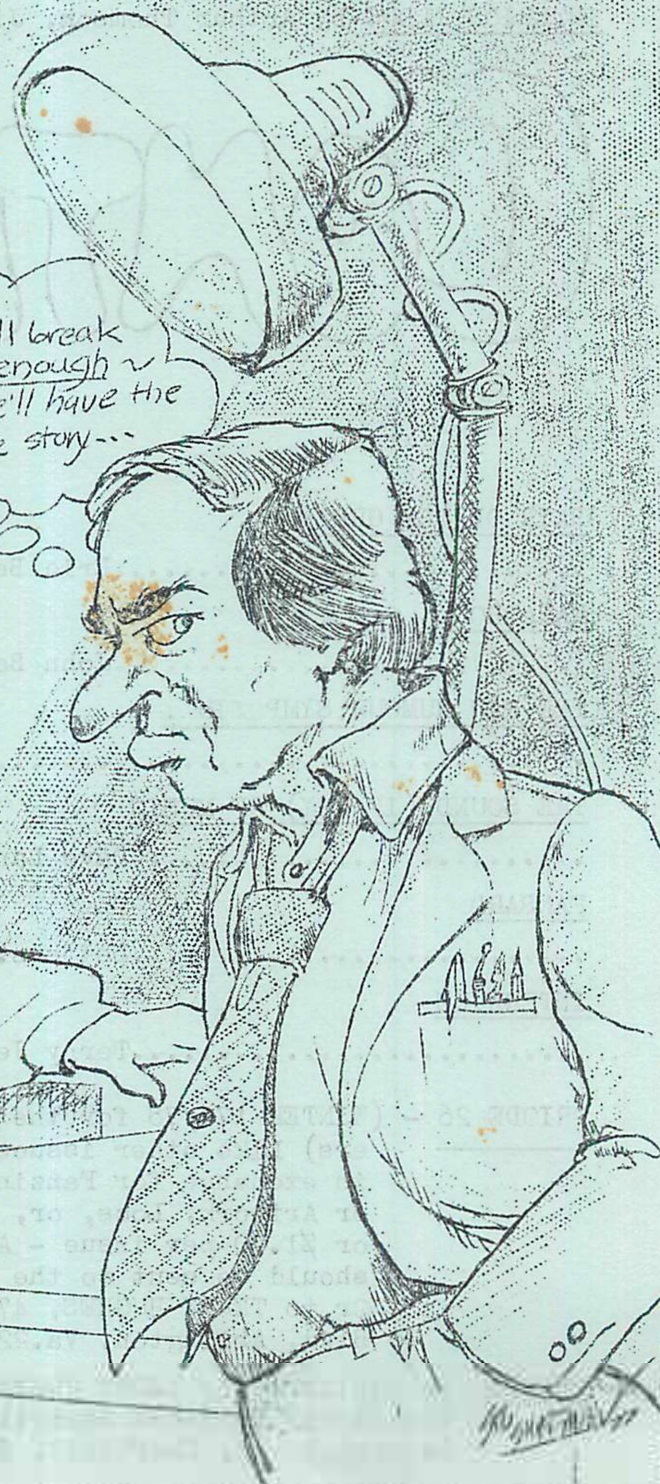


# TRIODE

26

No, No!! I'll never  
**TELL**!!

She'll break  
soon enough ~  
and we'll have the  
whole story...







TRIODE is edited, and emanates  
from.... ERIC  
BENTCLIFFE

17, Riverside Crescent,  
Holmes Chapel, Cheshire.  
CW4 7NR, ENGLAND.

COVER By...STU SHIFFMAN.

INTERIOR ILLUS By Arthur Thomson, Jim Cawthorn, Terry Jeeves, Bill Rotsler.

