his attitudes, his opinions, they are what makes STOP BREAKING DOWN his zine. But when he castigates others for not conforming to his style of fanac, his attitudes, he's acting somewhat fuggheadedly.

Greg approves highly of a couple of U.K. fanzines; Leroy Kettle's TRUE RAT, and Pat Charnock's THE WRINKLED SHREW. So do I, both are fine fannish fanzines of a similar style to Greg's own SBD. Both are also a little insular in that they don't encourage contribution, comment or trade from outside their particular coterie (although TWS would appear to be reversing this policy recently, I'm pleased to note), but again, interesting and entertaining fanzines. May they come out weekly!

Between them - STOP BREAKING DOWN, TRUE RAT, and THE WRINKLED SHREW - form an involuted, intriguing and interesting fandom; but it is only one fandom and Greg's reviews are from that base. Strangely enough, the type of fanzine exemplified by these three came about as a rebellion against the status quo - sadly, like most rebellions and revolutions they have merely

supplanted one 'establishment' with another. Just as FOULER was panned by the then fanzine-publishers when it first appeared; now, Greg eagerly pans any new fanzine (or so it seems) that does not conform to his norm.

Hopefully, with the increased contact between anglo-fandom and the other elements of International fannish fandom (particularly American fandom) resulting from the British WorldCon Bid, some idea of just how much more fun fandom can be if you widen your horizons will impinge on Greg... and Don....and a few insular others. One way or the other, it won't affect myself and TRIODE, or the other U.K. fans who are already into International fandom; but it could make a difference to those newer fen who, at the moment seem to be suffering the wrath of Gregory....and who could be deterred from finding out just what fandom is all about by his hubris.

And, I suppose it could permit me a horrible pun if these words are noted in Bradford. Like, How D. West was won....

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It may already have crossed your mind that it can't be purely coincidental that TRIODE should achieve its 25th issue in the same year that Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the two'th celebrates her jubilee. It took a great deal of planning on my part (and several years of gafia) to bring this about, and I'm only sorry that Buck House has been less than cooperative about it all. Nowone upstages Liz; that's why you don't get the souvenir pottery-mug with this issue (I'm not too upset about this as it would have been difficult finding the right size envelope), that's why the planned, grand, silver-bordered Kelly Freas cover never came about (the fact I never got round to writing Kelly Freas has nothing to do with it). And as for my other suggestions for making the Royal Jubilee more memorable to fandom; sad to relate these fell on stony ground too.

There was no way the Prince of Wales could join Greg Pickersgill, Bryn Fortey and Ian Williams in promoting Welsh Fandom (I have a secret suspicion that Greg being a Failed Druid had some bearing here). Neither could 'Our Royal Son resident in Canada' be allowed to join OSFIC. As a sop; I did get a polite little note from the Foreign Office to the effect that if there were any conventions outside H.M.'s Dominions, it would be quite allright with them for Idi Amin to be invited during Jubilee Week....

Despite lack of Royal Patronage I feel I've reached some sort of a landmark in my fanac, and whilst I don't intend to dwell on this magazines (and my) past - whatever a small welsh minority may think, I consider the present to be where I'm at - a nod or two in that direction might be permissible. Particularly as it might help me decide which direction I'm heading in the next twenty-five issues.

Triode No. 1 came out in the Summer of '54 - I think! My research reveals that with typical fannish abandon I omitted to put a date on the cover or colophon of the first two issues, but it was around then. And I had already been in fandom long enough to learn that dating your fanzine was a sure way of getting irate enquiries as to why it was late. The first issue, like most first issues, was a little unsure of its direction; this was partly due to it being a first issue and partly due to the fact that there were three of us involved in its publication. The late Cheltenham fan Eric Jones, Terry Jeeves, and myself. We'd all been previously involved in publishing the North West Science Fantasy Club's magazine SPACE TIMES and as that group had started to disintegrate it was natural enough that we'd thought of doing our own thing. That - thing - was TRIODE; a title, incidentally, with which I've never been completely happy and which was decided upon by the three of us putting our individual choices of title on slips of paper and Eric's wife Margeret pulling one out of a hat. Eric Jones choice of TRIODE came out first....closely followed by enquiries from Terry and myself as to what the hell was a Triode ?

That Eric was to go gafia (as far as Triode was concerned) before the second issue appeared was not due to our revolt against his awesome powers over slips-of-paper.

One bit of memorabilia that still amuses me when I look through those early issues is "The Future History of Fandom", a series of connected fannish tales which started in that first issue. The concept was that of the active-fandom of the day deciding to forsake munaneity and go fued together on a desert isle. Vince Clarke started it off in true democratic fannish style by giving fandom this choice in a fictional poll:

" I am heartily in favour of living on a Pacific Isle away from all worry and care, and devoting my time to fanac.....

I would rather be left alone with no one else to write or talk to....."PLACE AN 'X' AGAINST YOUR CHOICE. "

Walt Willis, John Berry, Arthur Thomson, Mal Ashworth, Harry Turner, and others continued to relate this epic tale of fannish pilgrimage, from disaster to disaster to further disaster in subsequent issues. Each writer vying to destroy continuity by placing the valiant voyagers in an impossible situation at the end of his episode.

If, one day, I have elaborate (and cheap) photolitho facilities at my disposal that is one of the things I'd like to reprint. It isn't the only thing, either; I'm pleasantly surprised just how much of Triode's early offerings are still eminently readable. Naturally, some of it contains esoteric allusions which would now be understood only by a few aged fan and devout historians; but much is very readable.

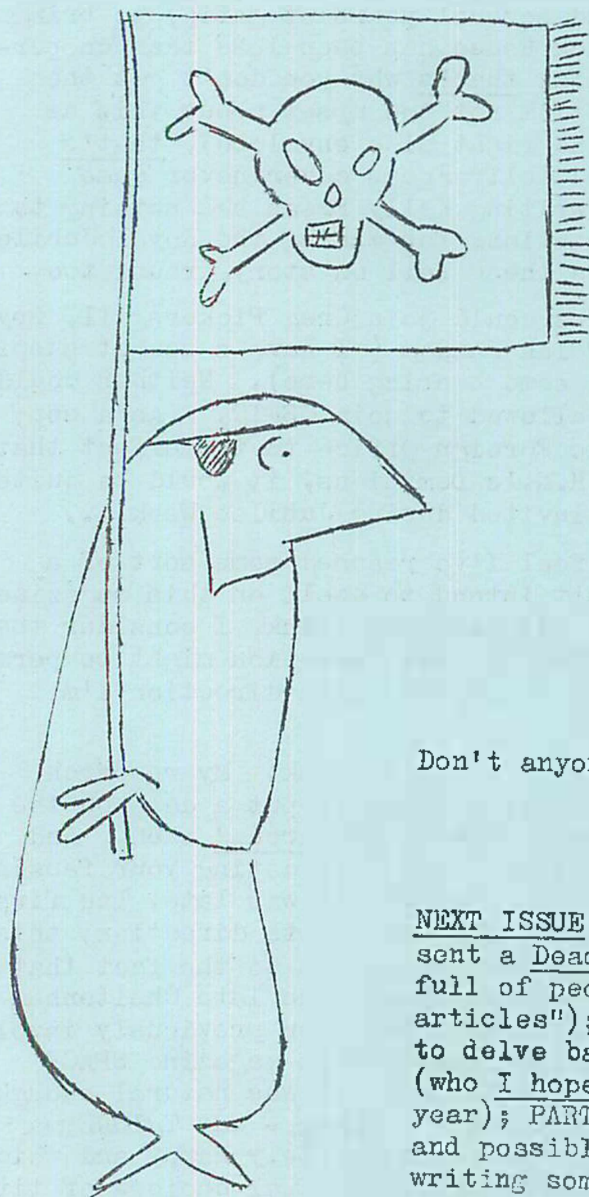
I might even spring one or two of them on you...one of these days. Not just for old-times-sake, but because I think you'll enjoy. Many of the best though, will have to wait for me to acquire suitable equipment to reproduce also the fine illustrations by Atom, Eddie Jones, Harry Turner, et al that were hand-drawn onto stencil for them. It wouldn't be right to reprint just the text.

Don't anyone out there hold their breath.....

* *

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NEXT ISSUE will feature TOM PERRY (who has been sent a Deadline; DAVE LANGFORD ("SF Fandom is full of people for whom I haven't written articles"); HARRY WARNER (who's been approached to delve back into the Okefenokee); JOHN BERRY (who I hope is taking an exotic vacation this year); PART TWO OF THE FAN HUMOUR SYMPOSIUM (??); and possibly other kind people who even now are writing something suitable for Triode...Artwork from all over, is also launched for. Are you there Stu Shiffman, Al Sirios, Ken Fletcher, Reed Waller, Dan Steffen. Atom....anyone.....



WE HONKED

LIKE SEALS

by
Mal Ashworth

I was staining the new bookcase, just the other day, when I suddenly wondered where the hell I used to put them all; the books, that is. The time I had in mind was when I lived with my parents, which wasn't so very long ago, I surely do not know where all my books used to go; try as I will, I can not figure it out.

I know where they are now, right enough. For a start they are in three bookcases in the living room (three pretty big bookcases); after that they are in a sort of massive wooden chest that a man could comfortably sleep in (if all the books were taken out); a couple of men could sleep in it quite comfortably, in fact. (Come to think of it we'd better make that a man and a woman for the sake of propriety. And I suppose even then we ought to ask to see their marriage license before we let them sleep there. By God but collecting books can get you in some fixes!) After the books overflow this chest that a man and a woman (married if you insist) can sleep in, they cover the top of a very large cupboard. I am using the word 'cover' here to mean ' are piled thirty or forty deep all over '. There are probably some inside too, but I daren't look because all the magazines would fall out. This cupboard is so big that if it did not have all those books piled on top of it, I guess a young boy could sleep there; maybe a young girl as well. (If you want these two married, we'd better make them a young Indian boy and girl; I understand they get married young enough to satisfy even your exacting demands.) Well, after these books have finished filling the top of this cupboard, they creep into the corner of the room, into an alcove where about six or seven people could sleep. (The only thing I can suggest, if you are still feeling moral-minded, is to have one man and five or six women. They'll have to be Orientals of some kind so that you can have all the women married to the same man. I just can't think of any other way of doing it; if you insist on complete propriety you'll just have to accept polygamy and there's nothing any of us can do about it.) I was going to tell you that when you move all these sleeping people (Christ, but they're a crowd of sluggards around here!) out of this alcove, you can get quite a lot of books in. The books are packed in orange-crates and cardboard boxes and piled loose and higgledy-piggledy and all that kind of thing. That's just the books.

Having got them out of the way, there are magazines to be considered, and fanzines, and APA-Mailings; there are boxes of letters and papers, and reams of duplicating paper. The plain fact of the matter is it's my damned house and if the books just won't go anywhere else, I can always pile them on the bed. (A couple of people can sleep in here too, when it hasn't got books on it. In fact, they invariably do. One is a man, and one is a woman. They are married.) Now, I am not pouring all this out in a spirit of exhibitionism, to try and show that we have a big house (we haven't) or that I have a lot of books (I haven't half enough) or for practise in sorting out the sexual relationships of people who could sleep up and down in our house

8

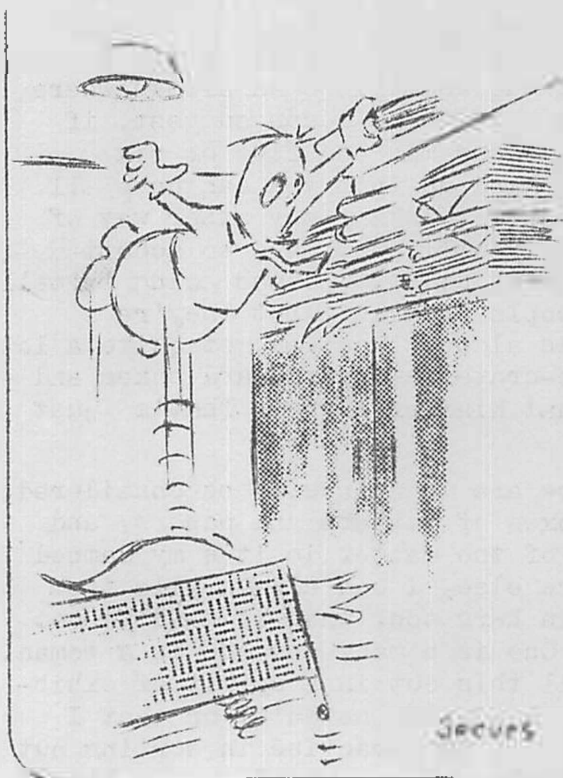
if I had less books (By God, but I feel depressed; depriving all these people of a place to sleep is weighing heavily on my conscience.) I am just showing you why I wondered the other day where all my books used to go when I lived with my parents. Because all my belongings used to be in one room there, a bedroom shared with my brother Vernon. In this room were our two beds; a dressing table; a long wooden, chest-like-thing (similar to the one the first two people slept in, you know); my big cupboard; my two bookcases; Vernon's bookcase, and a bamboo table (and, sometimes, a chair). Plus all Vernon's worldly goods and all my worldly goods, and us.

My bookcases were full of books, of course, and I guess my cupboard was full of magazines which used to fall out when I opened the door, just like now except that then they couldn't fall so far because my bed was in the way. In addition I had a tin trunk under the bed, full of books (it's possible a couple of dogs could have slept in there, providing you make them fairly small dogs; how you marry them off is your worry). On top of my two bookcases was piled the usual - thirty or forty deep and all that. (I reckon that at a pinch somebody could have slept up there too, but we'd better make it a hermaphrodite because more than one would be sure to fall off such a narrow space; even one would probably fall off, but I don't much care.) And all the rest of everything (except for some papers and things piled on the dressing table) was piled up on top of my cupboard (we settled the sleeping arrangements for this earlier, if you remember. That's where we had the little Indian boy and the little Indian girl.) This means everything - books, fanzines, magazines, OMPA Mailings, FAPA Mailings, duplicating paper and so on. The pile came to within about six inches of the ceiling and to reach the top of it I used to have to stand on my bed and jump wildly.

This wasn't too bad if I was just throwing something else up there, but it could be distinctly dangerous if I was trying to get something down. I would be swept back onto the bed, and maybe off the other side, by the resulting avalanche and would have to spend the rest of the day jumping like a grasshopper with St. Vitus Dance to throw all the stuff back on top.

I don't suppose that anyone could have slept up there, even if they could have got up; the human body isn't meant to survive at altitudes like that, and anyway the top of the pile wasn't level enough. Looking back on it all I'm forced to admit that things were a little crowded.

I think that the way I callously filled the place up with books had a pretty bad effect on the family in general, too. My father hardly ever used to go into our room so he probably came off best, but my mother used to get pretty cut up about it at times (like when she wanted to clean and when she just couldn't figure out just what there was she could get at to clean). At these times she would wag a duster at me and exclaim vehemently, " Your not bringing another book into this house. Do you hear me ? You've got too many already. You're not bringing another book into this house."



And I would say, " I don't know what you've got to complain about. It's a harmless hobby. If I went and stood on street corners you'd have something to complain about, but I spend nearly all my time at home and I have to have some sort of a hobby. So I collect books."

Women are peculiar in some ways, and instead of pacifying her, as you would expect, this used to get under her skin for some reason. " Well, I've told you now," she'd say, her voice rising, " You are not bringing any more of those silly books in this house. And you are going to get rid of some of those you've got. If you don't I shall throw them out into the garage."

Then I would point out, calmly and reasonably, that if anyone so much as moved one of my books without written permission and a cotton-wool cushion, I should feel constrained to tear the rest of the house apart. This didn't seem to calm her either. " You're not bringing another book into this house," she would shout, " They only fill your head with nonsense."

" Well, if I can't collect books anymore," I would say, as reasonably and logically as ever. " I shall just have to go out and stand on street corners."

" Talk right in your head," she would say.

" I am talking right in my head," I would say, " I shall have no choice but to go out and stand on street corners."

In the end she would go and clean somewhere else and I would go on bringing books into the house. I never knew just what there was about standing on street corners, but I'm glad she never took me up on it because I'm sure I would have felt rather stupid standing there on some street corner and not knowing what it was all about.

I think my program of unlimited expansion had a rather adverse effect on Vernon too; it left him so little lebensraum that I guess it stunted his soul somewhat. None of us realised what a venomous, seething cauldron his mind was, and even when he told us that he'd sent away for some new bookshelves we didn't tumble to the fact that he had sworn a solemn pact with himself to blast a niche once and for all in that overcrowded bedroom. He sold me his old bookcase (which was how I came to have two) and nobody thought any more of it until one day a railway lorry drew up outside and started unloading yards and yards of sheet metal.

This was a somewhat unusual occurrence even for our household so we all gathered on the path to watch. Large iron girders followed the sheet steel and we were all thoroughly engrossed; when he had finished unloading and the garden resembled a Glasgow shipyard, we said, " I guess you've got the wrong house." The driver squinted at the sheet he had pulled out of his pocket, and then at the gatepost, " No, this is it," He growled. " Yes," we said, " but I guess you have the wrong address down on your sheet." " Sign 'ere," he said. He climbed back into his cab. " Maybe you just got the wrong load," we said. He revved the engine to a roar and moved off up the street.

Vernon, who had been silent all this time, walked over, picked up a girder and carried it into the house. He came out a minute later and took a sheet of steel back with him; another girder followed and then more sheets of steel. As he was picking up the last girder mother asked him, " Where are you taking it ?"



" Into the back bedroom," he said. "Why ?" she asked. " It's my bookshelves," he said, disappearing into the house.

" You're not bringing hideous metal things like that into this house!" mother shouted after his vanishing back.

When he got his bookshelves erected I guess you could have slept whole families up and down in them (if he hadn't immediately filled them with books and all his other belongings) but, of course, unless you could segregate them efficiently you'd have to worry about incest. Anyway, I wouldn't dare to give permission because they weren't my bookshelves; and probably after what I'm going to tell you nobody would want to sleep there anyway. A few months later these gargantuan bookshelves - they were so big that Vernon had to take up the standing-on-bed-and-leaping technique too, when he wanted to reach the top shelf - well, a few months later they started thudding in the middle of the night.

Vernon was sound asleep when they started it, so that I was the only one to hear it. It was a small but distinct thud and was repeated at fairly regular intervals. I lay in the darkness racking my brains and trying to think what could be happening in or around Vernon's bookshelves to cause thuds in the middle of the night. I fell asleep before I solved it, and next morning at breakfast I said, " There were some queer thuds in the night coming from Vernon's bookshelves."

" You read too many of those fantastic books," mother said, " they fill your head with a lot of silly nonsense. I don't wonder you hear thuds in the middle of the night."

The next night I stayed awake deliberately and as soon as the house was quiet the soft thuds started again and went on from time to time until I fell asleep. " There were some more thuds last night," I told them, "you ought to take a look at those bookshelves."

Eventually they decided to investigate, though it was more in a spirit of " We'll show you it's all in those silly books you read," than a disinterested scientific enquiry. But when they found the bar of orange-chocolate, half-nibbled away, hidden amongst the books on the third shelf their whole attitude changed. They generously admitted then, that perhaps after all there had been thuds in the night. Mico had been climbing the sheer steel (God knows how) and gorging themselves on the orange-chocolate. Then they had either fallen off in a stupor, jumped off in ecstasy, or simply been pushed off in gluttony. The matter had been explained, the orange-chocolate was removed, the nocturnal thuds ceased, and everyone was happy. Nobody thought to ask Vernon why he had kept orange-chocolate there in the first place.

And thinking of all that reminded me that when we used to lie in bed at night - Vernon and I - with the window open, whenever we heard the footsteps of a benighted neighbour passing up or down the street, we would honk like seals as hard as we could go.

But I still don't know where all those books used to go.

...Mal Ashworth.

DUPLICATING NOTES. All the articles from the series which ran for three years in ERG, collected together. 54 pages, board covers, plus a section on Art from ERG and TRIODE. £1 a copy, or Statesiders send £2.00 (in bills, NOT cheques), to :-

Harry Jeeves, 230 Bannerdale Rd., Sheffield S11 9FE., ENGLAND

I should have known better of course; a fan of my experience should not make mistakes like that...but haste and penury overcame me and I distributed questionnaires at a convention. The Eastercon, of course. Yes, I really should have known better and I really shouldn't have left one side of the questionnaire blank, either; that was a silly thing to do. No doubt many were used for making notes for con-reports or used in some weird Austral League Ritual; others, I suspect, provided the wherewithal for fleets of paper-aeroplanes. But a few gallant souls did resist the temptation to do something fannish with my offering and did use it for its intended purpose....and Tom Perry came to my aid by sending out copies with QUARK. And, I'm quite sure the rest of you'll have opinions to express for Part Two...

The FAN HUMOUR

SYMPOSIUM

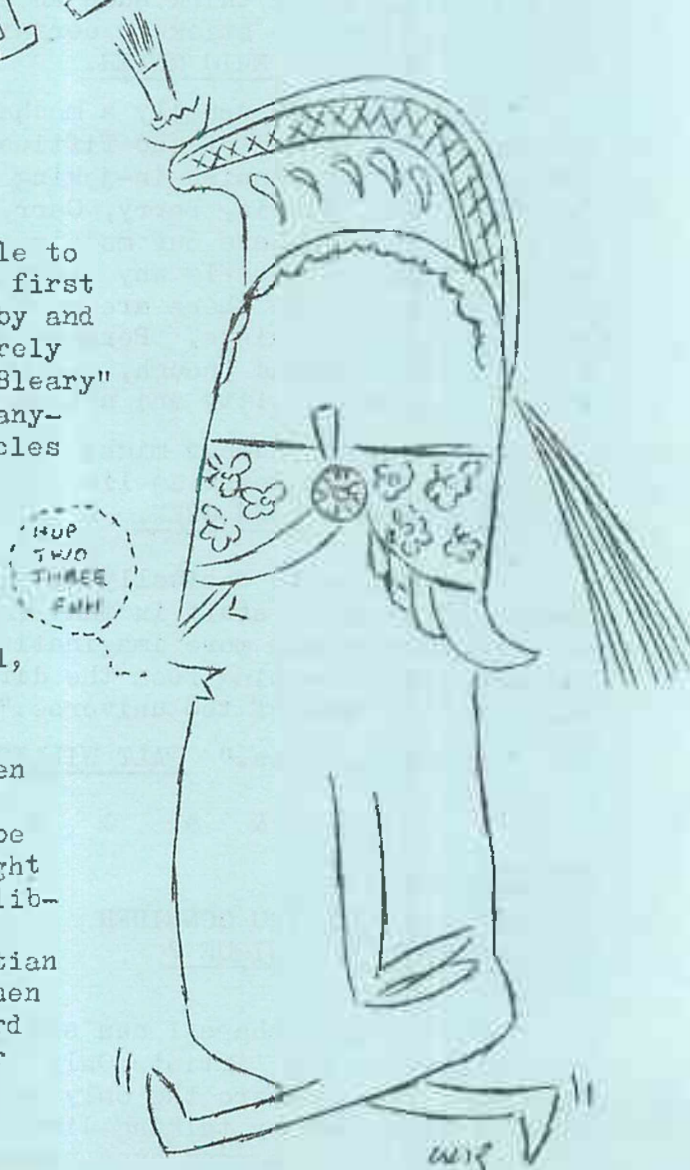
Question. 1.

HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE FAN HUMOUR ?

" I don't really see that it's possible to define "fan humour". It might appear, on first consideration, that fan humour is humour by and about fans but Bob Shaw's articles are rarely about fans these days, and Berry's "Goon Bleary" stories were not strictly speaking about anyone in particular. In essence Bob's articles are no different from, say, Alan Coren's, except that some of the references can be appreciated only by fans." HARRY BELL

" I don't think there is such a thing as "fan humour". All in-groups like to think that their type of humour is special, unique, incomprehensible to the coarse, insensitive outer world." JIM CAWTHORN.

" Fan humour, like fan itself (or even science fiction for those of us who can remember the word) probably can't really be pinned down to a single definition. It might be " Anything written by a fan that is deliberately intended to be funny" which is unarguably correct. Or we might go Knightian and say " Fan humour is what I point to when I say the term" which would be equally hard to deny. Personally I'd define fan humour by exclusion, to wit: " Fan humour can be anything not written by Dave Locke, not published by Leland Sapiro and not laughed at by German Fandom." MIKE GLICKSOHN.



1) HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE FAN HUMOUR

" Mainly in-jokes and 'dreadful' puns." JOHN HARVEY.

" Desperation." DAVE JENRETTE.

" Fan Humour cannot be defined, it varies from fan to fan, and from zine to zine. However, it seems to have a few traits such as a tendency to be off-trail, different, and unconventional....ie, Monty Python appeals to more fen than, say, Bob Hope." TERRY JEEVES.

" How would I define fan humour. Oh God. Humour written by fans ? No, 'cos if Leroy Kettle wrote an article for PUNCH, not that he would stoop so low except for money, it probably wouldn't be definable as fan humour. PUNCH wouldn't understand it, almost by definition (definition?) if it were: though it would be funnier than anything they do print these days except maybe Alan Coren. Humour appearing in a fanzine ? No, some idiot editor might reprint a PUNCH article. How about "humour containing implications or references which can only be fully understood by fans" ? - That answers questions (2) and (6) as well." DAVE LANGFORD.

" I'd like to think that fan humour is whatever one fan writes that some other fan thinks is funny. It might be more precise though to define fan humour as the kind of humour that appears in fanzines, because while the first definition seems very nebulous the second definition can be examined empirically. And I think such an examination will show that published fan humour does tend to stick to certain "rules", or at least tends to follow well worn paths." ERIC MAYER.