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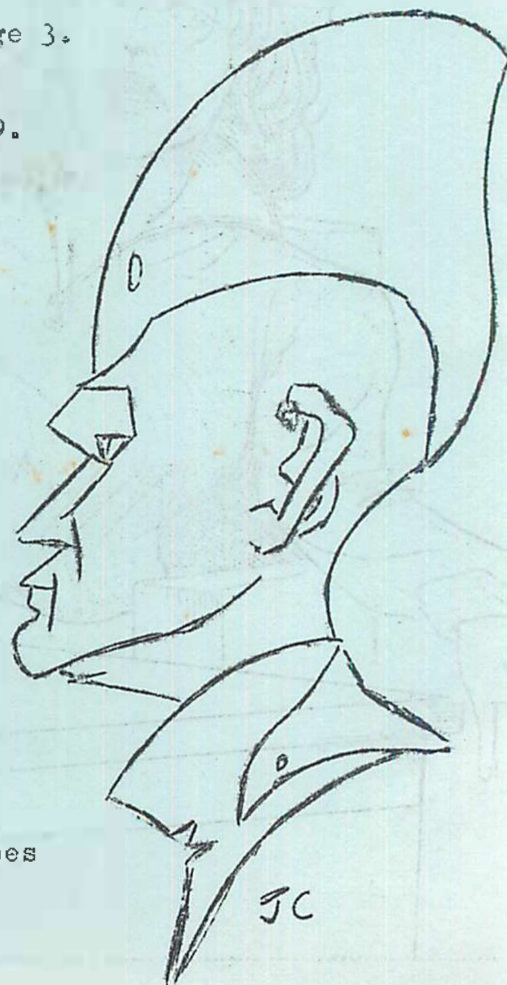
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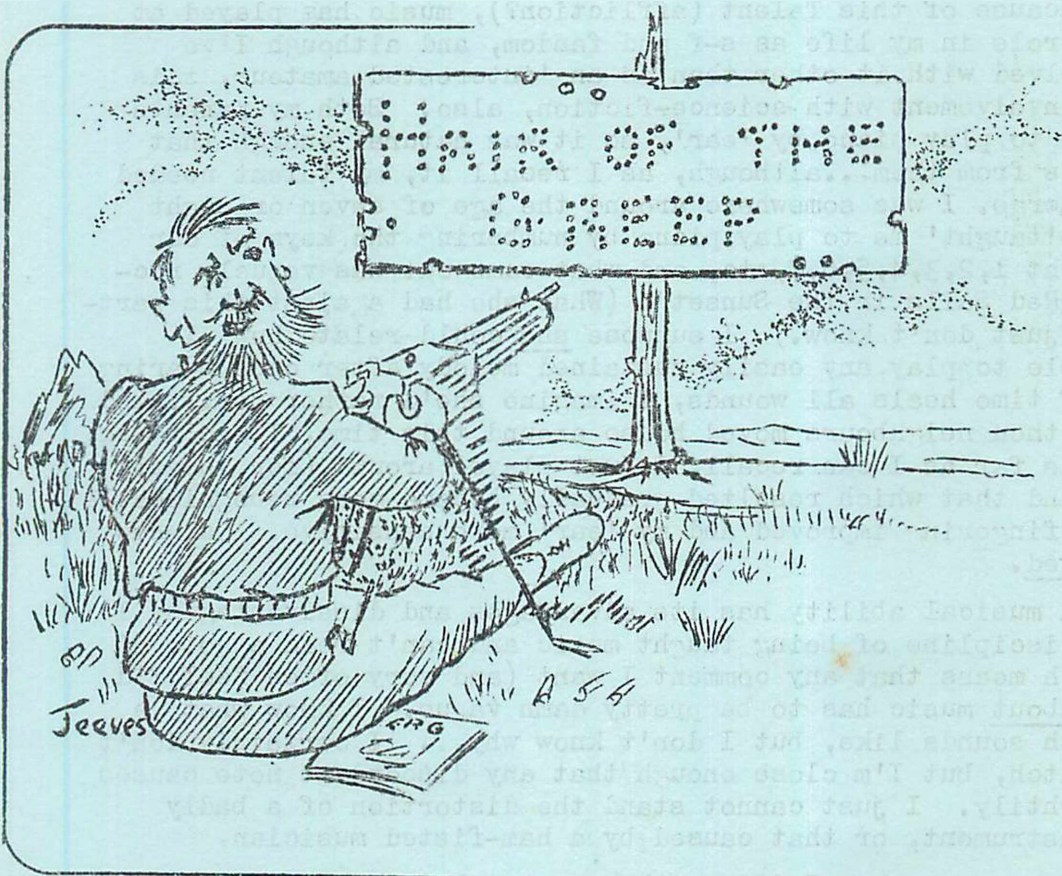
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TRIODE 26 - (WINTER '77/78 for the Bibliographers) Like other issues, can be had in exchange for Fanzines, Material or Artwork, Locs, or, Money - 50p or \$1.00 per issue - All of which should be sent to the above address. Or to TERRY HUGHES, 4739 Washington Blvd, Arlington, Va.22205. U.S.A.