" Fan humour is usually a mechanical following of forms set by the great humourists in fandom of the fifties. All the basic forms of parody, punning, exaggeration, and fannish in-joking seem to have been brought to a culmination by Burbee, Willis, Berry, Carr, and a few others. We all know how to do it now that we have our models, and its damn few who can be genuinely witty. This is probably why present day fans bemoan the state of fan writers today. Not because there are so few good writers, but because there are so few original humourists. Perhaps Susan Wood stands out as original. I'd hate to make a stand though, and perhaps only time will show us, by survival, who was genuinely witty and not simply derivative." TARAL WAYNE MACDONALD.

" I think fan humour might be described as at its best, grotesquely brilliant; at its worst as like cold rice pudding pouring slowly over the frontal lobes." JOHN OWEN.

" Fan humour is basically in-group humour, but it differs from other brands of in-group stuff in that (a) the group, i.e., fandom, is larger, more variegated and more imaginative, and (b) the subjects are fantastically wide-ranging, spanning from the difficulty of duplicating on cheap paper to the ultimate fate of the universe." BOB SHAW.

" Humour by fans." WALT WILLIS.

& & & & & & &

QUESTION 2.

IN WHAT WAY/S DO YOU CONSIDER
FAN HUMOUR TO BE UNIQUE ?

" Pass. Or perhaps I can sidetrack a little and put in something appropriate to the 'Artists Only' section, but not asked for there. To my knowledge fanzines are the only magazines wherein the cartoons take on some life of their own by talking directly to the reader, commenting on the contents of the fanzine, and even remarking on their own position in the fanzine. I may be mistaken, but I don't recall seeing anything like that elsewhere."

HARRY BELL.

THE FAN HUMOUR SYMPOSIUM

" Fan humour is probably only unique in the exact in-group references and catch-phrases that are used for humorous effect. Fan humour uses all the standard components of humour but it often applies them to a specialized subculture the nomenclature and cant of which would be meaningless to an outsider. So the content of fan humour may well be unique but its structure certainly isn't." MIKE GLICKSOHN.

" I'm not sure if it is unique except, perhaps, in its limited appeal." JOHN HARVEY.



" I don't". DAVE JENRETTE.

" Fan humour just isn't unique...we only like to think it is...along the lines of " It is a proud and lonely thing to be a fan"...or, " I reckon I must be the only man in England who knows about, likes, and collects SF"...the latter then goes on to 'discover' fandom and gets a rude awakening." TERRY JEEVES.

" Fan 'humour's basic identifying trait, its greatest strength and its worst weakness, is that it happens to be aimed at a very small, select, fairly homogeneous group of people. People who tend to have a similar outlook and almost invariably share at least two interests - sf and fandom. The fan humourist can zero in on these shared interests. He can employ a much finer "focus" than the mundane humourist who has to search for common denominators, or supposed common denominators...like mothers-in-law or pies in the face. Since I think we all tend to value what makes us different from other people, humour aimed at our more esoteric interests is able to affect us on a more personal level. It might be argued that humour which deals with the whole "human condition" should be more effective than that which deals only with a few idiosyncracies fans don't happen to share with the rest of the human race. I don't think that's true. To the extent that a fanwriter can inject humanity into a fan humour piece, that piece, hitting the fan reader closer to home, will be more effective than the humorous article aimed at a diverse audience and couched in terms that are comparatively, and necessarily impersonal. This isn't a statement that is obviously true, nor is it ever likely to be proven since I doubt that any future Spike Milligan or P.G. Wodehouse is going to confine himself to titillating just us. (Reaching for names of humourists just now another unique aspect of fan humour hits me - its existence. Its hard to find decent humour in printed form anymore. Suggestions ?) But I think you'd find, that had Dante written the Divine Comedy with sf fandom in mind, it would've been a lot funnier to sf fans." ERIC MAYER.

" Fan humour is unique ? Superficially, maybe. Fannish humour is more likely to contain words or phrases like "gafia" or "Yngvi is a louse" than Twain or Voltaire, but I don't see that as a very important difference. Perhaps in something more subtle. The sort of ironies that are considered funny may not seem funny to mundanes. Perhaps fan humour is dependant on the syntactical framework of fanspeak more than I thought. Who knows ? But on grosser levels it seems pretty orthodox. And on the subtle levels it is probably no more unusual than the humour found in other similar communities of interest, like Jazz, wargaming, and cybernetics."

TARAL WAYNE MACDONALD.

" None." WALT WILLIS.

THE FAN HUMOUR SYMPOSIUM

QUESTION THREE.

PLACE, IN ORDER OF MERIT, THE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS OF HUMOUR:-
a) WIT. b) SLAPSTICK. c) INCONGRUITY. d) PUNNING.

" Wit. Incongruity. Punning. Slapstick. Except for a very few examples I can't abide slapstick." HARRY BELL.

" Wit. Punning. Incongruity. Slapstick." MIKE GLICKSOHN.

" Punning. Incongruity. Wit. Slapstick. JOHN HARVEY.

" Wit. Incongruity. Slapstick.....Punning." DAVE JENRETTE.

".....Incongruity (any person manhandling the English language sends me beresk!), Punning, wit, and a long way behind them all comes Slapstick...the banana pratfall or custard pie in mush both leave me cold." TERRY JEEVES.

" Normally wit would always go first, but the order of merit depends entirely on handling, and subject. You can't have an absolute scale when it depends on circumstances. For example, a well-wrought pun is an agonising delight; constant inane punning is usually a pain in the neck. But I will admit that wit is never out of place, and I'll go so far as to put it first. The others can fight for it." DAVE LANGFORD.

" Incongruity, for me, is so far ahead of the others its practically in its own dimension. Incongruity is the germ around which the idea grows, sprouting bits of wit, slapstick and punning. I can't imagine anything more terrifying than sitting down at the typer and saying, "Well now, I'm going to write something funny." In fact I never consciously am aware of trying to write anything funny, of trying to provoke laughs. I'm not a comedian. What happens is that something incongruous will occur to me - the fact I'm in law school...the fact that I've always been obsessed with music despite having a tin ear. Such incongruities are usually fascinating to me. I want to explore them a little. Get a handle on them. So I write an article. It doesn't necessarily come out funny. The point in writing it isn't to write something funny but to explore the incongruity. However, such situations have a way of provoking humour. In a sense they are what humour's all about. The humour stems from the situation, from the reality, rather from the style. Naturally though, you try to fit the style to the subject matter. That's where wit and punning come in. I've never been fond of puns myself. Too artificial, too intellectual to strike my funny bone." ERIC MAYER.

" I can't answer this question, mainly because I don't think the four categories you list are seperate and truly valid. For instance, wit can and has to be used in devising good puns or incongruities. It is risky, anyway, to become too analytical about humour in case you become too selfconscious about it and drive out the indefinable quality which makes humour work. I've seen Jerry Lewis on tv expounding his expertise on the theory of humour, and yet his later films are about as funny as a child's coffin. Bob Monkhouse is one of the cleverest gagsmiths I've ever seen, but something about him and the way he performs kills all his jokes stone dead." BOB SHAW.

" I don't accept the categories. I see the essential element of humour as surprise, and as originating from muscular relaxation and where, built on the sudden disappearance of danger, it is to my mind a special form of art. The nature of which was defined by Wordsworth (in the Preface to the Lyrical Ballads) as the incongruity of the similar to the dissimilar, and of the dissimilar in the similar. On this analysis, incongruity is an essential element in all humour: punning is merely a mild form of slapstick in which words slip on banana skins." ALF WILLIS.

& & & & & & & & & & & & & & & &

QUESTION 4.

LIST WHAT YOU CONSIDER TO BE THE THREE MOST EFFECTIVE STYLES OF FANNISH HUMOUR.

" I'm not at all sure I can answer this question because I'm not at all sure I know what the styles of fan humour are. For example, I believe that Bob Shaw's speech/article on the BACKYARD SPACESHIP was the funniest piece published last year but what 'style' was it? Bob used puns, clever word play, satire, exaggeration, incongruity and a dozen other tricks to achieve an overall brilliant piece of humour. I can't put a simple one-word description to his 'style' because it's far too complex. Leroy Kettle writes some of the most side-splitting material in fan-zines with a mixture of exaggeration, word-play, insult, pseudo-invective. How to describe his 'style' ? What I can do is give you a list of some of the funniest writers in fandom and forget about trying to specify which one writes which way. Here goes...Bob Shaw, Leroy Kettle, John Brosnan, Derek Carter, Lee Hoffman, Dave Locke, Denny Lien, Dave Jenrette, Tom Perry, Bob Bloch, John Bangsund. And I've undoubtedly forgotten lots of them!"

MIKE GLICKSOHN.

" Short satires of sf; critical reviews; con-reports."

DAVE JENRETTE.

" Most effective fan humour is the perversion or deliberate mishandling of straight forward themes. Satire." TERRY JEEVES.

" Styles of fannish humour... Witty, in-joke reporting of events (Graham Charnock is best here); Parody and buffoonery (Leroy Kettle); sheer bloody idiocy (Dave Bridges). That clears up number 5) too, as far as instant response goes. I'll send you the deep, reasoned, mature stuff in a few years, perhaps." DAVE LANGFORD.

" To be perfectly honest, I'll have to pass on these. I'll be damned if I can identify three distinct styles, let alone single out their best practitioners. But if you make up a tally of some sort vote for Bob Shaw."

- In my mind I tend to divide fanwriting of a humorous nature 'into' two categories - Personal and Faanish. The personal centers around people who just happen to be fans and who therefore share certain perspectives. The faanish centers around all the paraphenalia of Fandom - history, myths etc. The latter is a fascinating but excruciatingly limited form. The former has more possibilities, but too often, instead of trying to use the shared subjectivities of fandom as a basis for humour, writers depicting personal events fall back on the props of fanishness. The built in interest that faanish doings like conventions, meetings, and sf have for fans make good crutches, and often the most acclaimed fanwriters are those who can hobble fastest on these crutches. Examples of that kind of writing are numerous, just about anything you point to fills the bill. Certainly most of my stuff fits. And there's nothing wrong with that. Its one of the beauties of fan humour that we can have all sorts of fun playing at faanish conventions. But to see what its possible to achieve, by focusing on the subjectivities, and perceptions we share, in addition to using the normal faanish props, you have to look to an article like Tom Perry's account of meeting Walt Willis. Now there's a humourist who carries his crutches under his arm. - Its interesting to me that in Fandom, in direct contradiction to the situation in mundania, humour is far and away the most popular form of writing. I wonder why. Certainly its not easier to do than serious writing...just the opposite probably." ERIC MAYER.

" I couldn't say. On the whole, parody is quite easily used in a heavy-handed way. The effectiveness of any humourist really depends upon his skill." TARAL WAYNE MACDONALD.

QUESTION 4.(cont.)

" (a) Sarcasm about bad SF and bad writing in the cinema, on tv, in books and in fanzines. (b) Pseudo-spiteful cut-and-thrust among personalities in fanzine fandom. (c) Dry depreciation of the vast gap that exists between the idealised fannish/SF star-begotten and the homely individuals, with all their humdrum failings, who actually make up the SF and fannish microcosm." BOB SHAW.

QUESTION 5.

WHO DO YOU CONSIDER THE BEST EXPONENTS OF THESE STYLES.

This question didn't provide a big enough sampling for any fair listing of fan writers to be made - although Bob Shaw did get mentioned frequently as master-of-all-styles. Hopefully, if you'll all sit down and send me your answers, there'll be a listing next issue. eb.

QUESTION 6.

DO YOU CONSIDER THAT FANNISH HUMOUR MUST, BY DEFINITION, BE ESOTERIC ?

" No. See my comments on Bob Shaw in answer to 1). His "Back Yard Spaceship," and Roy Kettle's "How Not To Be A Writer" were both enjoyed by several non-fans in my office." HARRY BELL.

" No. Some fannish humour is rendered esoteric by the cliqueishness of its subject matter but the best fannish humour is truly funny, which means it rises above the limitations of the topic itself." MIKE GLICKSOHN.

" Yes." John Harvey.

" No." Terry Jeeves.

" NO. I believe that best fan humour is at least at two levels: Humourous to the in-crowd, the cognoscenti, and also funny to the outsider; if it isn't both, it can be very funny but not really CLASSIC."

DAVE JENRETTE.

" I think fannish humour is largely esoteric, but it doesn't have to be outwardly esoteric. It could appeal to our subjectivities. But even then, I think fannish humour would remain a mystery to large groups of people, the unimaginative, the anti-intellectual, the over-practical etc, etc, etc."

ERIC MAYER.

" Perhaps humour must be esoteric to remain fannish by definition, but surely not very esoteric. And by no means should non-esoteric (therefore, I presume, non-fannish) humour be barred from fanzines. As if someone could prevent a given faned from publishing whatever he or she damn well well wants....." TARAL WAYNE MACDONALD.

" Fannish humour isn't necessarily esoteric - any citizen of the Galaxy can join in. When I'm writing a fanzine article I tend to make the jokes a bit more exclusive because I know I'm reaching a fanzine-oriented audience; but for a convention talk I apply the same style of humour to jokes about science, well-known scientists, science fiction, and well-known authors, for the benefit of convention members who are not conversant with fanzine lore."

BOB SHAW.

" Fannish humour must be esoteric since it is by definition related to fandom and fandom itself is esoteric. This is not to say that fans can not and do not produce humour which would be funny to anyone, or that mundane humourists cannot produce humour which is equally attractive to many fans - eg, the Goons or Monty Python. It is possible to argue that fantasy is a particularly strong element in fannish humour. I would not want to list examples of fannish humour because there has been so much of it, but for some reason one example sticks in my mind:-

"The stars shone in the black velvet of space, Like a handfull
of Ted Tubb Stories scattered carelessly across an agents desk."

- Hyphen.

I don't mean to imply this is a great example of humour but it does illustrate to me the elements of surprise and incongruity to which I referred, and the importance to fan humour of the esoteric allusion, of which there are three layers in this example." WALT WILLIS.

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QUESTION 7 (WRITERS/EDITORS ONLY)
WHICH THREE FAN ARTISTS DO YOU CONSIDER PRODUCE
THE MOST INTRINSICALLY HUMOUROUS WORK ?

The answers to this, and the following questions were intended to form the basis for a poll sequence. However, I don't see why those named shouldn't get some advance egoboo - along with an invite to send artwork to TRICDE....eb.

" Grant Canfield, Derek Carter, Bruce Townley." HARRY BELL.

" Arthur Thomson, Bjo Trimble. Can't think of a third. Now, if you'd asked who produces the most unintentionally humorous work...." JIM CAWTHORN.

" Derek Carter, Harry Bell, Grant Canfield." MIKE GLICKSOHN.

" Harry Bell, Jim Barker, Dicky Howett." JOHN HARVEY.

" In the U.S., I like Kinney, Rotsler, and Canfield; in the U.K., I'm partial to Harry Bell and Terry Jeeves." DAVE JENRETTE.

" Harry Bell, Tony Glynn, Tim Kirk," TERRY JEEVES.

" Harry Bell, Dan Stoffan, D. West." DAVE LANGFORD.

" I could say Bonny Dalzel is one of the most humorous fanartists, intrinsically. Or even myself. Both of us produce drawings that are funny to a developed artistic sense, but have no punch lines and do not illustrate a funny written piece. I doubt this comes across to most fans, though. On the grotesque level, artists like Canfield and Bathurst produce intrinsically funny work. (By grotesque I mean drawing people or things with exaggerated or distorted characteristics)." TARAL WAYNE MACDONALD.

" Atom, Jim Barker, Bill Rotsler." BOB SHAW. " Atom. Ray Nelson." WAW.

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Since listings of individual preference, however relevant, get a little tedious; I'm now just going to quote the other questions (together with a few pertinent quotes) and save a value listing for the next issue....when all the returns are in! eb.

QUESTION 8. LIST THE BEST ILLUSTRATORS OF HUMOUROUS FAN WRITINGS.
(WRITERS/EDITORS ONLY)

QUESTION 9. WHICH ARTIST WOULD YOU CHOOSE TO ILLUSTRATE YOUR FAVOURITE
(WRITERS/EDITORS ONLY) PIECE OF FAN HUMOUR ?

QUESTIONS 10 & 11. AS 8) & 9) ABOVE BUT FOR ARTISTS ONLY.

QUESTION 12. WHICH FAN HUMOURIST WOULD PROVIDE YOU WITH THE BEST VISUAL
(ARTISTS ONLY) HOOKS ?

" You may have gathered by now that the writers of the (genuflect) Harrison saga's produce the sort of NIGHT TRAIN TO AUSTRO-HUNGARY send up which is my favourite material for illustrating." JIM CAWTHORN.

& & & & & & &

" What's the real reason behind this quiz ? You can't expect contemporary readers to accept this sort of thing at its face value. What are you really up to Bentcliffe ?" Suspicious Jim Cawthorn.

QUESTION 13.

WHAT IS THE WORST/BEST FANNISH PUN YOU KNOW OF ?

" No one favourite, but I'm rather fond of a rather long Ken Bulmer story which (very briefly) concerned the Chinese Emperor who wanted to commemorate his reign with something notable and decided to get someone to fly for the first time. Wise men design huge wings, then races are held the length and breadth of China until the fastest runner is found. Great day - runner straps on huge wing, runs down hill, lifts into air, soars away into clouds. Minutes pass. Suddenly, runner minus wing crashes down out of clouds. Emperor concerned over fate of beautiful wing. Wise man say, 'When sprinter come, can wing be far behind ?'" HARRY BELL.

" Willis' "The bun is the lowest form of wheat." Anything by Tom Perry. My own " At last I've found the 'end'-chanted DEW placator."

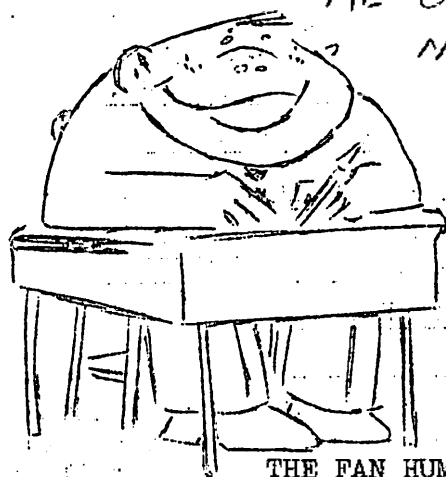
MIKE GLICKSOHN.

" The worst puns if fandom are 4 out of 5 in a Sam Long letter."

TARAL WAYNE MACDONALD.

"The one about Arthur 'Ego' Clarke's favourite drink being ACColade." BOB SHAW.

" Ed Noble used to change his address so frequently that Bob Shaw called him " The roamingest Noble of them all." WALTER A. WILLIS.



DO I GET
ME 'O LEVEL
NOW?

THE FAN HUMOUR SYMPOSIUM - Part Two.
Will appear next issue if you'll all
be kind enough to respond.

TUCKER TRANSFER - TUCKER TRANSFER - TUCKER TRANSFER

" The TUCKER TRANSFER is a plot to export one Wilson "Bob" Tucker to England for the '79 Worlcon. Cornered in his room at TOTOCN, plied with Beam's Choice and Gail Burnick, he agreed to be transfered. Now, you might ask why should he be sent to Brighton ? Don't ask me, ask the Kangaroo's and Wombats that are wandering about the Australian Outback saying SMOOTH! Ask the Rosebud Hotel? Ask the ladies who's charms he has appreciated, ask the readers of his fiction and fanzines. Heck, ask anyone who has met him. He's a fan's fan and a pro's pro. This is an idea whose time has come! Help Tuckerize British Fandom. Money is needed! Items to auction are needed! Publicity is needed! The American and British administrators of the TT are Gale Burdick, 2266 Jackson, Dubuque, La 52001, USA, and Eric Bentcliffe."

JAN HOWARD FINDER.

Whilst I fully support the TUCKER TRANSFER it is only right that I tell the whole story. The fact is that certain well-known fen have been approached by the maker of a liquor known colourfully as JIM BEAM. At certain times of the year this chap has difficulty coping with demand - American Labour Day being an example - and he's made an agreement that if Wilson "Bob" Tucker can be got out of the country for ' just a couple of days' he will have available on his return, enough Jim Beam for Robert Bloch to finally pickle Tucker for posterity. Personally, I think this is a cause deserving all of fandom's support....besides, Old Redeye's has promised to bring some with him! EB.

ADVENTURES OF A TIN EAR

19

By
ERIC MAYER.



My father played trumpet for a Seabee's band during the war in Hawaii. My father never wanted to join the Seabee's. I never wanted to play the trumpet. Nevertheless, when it came time to do my duty for the fourth-grade orchestra, I had thrust upon me an instrument for which I was not suited. At least that's my excuse.

The shiny horn that had wafted "Stardust" out across the airways to the troops in the penapple fields was removed from its velvet-lined case and pressed into my sweaty little hands.

"Just remember," said my father, by way of last minute instruction, "keep a stiff upper lip."

Apparently, I would've been one step ahead of the game if I'd been born British. Sucking cherry cokes through straws at the corner drug store does not give you the musculature you need to tighten your lip into the brass equivalent of a vibrating reed. This explains why most good trumpet players are British. Being American, I would have been better off with an oboe.

I won't mention the name of my music teacher. He was disciplined by the school authorities a few years ago when they discovered he was spending too many school days in a different state than the school. The school was in the state of Pennsylvania and my teacher was in the state of inebriation.

All of which has nothing to do with my story. I'm sure my musical career wasn't adversely affected by the fact that my first teacher was a drunkard.

He was a short man - perfectly spherical except for his double chins. When I explained to him the events which had culminated in my taking trumpet lessons, he told me he'd been decorated in that same war. I figured that accounted for his unnaturally red face. I wondered what he'd been? A barrage balloon perhaps? Did they use them in Hawaii?

His efforts with me turned out to be less than heroic. I managed to finger the valves ok. I could even operate the gadget that let the spit out of the tubes. Trouble was, I couldn't get any spit into the tubes - or air for that matter - let alone force it clear out the other end. I weighed about 55 pounds, none of which was lung tissue. I'm sure I'd have had no trouble with a drum kit.

As it was I huffed and puffed to no avail. I might just as well have tried to blow the Eiffel Tower over from my back porch. There must have been ten miles of tubing between the mouthpiece and the bell - stuffed full of concrete. My face would turn blue, my cheeks would blow up until I was afraid they were going to split like overinflated footballs. The only sound I heard was bells as the room started to whirl around me and go dark. Once I did get some air through, or maybe I only displaced a few breaths left over from 1944. It sounded like asthmatic geese coughing.

Eventually my parents let me quit. They were probably afraid I'd turn myself into a giant hernia.

The trumpet lessons were bad enough, but more than once I had to drag my numb, swollen lips, back to the classroom just in time to take part in the organised croaking and squawking the grade school's teacher of music liked to refer to as "singing". It's likely that I'll never learn to play a musical instrument, but singing is another matter. It's absolutely certain that I'll never be able to sing. I've always known I couldn't sing. When I was born, I cried flat. I'd as soon jump out a 10th. story window as try to sing. I know very well, without any deep reflection, that if I jumped out of the window I wouldn't suddenly sprout wings. I know if I tried to sing I wouldn't suddenly sprout new ears and vocal chords. Simple, right?

Not for my grade school music teacher. She wasn't a drunk. Just stupid, I guess. She had a pitch pipe tuned one octave lower than an ultrasonic dog whistle. Just right for very young castrati. She'd blow a piercing toot on the thing and then everyone's eyes would bug out as they strained to hit the note.

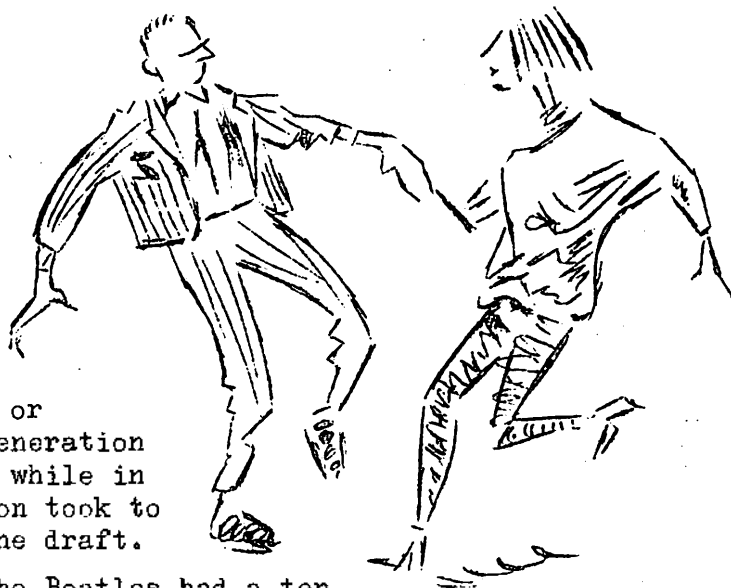
Somewhere in the midst of this popeyed, squealing throng, I could be found, carefully mouthing the words. I wasn't about to contribute to such silliness. Not only were all the notes too high, the lyrics were insipid. One song in particular, about a "little man" who lived in the "deep dark woods", I found offensive.

I had begun reading science fiction at this time, with special emphasis on time travel. I wouldn't have objected to singing about an enormous triceratops in the deep Jurassic ooze but "little men" had to come from Mars before I'd deign to sing about them.

I was well read, after all. I knew a bit about the world. I was aware of some of the more trying facets of existence. I knew that if you got your foot stuck in a giant prehistoric clam there was nothing to do, if the tide was coming in, but hack off your leg below the knee. I had fully resigned myself to do so if I was ever unfortunate enough to stumble into a giant prehistoric clam on my way home from school. No way was I going to make an ass out of myself by singing about any little men with purple cloaks and long black hoods. The damn song was about a Jack-in-the-Pulpit anyway - a plant obviously named by a nervous Baptist who hoped to distract people from noticing what it really looked like.

So I mouthed the words silently. What was wrong with that ? That's what the singers on American Bandstand did. Being a singer was a real racket. The music was all there on the records. You just had to stand on stage and move your mouth. I was in college before I understood the rationale behind lip sinching.

My debacle with the trumpet interrupted my musical career briefly. After I had finished grade school, junior high school, high school and one year of college I took up where I had left off and bought an acoustic guitar. I had no choice. Everyone at school either played guitar, carried one around campus, talked about learning to play bass so he could start a band, or took accounting. A previous generation had taken to their instruments while in the armed forces. My generation took to theirs while trying to avoid the draft.



I faced quite a task. The Beatles had a ten year start on me. But I was younger than them.

A second, totally unexpected problem immediately confronted me. I found, to my amazement that aural distortions caused by vinyl make recorded notes sound considerably different from real life ones. I was shocked that none of my instruction books mentioned this fact. Perhaps the authors were afraid that pupils would be discouraged from the outset if they knew that all those pretty C's and B flats that sound so pleasant and melodious after being altered by transfer onto vinyl started off as the sound of asthmatic geese being plucked.

My hypothesis about the sound distorting qualities of vinyl were confirmed when I had the chance to listen to a recording of my father's Seabees band, made during the war on steel. It sounded horrible, just like in reality.

Keeping this musical fact of life in mind, I persevered. After three weeks I managed a stirring rendition of A sharp. At that point, I decided to lay down my pick. It would be at least a year before I was ready to become a rock star and besides, the Beatles were probably practising every day too and it would be difficult for me to catch up with them. I went around for the next month feeling like George Harrison thanks to the large callouses I'd built up on my fingers.

I decided to take up writing.

.....Eric Mayer.

IT'S U.K. TIME
IN '79



The Dehydrated Goldfish

By

Eric Needham.



If ever fans visit Romiley at 3.15a.m. on any November 15th, they will find all the people in bed, behind bolted doors - and this strange tale explains why.

Years ago there dwelt where Carlton Avenue now exists a Venerable Philosopher, who sought the solution to eternal life. With him dwelt his servant and his friend, a tame goldfish. The Old Philosopher had no need of other company save when he mounted his milk-white steed and went carousing at a certain tavern. When sozzled with alcohol; a noted antiseptic and, therefore, a method of prolonging life, his milk-white steed would seize his collar in its teeth and haul him back home to his goldfish...for it was no ordinary goldfish.

Several hundred miles up the road in Scotland, a protesting executioner was slung out of a boarding-house for non-payment of rent. "Och!" he cried bitterly, "Would you fling me oot intae the streets because I've nae the bawbee tae pay me rent?"

"Aye," said his stony-hearted landlady. "If ye canna get work and canna pay your rent, I canna keep feeding ye. Ye'd better tac' yon great axe and gae where there's plenty of criminals to execute. And the number of criminals tae be executed will be higher among they southern sassenachs, since there be a proportionately greater population."

"Mebbe yer right," said the unemployed executioner dolefully, and hoisting his axe, tramped off in a generally southerly direction.

A student of Pavlov, the Old Philosopher had trained his goldfish for years to live on less and less water, until eventually it lived in its empty glass-bowl quite happily. Ignoring the fact that there was no water; for since the glass bowl functioned as a dielectric insulant, the goldfish built up a powerful electrostatic charge by the physical activity of flapping its fins, enabling the electrical repulsion so generated to keep it 'afloat'. But its chief feature of appeal was its magnetic personality, which attracted some people and repelled others. Around the house it was extremely useful, and performed many strange tasks while the Old Philosopher laboured incessantly on his perpetual life machine.

On the heather-strewn Clyde delta our out-of-work headsman rested his great axe on a convenient cromlech, and enquired of a passing dock-worker if he new of any cities with criminals in need of execution. "Manually?" enquired the dock-worker. "We generally combine business with pleasure around here. The executioner we used to have now earns a living chopping firewood in the forests, and we burn our criminals at the stake. It's a grand spectacle, keeps the bairns off the street-corners, and the wood ash when mixed with calcified criminal makes a very fine fertiliser for Haggis growers. We get every benefit we can from our evil-doers, ye ken."

The headsman sighed wearily, thanked the dock-worker, and grimly tramped on towards England.....and Romiley.

Within the tavern the Old Philosopher explained to a local yokel his theory of how to obtain immortal life. "Drink lots of ale and liquor," said the Old Philosopher, "destroy the germs with alcohol and live longer. Remember Nelson - he was embalmed in rum." He sighed a deep sigh and took a gulp of ale. "By that time, however, Nelson was dead. Such machines as mine were unknown in those days." "Tell me more," said the yokel, as he accepted another pot of ale.

"My method is electrical," continued the Old Philosopher, "As you know the human body has definite electrical resistance. This resistance limits the current which can be passed through a human body, as you can well imagine. But germs, being far smaller, have less resistance and can pass a greater current which destroys them! My machine can pass an electrical current through the human body by certain devices I have developed, and destroy all the germs therein. Have another drink."

"What ye do say sounds eminently reasonable to I," reflected the yokel, "but do it work in practice?" Here the Old Philosopher pounded himself on the chest with both hands. "Look!" he cried. "Am I not older than you? Have I not lived before you were born? My longevity I owe to my machine...but I am not satisfied. No, not until I find the secret of eternal life shall I be satisfied. Have another drink." "That I will," said the yokel, working out compound interest sums based on a thousand, or more, years - for like many rustics, he was no fool.

And so it was that later that night the milk-white steed carried home a sozzled rustic and a sober, icy-cold scheming philosopher.

Still the starving executioner loped southwards in search of criminals to execute, and wild of eye, accosted a tourist in the Lake District. "Pardon M'sieu?" asked the puzzled tourist. "Is it that M'sieu is unwell? Is it perhaps the heat which makes you seek felons to execute? In my beloved France we employ the force of gravity to execute criminals with Gallic despatch and efficiency. Can you not imagine how a man would feel to live in the shadow of Madame le Guillotine?"

"Losh, mon, I ken fine," muttered the headsman, resuming his steady march southwards....

"Sad," mused the Old Philosopher, standing bareheaded beside the newly dug grave. "So often in life is there this discrepancy between theory and practice. Perhaps more than two electrodes are necessary to ensure equal current distribution throughout the human organism." He entered his little house in deep thought, viewed his germ-destroying machine pensively, and gently stroked his industrious goldfish with a glass rod. Happily the goldfish floated over the carpet, smiling on the dust in it.

Immediately the dust was attracted to the goldfish, which flapped its way out of doors, to frown fiercely at the dust on itself and so repelled it into the dustbin. Broadly, the Old Philosopher took his milk-white steed and set a course for the tavern.

In the great city of Manchester the foot-worn headsman asked a passing policeman if he had any criminals to execute. "No," replied the copper disdainfully. "We either suspend them from a rope around the neck until dead, a highly efficient method since it breaks a man's neck, ruptures his arteries, strangles him and snaps the spinal chord all in one go, and with no blood spilt. Or, we imprison them for life in Owens Park. What do we want with archaic methods such as yours?"

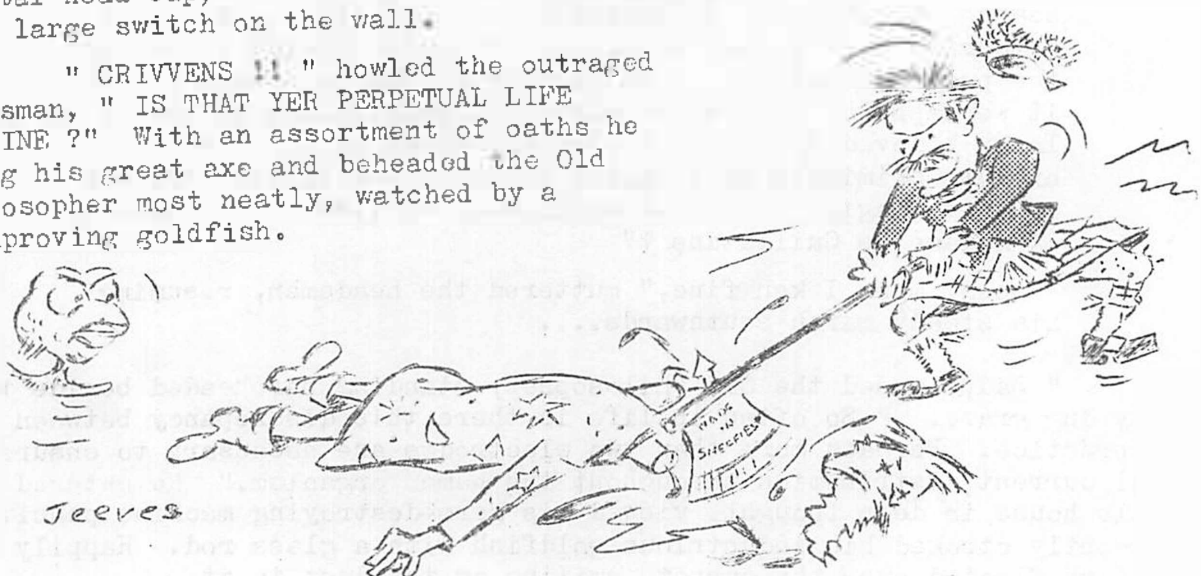
"Mon," almost sobbed the headsman, "is there nowhere a mon can earn a decent living these days?" The copper frowned. "There are no headsman in the United States," he reflected, "but lots of American tourists collect curio's and relics. I'd try one of those!" "Aye," muttered the headsman, "mebbe you're right at that." And he found a camera-slung, cigar smoking, fedora-hatted tourist and asked his question.

"Ain't much demand for headsman in the States," opined the Yark. "We got automation and cheap power to spare. Our generators run all around the clock, and round about dawn there's no demand for power anything like the output. So, we use the off-peak power to fry our criminals in electric chairs." "What's an electric-chair?" demanded the headsman. "Heck, it's just a strong chair with a metal head-cap and metal strips to go round the wrists and ankles of the criminal to ensure he gets all that's going," said the tourist proudly. "Mr. Edison's rocking chair, we call it."

Sadly the headsman hoisted his axe once more and silently wandered southwards through Stockport, through Bredbury, and into Romiley, where he entered a tavern and ordered a glass of beer. "Have a drink," offered a hospitable Old Philosopher with a smile. "You look run down. You look downright unhealthy and full of germs and bacteria. You a stranger in town?"

That evening, the milk-white steed brought home a double load again. In the little home of the Old Philosopher the headsman gazed around at the furnishings, the goldfish in its empty bowl...and a substantial chair with a metal head-cap, metal wrist and ankle straps and a power-cable attached to a large switch on the wall.

"CRIVVENS!!" howled the outraged headsman, "IS THAT YER PERPETUAL LIFE MACHINE?" With an assortment of oaths he swung his great axe and beheaded the Old Philosopher most neatly, watched by a disapproving goldfish.



In fury the headsman strode out of the house, into the falling rain, into the stable, and grabbed the milk-white steed. Angrily the goldfish flapped its way out of the bowl and towards the headsman as he mounted the steed....and batted him with a fierce fin...



Seeves

There is little need to tell you that a horse and headsman soaked with rain constitute a conductor and so fierce was the electro-static discharge that it killed the horse and rider, while the goldfish fell to the ground and was drowned by the falling rain.

And this is the full and true story of why, at 3.15 am. on any November 15th in Romiley, the people stay abed, as through the streets parades a ghastly procession of a horseless headsman pursued by a headless horseman.

....Eric Needham.

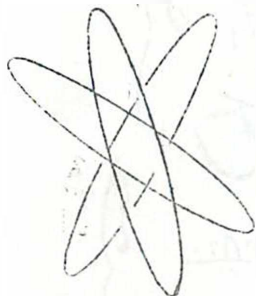
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MEANWHILE IN MAGIC LANTERN LAND: WITH JIM CAWTHORN

"Back to Pinewood last week, where we watched Patrick (Son of John) Wayne exposing his chiselled profile to the blast of a wind machine while he piloted a flying boat over the jungles of Caspak. Jammed into the same aircraft (but in other seats) were Sarah Douglas, Thornley Walters, and Shane Rimmer. Only Mr. Rimmer seemed to be having any fun, even though he was nearer to the wind machine than anyone else, but then, he had a lewis-gun to play with. Periodically, at the director's command, he would stun everybody's eardrums with a quick burst of fire at a passing pterodactyl. The pterodactyl had to be taken on trust as it was somewhere inside the "back projection" machine, hence invisible. I've put the phrase in inverted commas because, confusingly, back-projection is projected nowadays at the front. Oh, well.

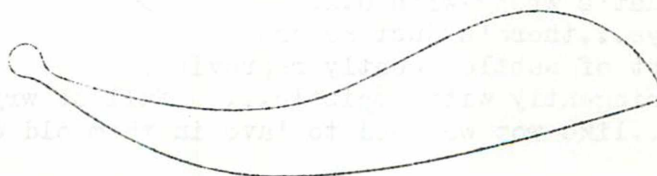
Speaking of Pinewood....I hear that the film of SUPERMAN has taken over the entire studios, likewise Shepperton and part of Ealing. I can't see how they hope to make a box-office success of it. Where's the audience for SUPERMAN ? "

AND TERRY HUGHES



" STAR WARS is pure gold at the box office. It has set records in every city it has opened in. Most people I know love the film. (Ted White is one of the few who hate it.) I'm very fond of it myself. I think that it recaptures all the gosh-wow enthusiasm of the Flash Gordon serials. It's a film full of action and good humor. The special effects are simply superb. STAR WARS is so big that it will wipe out STAR TREK! Yes, I am serious. You will hear the phrase " May the Force be with you..." time and again. "

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FANSARD

THE
LETTERS and
((E.B.))..

Sean Harris, 32 Lake Crescent, Daventry, Northants.

My dad's right off you. And your Mr. Jeeves. And Mr. Harry Bloody Warner Junior. He wishes he'd voted for Brian Burgess for TAPP, and if he'd subscribed cash money for Triode he'd be round your house tomorrow morning to ask for it back. So there. Also he hopes you all get stencil chancre and your staples rust and fall out.

He is going to report you to the N3F and have you DRUMMED OUT OF FANDOM. He is so sore that, if you approach him at the next convention and offer to buy him a drink, HE WILL REFUSE IT.

Incredible, huh? He'd never be that sore. WELL.....

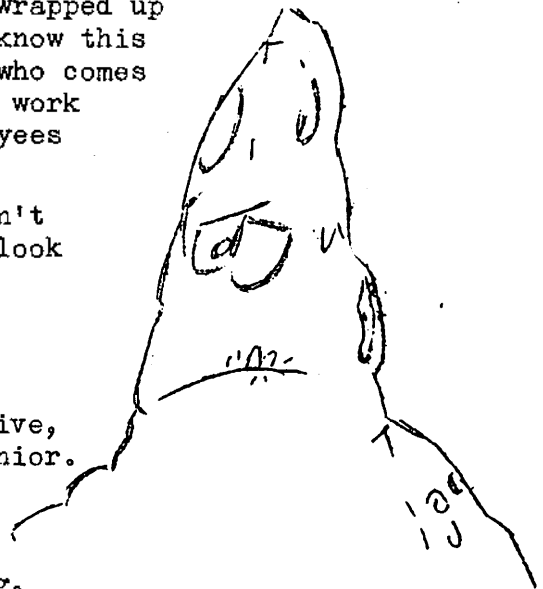
He said that if Harry Bloody Warner wasn't a half assed tightwad (what's a half assed tightwad, Mr. Bentcliffe?) he would have splurged six dollars on Lee Hoffman's NOTHING BUT A DRIFTER before attempting a definitive article on Fannish Influences, Scources, and Names in the Tales of Hoofman. Dad did a little dance on TRIODE and said he quite understands how Ed Wood feels about Warner.

Harry has got the VALDEZ HORSES bang to rights - even if he can't quite manage the spelling, and shure it's dedicated to half a page of Hoffmans on the flysheet but....

If you came into our house now (and if I were you, I wouldn't dream of doing such a stupid thing), if you came into our house, my Dad (after checking to see your hands were clean) would ever so casually show you a brand new copy of NOTHING BUT A DRIFTER all wrapped up in a clear plastic protective cover... (I know this for a fact because he shows it to everybody who comes into the house and most days takes it off to work with him to show the other 40,000 Ford employees who haven't seen it yet.)

In a sort of offhand tone as if he didn't care one way or another he'll say, " Take a look at the flyleaf," and, if you've got any damn sense at all, you'll bate your breath and intone " To The Wheels of IF...and to Chuck Harris, in lieu of a spaceship."

Egoboo gluttons like my dad never forgive, never forget. God help you, Harry Warner Junior. ((I print this letter to illustrate one of the things that's wrong with U.K. fandom these days...there's just no one writing this sort of subtle, gently reproving, insouciant, astringently witty epistle...so full of wry sadness, but not condescending....like wot we used to 'ave in them old days.))



Harry Warner Jr, 423 Summit Ave, Hagerstown, Maryland. 21740.

Chuck Harris really did write me a most alluring letter of invitation to buy a one-way ticket to Northants rather than Dubrovnik. ((You sure you got that the right way round, Harry ?)) I can't recall the exact reason I was forced to decline (most likely, I was afraid to risk the ride to the airport because there was terribly slick ice covering Hagerstown almost all winter long) but this week I've been tempted to ask him if the invitation is still valid. Something impelled a section of spouting to depart its moorings at the rear of my house. I telephoned six firms that advertised their anxiety to make repairs of this type. Three firms promised to send someone out to give me an estimate at a specified time, and none of the three showed up; another firm used one of those automatic answering devices into which I recorded a request to telephone me about my crisis, and I never got a call; the operator broke into my attempt to dial the fifth firm and told me it now had an unlisted number; and the sixth firm actually gave me an estimate but warned that I need a new roof over my front porch which they would be glad to supply for a mere \$1,300. I would have tried to fix the spouting myself, except for the thought of the prophecy which might come true if I climbed up there, the prediction that I'll some day end up in the gutter. ((Harry, d'you mind, Chuck Harris and I do the funnies around here!))

I was gratified at the fine illustrations which Paul Ryan contrived for my article. It made me even gratified to get a letter from LeeH. She didn't find that I had done anything particularly terrible in the things I wrote about her pro' fiction. ((Any hope she'd dedicate another book to Sean's Dad, you think ? So that he'll come down off the roof...))

Tom Perry's article is almost worthy of ranking with Bob Shaw's space drive essay among the finest fanzine material emanating from Europe in recent months. I think he misquotes slightly the lyrics of that song, whose title I remember as I'm Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself A Letter. ((Yes, an old Fats Waller number.)) The first line should start, I think, "Lotsa kisses". I wonder if anyone has ever compiled a list of poetry which eventually became unintentionally suggestive through later changes in word meanings and connotations ? I once saw a collection of musical settings of songs in Shakespeare plays whose editor had carefully substituted another verb in the one that begins "Where the Bee sucks". Someone once told me that one of Tennyson's obscure poems has as its climatic line "He gave her the bird" although come to think of it, the idiomatic meaning of that line may not be known in England. ((Oh yes, it is....but how giving her the time can be a climatic line I'm not sure...))

You may have written more truthfully than you intended about the new fan history book. I've heard nothing since September from the fan who intended to produce it. By our publishing agreement, his right to produce it will expire if he hasn't done anything by late this summer, and publication rights will revert to me. If that happens, I might decide not to go through this agony of working with a potential publisher for a third time. I might simply sit on the manuscript until retirement, then publish it when I have plenty of time, or I might declare a moratorium on loc-writing and other forms of fanac for a few months and do it immediately myself. ((The latter rather than the former, Harry, please....er, after you've finished that next article for me.))

John Berry's latest adventure on foreign soil seems even closer in spirit and language to his old fanzine writings than his other recent contributions. I don't know whether any other readers felt the same extra spice of humor emanating from this one that I sensed: the incongruity of The Goon engaging in these wanderings in an area so closely associated with ancient Greece. It's almost as if all time and space had broken down and as a result a formerly gaffiated fan writing for a formerly deceased fanzine had been wandering in 1976 or thereabouts in Homer's time and clime. ((Hm, didn't Sprague de Camp once use that plot ?))

Gary Deindorfer, 447 Bellevue Ave., #9-B, Trenton, N.J. 08618.

The cover is rather dramatic, what with the three dimensionality it suggests, not to mention of how you stop a creature made out of metal with nothing but a sword. But I was especially interested in the towers in the background. An interesting concept of architecture. They look like a far-future evolution from Russian architecture. I would like to see them make their reappearance sometime in the future, so that I may further grok them in there fullness. ((Jim?))

Sf and daydreaming: yes, I just read the first volume in LeGuin's Earthsea trilogy and have been imagining myself sailing along over the ocean, raising a mage-wind to power my sails. Along these lines, if you were out in a sailboat knowing the real wind was filling your sail, you might gild the lilly a little by imagining it to be the mage-wind the Earthsea wizards use. If you were neurotic, you might fret and worry that the real wind wasn't good enough and why couldn't you raise a mage-wind. And if you were psychotic, you would be sitting in your boat actually believing the mage-wind was powering your sails, telling yourself, "Well, if I wander too far out on the ocean, my mage-wind will get me back." ((What kind of a hell of a job have you got that your daydreams turn out like that, Gary?!?))

I see what Terry Hughes in the letter column means about Tom Perry's humor, especially his puns which are subtle little fellas, such as the way he slips in "2p or not 2p" after mentioning Hamlet. If the Golden Age of fannish writing was in the early fifties, then surely this is a golden example of the faanish Post Age. Surely a high watermark of recent writing in the genre of taking a tiny little idea and expanding it and embellishing it and giving it its own humorous special delivery. However, it's too bad Tom didn't have himself sipping a mint julep while writing the piece, but I guess he thought puns deriving from "mint" were too obvious and cancelled the idea. ((Actually, since it was something of a horror story he was writing about the P.O., I'm surprised he didn't work in Frankingstein!))

The Harry Bell illo heading the letter column is...superb. It is also an amusing thought, the idea of a live fanzine, with the editorial and the contributions received recited aloud to an audience, and the illos drawn while you watch, and then the letters of comment delivered off-the-cuff immediately afterwards from members of the assemblage. And then the editor, realizing time has run out, calls out, "And we also heard from..." and names the people who didn't get a chance to improvise verbal locs. The immediacy of the whole thing would be rather devastating, and could be immortalized on video tape. ((This idea was, in fact, recently done at a Stateside convention, Gary...but I'd dearly like to see it done here, too. Particularly, if the fanzine on-stage was to be SED. One can almost picture the scene as the hall is plunged into darkness and a discord of guitars heralds our boy Greg's entrance; his only props an evilly glowing brazier and a slightly-soiled manure-fork. Offstage; the sound of a gong being beaten to destruction, followed by muttered incantations as Greg proceeds to review a few recent fanzines. The whole thing climaxing in a ceremonial burning of effigys: of the fan-editors who have not made the grade. It would have to be effigys I think, otherwise there wouldn't be any audience left!))

Rob Jackson's piece causes me to point out that when I hear certain rock groups I wish they were ghosts. ((Damn, bottom of stencil and you hand me a line like that....I may not be able to spell 'effigies' but...))



((...but, I dearly love discussin' the blues. My tastes in music are pretty wide; I can enjoy most kinds except Brass-band and Ballet, but prefer jazz and Big Band Swing. Rock is okay for the occasional writhing session, but when its over-amplified and ineptly played I'd rank it with the worst sounds around - challenged only by the sound of a jumbo-jet in agony!))

Milton F. Stevens, 14535, #105. Van Nuys, California 91405.

It occurred to me whilst reading your editorial in Triode that I almost never have S-F daydreams. When my mind wanders I prefer to think about being disgustingly rich in the present, but several past eras are equally acceptable. The period from 1860 to 1900 was a particularly good time to be rich in. I was always impressed with the way one of my favourite robber barons (Jay Gould) was able to bribe an entire state legislature. He didn't bribe just a few corrupt officials, he bribed every single member of the New Jersey state legislature. And for only \$2,000,000. You can't get bargains like that anymore.

While they aren't exactly daydreams, there is one use I do have for scientificfictional thinking. I need things to think about that will put me to sleep at night. Thinking about being rich is entirely too interesting. Thinking about fandom is too worrisome. Thinking about work gives me the shivers. (I always manage to think of all the people who have been murdered in their beds on nights just like tonight.) But there are a lot of ideas in science fiction which are really sleep inducing. For instance, thinking about what the surface of Pluto is like at the moment is always good for a few yawns. If that doesn't do it, I start thinking about a dead galaxy where all the stars have burned out. For cases of real insomnia, I think about a black hole in space which is gradually swallowing the entire universe. Who ever said that science fiction couldn't be useful. ((You never used to be able to use it like this either, back in the old days. You'd only just get settled in a methane moraine of monotonous similarity when a bergey-form block of ice would drift by. A tempting, alluring bergey-form block of ice formed by a friendly alien who'd been reading your thoughts and knew that what you wanted wasn't really sleep. I suppose there is something to be said for modern sleep-inducing s-f.))

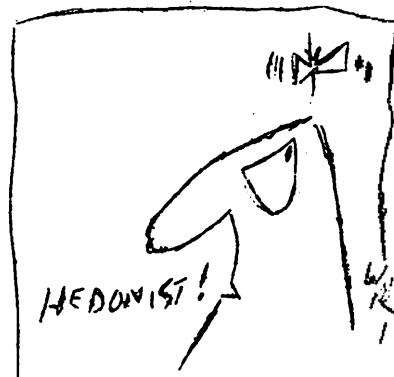
F. M. Busby, 2852 14th Ave, W. Seattle, Wa 98119.

Gee, I didn't find Agberg's "Shadrach...." boring. Bugging at times, yes...as when Shadrach decided against any of the more obvious means of self-preservation because he simply didn't happen to feel like it. Which means that Bob didn't want to be bothered writing any Chase Scenes', I guess. And the ending disappointed me, some. Still I can't say that the book ever bored me. Different hypes for different types? Anyway, the Vargo Awards should be fun. The V-cons in Vancouver, BC, Canada, have their Elron Awards for the same purpose, and Roger Ellwood is probably the front-running winner. Your idea of the Stanislaus Lemon is **inspired** (the Elron Awards, physically, are bronzed plastic lemons mounted on rolls of toilet paper).

Nice to see Marijuana giving Lee Hoffman's works a well deserved plug. I've read about 7 of Lee's books including 4 that Harry cites -- I also recommend "Change Song" (Fantasy) and "LOCO" (a Western). Tom Perry is writing some of the best fan/humour material that's going around lately. Tricky, as you say. Finest kind. But I fear that some fink in the Post Office would twig to the unfannish thought that someone might 'buy' negative postage stamps and not use them, but simply spend the money on beer. Unfannish though it may seem...((That's not unfannish, Buz, if enough fens did just that the P.O. would be forced to start selling mail order alcohol to get their money back. And the brewers would have to start a mail-service to compete and then fandom would have an acceptable substitute for the Post Office!))

Wow. Chuch H arris, Rick Sneary -- fandom lives. And Arnie Katz, too. The way to beat the Corflu Conspiracy is by using a paper-clip to smooth the stencil-wax, instead, and re-type. The method's not perfect, but it suffices. I cut stencils last fall for the first time in maybe five years and all our corflu had run away from home or something. The stuff is not essential. ((Oh, dear, I mustn't send this issue to Keith Walker.))

Jim Cawthorn, 106 Oxford Gardens, London.



Re the VARGO AWARD, picking out the worst of any year is a daunting prospect. Although I no longer read any s-f except in the way of business, I haven't forgotten some of the stuff I encountered when reviewing for NEW WORLDS. Nasty.... My reading today usually consists of popular science, thrillers, and fiction about W.W.1 & 2. And re-reading some of my favourite s-f and fantasy novels. At the moment, I'm on my third trip into The Night Land.

ARMADA SCI-FI No.4 is being cobbled together at the moment. I've just read all the manuscripts, but haven't got to do anything about illos right away. Writers of childrens s-f seem all to be frustrated rural types - out of eleven stories, five feature scenes where kids find alien spaceships in the woods beside the village. I doubt that the readers will notice this, but it's a bit of a drag for the illustrator. Makes me feel like submitting a story meself, set at the centre of the Galaxy and full of mile-long spaceships, Jackbooted Imperatrixes and lean, blaster-toting characters whose coal grey eyes are slitted against the blast of pi mesons as they ride the supernovae... ((Whilst I'm sure that your complaint about rural-oriented authors is a legitimate one from the viewpoint of an illustrator, Jim, I must point out that this is one of the joys of living in the country - the possibility/probability that on one of your ambles across the countryside you will find an alien spaceship. And, anyway, Jim, where the hell could they park in London these days ?!?! Come to think of it, there can't be many unused spaceship-parking-areas on Earth these days. The Canadian Backwoods have had fair usage from current authors, and the Mindanao Deep must be getting somewhat cluttered by now, too. Mebbe we should have a competition to help the authors in this regard - no invisibility-screens allowed. I rather liked an early Eric Frank Russell yarn in this regard; he had the spaceship discovered in a deep, deep coal-mine. I suspect this must have been one of the early solid-fuel jobs!))

Negative postage stamps would combine well with the GPO's policy of negative deliveries.

Rick Sneary's comments on the Treatment of artists by fanzine editors applies to the pro-art field, too. Such as the editors who make a fetish out of removing all trace of an artist's signature from cover paintings. ((Yes, this is frustrating to non-artists, too; I've often admired a cover and been annoyed at not knowing who it was by.)) It's hardly surprising that so many illustrators and comics artists in the U.S.A. are joining up with small independent publishing houses where a degree of personal control over the presentation of artwork is still possible. Which reminds me that the print unions are still out to take control. Just as soon as they get through fighting each other for supremacy, they'll descend upon the commercial art-world like the wrath of Marx.

I suppose I'm out of touch with Contemporary Taste these days, but.... I'm not entirely averse to violence in illustrations, as you may have noticed from time to time, yet the material now being used by some children's comics curdles my blood. Trouble is, I increasingly find myself in sympathy with the lad who is being thumped, rather than with the thumper. Which is no sort of mental attitude for someone specializing in heroic fantasy.

Rick Sneary, 2962 Santa Ana St, South Gate, California.90280.

Enjoyed your remarks about day-dreaming. As there has been a lot of times in my life when I could not be active, I've done a lot of it myself - keeping a number of plots going all the time. I wonder if most day-dreamers are faced with the same problem, of not being able to picture themselves just being up and off on adventure without a 'thought as to the family and responsibilities. I guess like you I never imagine myself much different than I am - just never ill, much stronger, and always able to say the right/clever thing at the right time... There wouldn't be much adventure in being Superman.

Perry on stamps raises a couple of questions. Has your P.O. really come out with 400 million quid to the good? ((One of their operations did, Rick, but another lost slightly more than this....we're told!)) Tom is obviously no stamp collector, or he would know that while there were tax stamps in the bad old days when we were under your flag, there were no postage stamps of King George. Your first postal stamps came in 1840, with a head of Queen Victoria, which are now worth a pretty penny indeed. Also, I might point out that while other countries do, we never have stamps showing our living Presidents... And you are the only people who regularly feel so unique as to not need to put the name of your country on your stamps. ((Hmm, must be a moral in there somewhere, but I'm darned if I can think what it is at the moment.))

I'll complain a bit about your change of paper size. I like it about as much as finding I've put four carbons in backward and typed four copies of FIVE BY FIVE, backward. I do not plan to have my copies bound, but the storage problem is strained. I've got thirty years of fanzines out in our garage. One floor-to-ceiling rack, 18" wide; one three-shelf bookcase with plastic slipcover; and one row, over 12 foot long, along the top of four glass-fronted bookcases that I made; plus four boxes for APA-zines. Most fanzines that had runs of more than two issues are placed inside old mailing envelopes, and labelled - that's regular 11" zines. The 14" ones go into a box all higgeldly-piggeldy. Fanzines of (you will pardon the expression) bastard-size, like yours, are a real problem which usually gets solved by a bit of bending and jamming. I don't really mind awfully, but I thought you might think of that, when you send them out.... doomed to being eye-tracked and then bent and jammed into a narrow hole for life. ((Which would be appropriate enough, I suppose, if Triode were some sort of Official Organ...))

Please keep in mind our plans for the second SOUTH GATE WORLDCON, in 2010. We are organising the bidding committee now and starting our campaign; it being obvious that it is harder to win a site now than it was in '58. ((Presume you have a suitable cryogenic facility set up for those who want to attend, Rick?))

Michael Banks, P.O. Box 312, Milford, Ohio 43150.

Your daydreams run similar to mine, though lately I've been fantasizing about ****THE PERMANENT FLOATING SF CON****. You can envision it, I'm sure. Two or three thousand tru-fen and pros, moving from hotel (or resort center) to hotel as they please. Or, beter yet, pooling their resources and buying a suitable property... The only problem with the daydream is that I usually get analytical in the middle of it and try to figure out how the con could support itself and its members, and worse yet, how to prevent the large scale wars that would probably develop from such close and constant contact... ((I thought there already was a permanent floating sf con circuit in the States, Michael; it certainly seems from fnz comment that there's just about one every weekend, at least. You could write Bob Tucker about a suitable property...he never seems to have accounted for all those bricks he got sent for the Tucker Hilton back in the Fifties!))

Mike Clicksoph, 141 High Park Ave, Toronto, Ontario M6P 2S3.

Oddly enough, even when I was reading as many as three sf books a day (during certain periods of stress while at college, stress induced by preperation for exams I hasten to add) I never daydreamt myself into similar situations. I guess sf was always fiction to me; regardless of how much it meant to me. Nowadays, of course, I read maybe three sf books a year and the only dreams I have involve desperately trying to run and somehow not being able to move as a tidal wave of screaming, gibbering, teeth-gnashing fanzines bears down upon me...

Although I've never read any of LeeH's professional work, I much enjoyed Harry's article about her. And Harry should be pretty happy lately because while Lee may not have resurrected QUANDRY, she has written a couple of articles for other fannish fanzines and yet another SF FIVE YEARLY has appeared; so the hoped-for return of Hoffman, Fan Writer is now a fact. (It's a bit coggling to realize that probably the majority of those who dabble in fandom come and go in between appearances of SFFY and never even know of its existence!) ((Yes, now there's a thought; mayhap we could define a trufan as 'one who has received more than one issue of SFFY'. It could even be a way of keeping sf conventions down to a reasonable size if attendee's had to bring a copy of the latest issue with them!))

You were so right in your rider to the Perry piece! The intricacy of the puns Tom wove into this article was philately amazing! (Also rather esoteric in places: almost as if the poor fellow expects fans to have some knowledge of history and literature!) Like all good fanzine contributions, this article is educational as well as entertaining. I'd not known, for example, that it cost ten pence to mail letters from England to Denmark. I suppose this is what is meant by England's adoption of the deci-mail system? ((Yes, they took a census and then took leave of their census...))

It's hard to do much with a John Berry travelogue except enjoy it enormously and marvel at the weird and wonderful things that seem to happen to him while they don't to me. (Possibly, though, the chance of encountering nude bathers, over-sexed yachtspeople, and oddball foreign type people is somewhat greater for a vacationer in the Aegean than for a letterhack in his living room?) ((Well, since I've since discovered that little Malcolm Edwards was one of the nude-bathers...you never know your luck!)) I did note a couple of places where John's choice of words left me with rather fascinating images, though! (Perhaps that reflects a north american viewpoint; I don't know if English readers would make the same salacious connections that I did.) I'm thinking of John and his wife humping their suitcases to a taxi, ((It was the only way they could get the drivers attention...)) and "a young Englishgirl called Jeannie in earthenware jugs". I'd no idea English medical science had made such strides in that area of transplants! But John writes a beautiful fannish column. Amusing, deftly constructed, highly interesting, and very enjoyable.

I just can't see Harry Warner emigrating to England, somehow. Or anywhere else, for that matter. Think of all the possibilities for accident or illness such a violent upheaval would entail! Can you summon up an image of Harry adjusting to the London Underground? English weather? All those people? I can't. No, I doubt Harry will be seriously contemplating a move to England, even if it would give him a new opening paragraph to apologise for not loocing a lot of fanzines lately! (And on the off chance that I'm wrong, and Harry is thinking of going abroad, I'm pretty sure an Act of Congress could be rushed through to keep him here and preserve a national resource!)

I disagree with Rick Sneary about removing oneself from contention for an award. This is a matter of personal conscience, and I do believe anyone should have the option of saying, "No, this isn't deserving" if they feel that way. If it puts others who ought to be thinking that unselfishly, but

aren't, under the gun, then that's all to the best, as I see it. It's about time a few people considered withdrawing themselves from eligibility for awards they win without really deserving them. ((Agreed, Mike.))

I also wonder whether or not TAFF hasn't changed somewhat since its inception many years ago. At that time, the cost of a trip across the Atlantic was prohibitive to many fans, so a fund to help deserving individuals who simply couldn't afford to make it themselves was an excellent idea. But times have changed, and international travel is now considerably cheaper and considerably more commonplace than it used to be. With a little effort, I doubt there are that many fans who'd be incapable of affording a cheap three week charter flight, especially knowing he or she could expect fannish hospitality at the other end of the flight. So perhaps the old criteria of "need" and "never been before" aren't quite so important as they used to be? The sort of person who has the reputation and service to fandom that a TAFF candidate has traditionally needed probably could if he or she really wanted to do it. ((But might not do so without the honour of winning TAFF ?)) I don't think so; not any more. Rick sums it up better when he talks about deciding on the basis of who you'd like to see or like overseas fans to see: which of course brings us back to matters of personal friendship, similar fannish generation, etc, which explain some of the recent fan fund award winners. ((Having just written a lengthy article on TAFF - for SBD - I'd better not get too involved here....BUT...I think TAFF needs almost a complete rethink! The thing is fandom has changed tremendously since the guidelines for the funds operations were set, but TAFF hasn't. Present winners excepted...this has resulted in recent times in a series of TAFF winners who have used TAFF as a springboard for prodom (perhaps intentionally, perhaps not) and who haven't, always, given TAFF as much thought and effort as they might. TAFF has become less of a fannish 'thing'. I'd like to see TAFF orientation return to being purely a fun-fannish thing; I'd like to see a campaign stressing that TAFF is purely and simply for people who are fans and that votes should go to those with a continuing interest and intent in fandom. And, I'd also like to see a change in venue's to aid this, with TAFF trips being to a smaller Stateside convention (Midwestcon, possibly) and not the Worldcon, and over here, the Novacon. Radical? Perhaps, but I think this type of change of emphasis is needed to return TAFF to where it was at.))

WAHF (And thank..)

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Robert Bloch, Alan Hunter, Terry Hughes,
Keith Freeman, Mike Moorcock, John Berry,
Michael A. Hamilton, Dave Piper, George
Flynn, Bob Pavlat, Malcolm Edwards, Tom
Perry, and Eric Mayer.

" Everything's being moved to Birmingham really, which is probably just as well. Pile it all up in the middle and leave the rest of the country fit to live in and Birmingham, in my opinion, was never that. For some reason it's the only city in the world (apart from Edinburgh, for entirely different reasons) I can't bear to be in. It represents everything depressing about the modern world to me. I must have destroyed it a dozen times in my stories. Graham Hall (who was born there) and I were stuck on the inner ring road looking for the motorway, coming back from the Dales, as I recall, and the poor chap went mad, convinced he'd died and gone to hell as we kept passing the street where he was born and where he'd sworn never to return. "

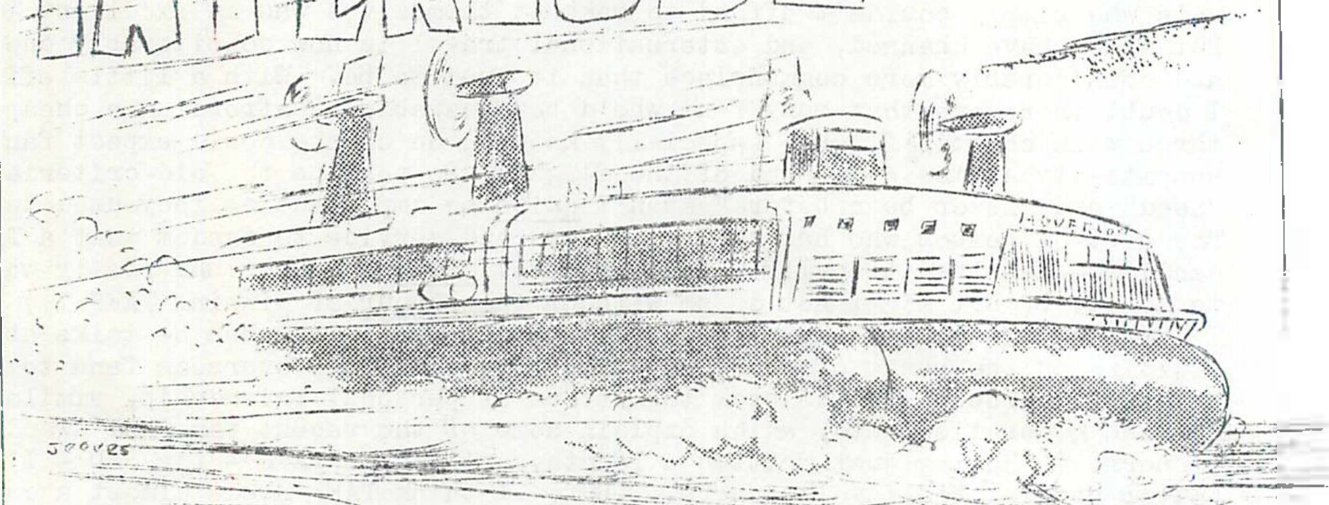
Mike Moorcock.

" Berry's sea-sickness, by the way, elicits my sympathy. I have a nephew with the same problem, but in a more aggravated form: he gets seasick every time he sits on the loo."

Bob Bloch.

Terry Jeeves

INTERLUDE



Doors slammed engines grumbled into action, roared to a crescendo and the giant hovercraft hoisted itself onto a cushion of air and slid down the ramp of Dover Heliport. Bearing 280 passengers (and the Jeeves family) plus 37 cars it headed off towards France in a cloud of spray.

35 minutes later, we disembarked in Calais, scuttled through the green Customs door and were met by a Jovial little Italian named Enzo - who introduced himself by shouting 'Jesolo', jumping up and down a couple of times, and then scampering off to a battered white coach. It turned out that he was to be our driver. Helped by the courier Ray, he soon winkled out his 45 passengers, stowed out luggage and toolled the coach out into the byways of France.

Enzo drove with panache, possibly even with goulash, frequently taking his hands off the wheel to conduct an imaginary orchestra as he sang some Italian ditty. Sometime around twilight, we crossed from France into Belgium - a crossing made notable by a complete absence of formality, we didn't even have to show passports. 1.30am saw us unloading at the Hotel du Nord in Kortryk and tucking into our first Continental meal...."Can you drink the water?" became a regular catch phrase. Apparently you could..at least no one died on the trip.

This was our first chance to examine the faces which up to now had been merely tufts of hair (or lack of) poking up above headrests. Names were exchanged, and right away, we remembered 'Calanity Jane', an elderly lady who set out to prove that 'accident-prone' is no idle phrase. Within seconds of reaching the hotel, she has dashed to a toilet and jammed the doorlock so firmly that the door had to be removed to get her out again....to a chorus of, "One old lady locked....."

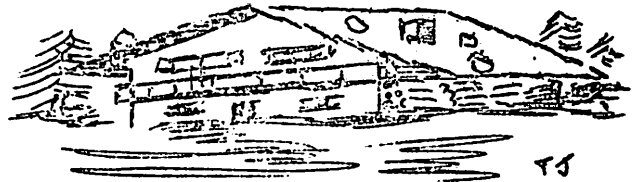
Despite our late night, 9am saw us once again rolling across the flat Belgian plains with Ray pointing out and explaining the various points and places of interest which be-spattered our route. We saw the top of a very well-known wine chateau (whose name escapes me) and the bottom of a lady bending down to pick vegetables. All great cultural stuff interspersed with occasional tapes of local music over the sound system. Lunch at the cafe John Kennedy and on into the Duchy of Luxembourg (which we discovered has a population two thirds that of Sheffield). Tea and cakes by the River Moselle at a place called

Remich - which resembled Blackpool - where one pot of tea and two cakes dented our piggy-bank by £2.00. If we hadn't needed refreshment before, we needed it after getting that bill.

On again, over the Moselle into Germany, past lean, hungry-looking pistol-bearing men in field grey manning the borders. I firmly resisted the temptation to shout, "Up der Fuhrer", those pistols didn't look like plastic replicas. With Ray on the mighty PA system, we cafe-stopped across Germany along the well laid out autobahns. Mostly two lane, and more casually treated, (no fancy entrance warnings, but even picnic lay-bys) they seemed much quieter than our Motorways. Through Saarbrücken to an overnight stop at the Hotel Matheis in Pirmasens. The Matheis had its own swimming pool, but our fears for Calamity Jane were misplaced. While we guarded the pool, she managed to drop all her room towels in the bath...and then croggled the German-speaking receptionist by asking for a spin-drier...and acting out her requirements in mime.

Tuesday dawned at 6-30am and we rolled past Lake Constance with its ferry steamers and into Austria (Ice cream cones 50p each). Ray shoved some Tyrolean music on the PA as we climbed the winding roads into the Alps. Val and I kept swapping seats to get better views of the breath-taking scenery. Blue-hazed mountains with snow-capped summits; cascades tumbling down the slopes; here and there the low-pitched, wide-eaved roofs of the chalets. The wide eaves forming snow shelter for the piles of cordwood stacked against the house sides in readiness for winter.

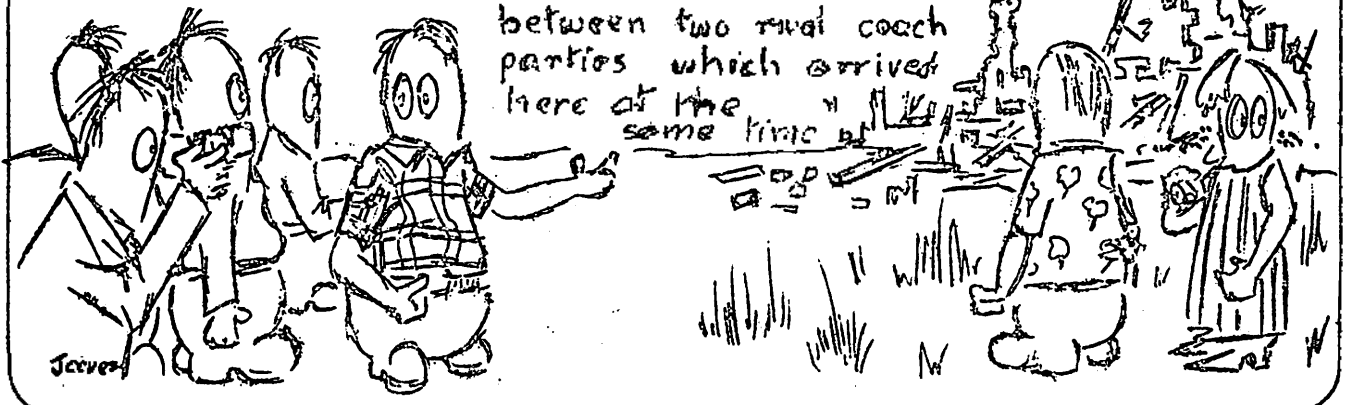
That night, we spent in the Hotel Christoph, 1800m up at the top of the Arlberg Pass with snow right outside the balcony of our room. Inside, traditionally garbed waitress and a roaring log fire gave the whole place a cheery glow as we tucked into the evening meal.



Wednesday saw a snow fight before we moved on through Innsbruck, up the Brenner Autobahn and over the Europa Bridge. Through the magnificent Dolomites into Italy where we visited Cortina, home of the Winter Olympics. We goggled at the height of the ski jump slope and the thoughtfully placed cemetery at the foot. With Gigli on the PA, Enzo singing and gesturing at the wheel, we hurtled down the mountain roads, narrowly missing upcoming tankers and trailers, giant trucks and other massive mobile stuff which populate the Continental roads. With only one anxious moment when Jane missed a low placed green filter, and only saw a STOP sign. She leaped out of her seat yelling "Stop, stop, the light's red!" and subsided, slightly abashed when she was shown the filter. We made it into Jesolo by 6pm, located the Hotel Acapulco (with swimming pool) and an evening meal before strolling along the main boulevard, strada or whatever such places are called in Italy...Calamity Jane got into the wrong room by mistake...where an elderly gentleman was at the toilet.

"And this ruin marks the site of a battle

between two rival coach parties which arrived here at the same time"



From the Lido de Jesolo, we made a side trip to Venice..which of course, as everybody knows, is flooded. This time, we had a different guide in the shape of a shapely young Lady. Once we had climbed from the coach, she hoisted her rolled umbrella into the air, and set off into the back streets of Venice at a cracking pace. Feeling rather like the children of Hamelin, we walked, ambled, hobbled or staggered after her. The pace was so hectic, that we had no time to poke into the variety of shops, side alleys and hidden squares which abound. Arriving at the Plaza of San Marco (or somesuch famous place) she paused to count noses. Consternation on discovering several absentees to be present! A quick rescue operation produced the missing members, and we were handed over to a little old man, armed with a portable PA system. He set out to tell us the history of each little dome, bell, doorway, pebble and fresco on the beautiful facade of St. Marks as a prelude to entering the place for more of the same. Well, we Jeeves believe in culture..but there are limits. Slipping left as the ooohin and ahhing mass moved right, we organised our own private tour of the back alleys. We passed the Bridge of Sighs which links the Doges Palace of Judges with the Courts of Sentence, plunged into a narrow gap in the building line, and in no time we were wandering delightedly along tiny passages, over bridges and along the banks of canals. At one point we found a flower festooned plaza drenched in sunshine..and also water..drenched as a flurry of urchins played around a central drinking tap and squirted water happily over each other..and anyone else unwary enough to get too near. We took photographs, still and cine, we nosed into shops and gawked at bridges and gondolas. We visited a glad-blowing factory and watched a master craftsman making goblets, and - in a trice - a beautiful glass horse. Sadly, prices were too high for our limited budget, so we wandered back to the square of St. Mark and had tea. The cafe band was playing, pigeons were EVERYWHERE, even bobbing along around our feet as we sat nibbling biscuits.

Next came a ride on a gondola, along the narrow waterways with buildings looming above, past a house in which Goethe once stayed (for ten minutes I think) and on into the Grand Canal. We saw the Rialto bridge (with its two rows of shops) and were serenaded by a tenor in an accompanying gondola. A meal in a back street cafe and a trip in one of the water buses which ply along the Grand Canal, then it was time to catch the ten-o'clock ferry across the harbour past the Islands of The Lagoon before getting our coach back to Jesolo.

Venice in June was lovely. Not too hot, very little pong from the canals, and most decidedly a place to re-visit, hopefully, for a longer, more exploratory stay.

Our week in the Lido stretched across Jubilee Day.. which caused a burgeoning of Union Jacks in the Hotel, and a mass toast to the Queen, followed by a singing of the National Anthem. Can't keep these British Tourists down you know!

Then it was time for the return journey, another four days on the road, with a different hotel each night. On entering Mannheim, we were duly amazed at a glider port only half a mile from the centre, and LIVE rabbits disporting on a traffic island in the city. We also made a side trip to Heidelberg and climbed all over the castle..and the biggest wine barrel in the world (it has a dance floor on top). The Heidelberg trip was made even better by the lightning playing behind the mountains as we wandered the floodlit battlements of the castle -- but it proved less romantic when the rain came and we got soaked on our way through the old town in search of refreshment. Eventually, it was back to Calais and the Hoverport, across to England and home. A wonderful trip and we hope to make similar expeditions in the future. For the curious, it was a Wallace Arnold Tour...and superbly organised (Unpaid Advt).

The only snag was the mailpile awaiting our return.