TRIODE is published by TERRY JEEVES (who also does the finely hand-cut stencilled art), 230, Bannerdale Rd, Sheffield, S11 9FE.





WILD TALENTS.

WILD TALENTS.

.....REALLY WILD TALENTS.

All us knowledgeable science-fiction readers know all about Wild Talents, I'm sure. In fact, some of us even possess them; I know of at least one fan-editor who has The Power to shrivel others with just one glance...and many, many fans appear to have the ability to teleport to the bar immediately it opens ( for some strange reason this does not seem to apply to those fans who are Dungeons & Dragons Players). Adepts amongst these are also able to materialise at the elbow of whoever is buying a round. Others have the seemingly magical ability to cause dark-blotches to appear on otherwise immaculately duplicated fanzine pages....yes, talents don't always work the way they should.

However, it wasn't until quite recently, resulting from the four (collective) Tin-Ears of Eric Mayer and Dave Langford, that I realised that I, too, have The Power. Unfortunately, it isn't one that benefits me a great deal in my fanac - I can't, for instance, force contributions out of the fans I'd like contributions from by sheer mental pressure (no, Tom, Harry, Chuck, Mike, that isn't a nit you have, that's my mental pressure...). I can't teleport Triode to the States and circumvent the efforts of the Post Office and lethargic-longshoremen...hell, I can't even exert enough influence to get Joe Siclari to send me Part One of "THE WEALTH OF FABLE, even though I've paid for it and bought a special wax doll from a coloured gentleman in Birmingham to help me focus my powers!

No, my Talent is not one that benefits me greatly in fandom, although it gives me pleasure equal to that which I get from desecrating otherwise virgin duplicating paper. I play piano by ear - no cracks, please, about 'why don't I try using fingers'...or 'so that's how they got to look like Spock's' (so I maybe the only fan who doesn't need make-up to attend a Trekkie con, so what!). And if you don't think that's a Wild Talent you haven't heard me play...

Partly because of this Talent (affliction?), music has played at least as big a role in my life as s-f and fandom, and although I've never been involved with it other than as an 'interested amateur, this is true of my involvement with science-fiction, also. Both my parents had the ability to play piano by 'ear', so it was natural enough that I'd inherit this from them...although, as I recall it, my talent needed an assist to emerge. I was somewhere around the age of seven or eight when my mother 'taught' me to play piano by numbering the keys of our venerable upright 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,etc, and what came out was vaguely recognisable as "Red Sails in the Sunset". (What she had against this particular tune, I just don't know.) I suppose she could relate how I later became able to play any easily sustained melody after once hearing it, but even if time heals all wounds, I imagine she'd rather not....and as most of the then neighbours moved house around this time, I can't ask them either. As far as I can recall, I just played around (for years!) on the piano and that which resulted gradually became more recognisable as music as my fingering improved and my 'ear' more sensitive. Our new neighbours stayed.

Inherited musical ability has its advantages and disadvantages; I never had the discipline of being taught music and can't read a note of the stuff, which means that any comment I want (and very often feel I'd like to make) about music has to be pretty damn vague. I know what a flattened-fifth sounds like, but I don't know why... I certainly don't have perfect-pitch, but I'm close enough that any discordant note causes me to wince mightily. I just cannot stand the distortion of a badly tuned radio, instrument, or that caused by a ham-fisted musician.

Because I grew up when I did, with a more melodic form of music; my tastes, obviously, in this regard are not those of many currently active fans....today's 'Pop' music does little for me, not because I'm unwilling to recognise its influences but because much of it is musically uninteresting to me. It lacks sophistication of melody - if you'll excuse the sort of vague terminology I must, perforce, use - and melody is all-important to me. I find it relatively easy to pick out the few notes that constitute the melody-line of a current top-pop, but there's insufficient there to begin with for me to take-off and enjoy improvising thereon. I play, I suppose, a personal sort of jazz. I'll sit down at the piano and fool around with some notes that have been drifting around in my head, these gradually develop into something recognisable; after that, if I'm in the right sort of mood, I play around with it...half an hour later I may still be playing around that theme. (I may not be good, but I am persistent!)

Playing 'by ear' has certain not so obvious limitations...for instance, I take care to hide my dim-light under a bushel unless I'm sure that there is an instrument around that I know is in tune and regularly played. I can hack out a tune on a beat-up bar piano, but I can't really take off on any flights of musical fancy....someone who plays piano only by music plays the notes (often irrespective of whether they are tuned/in tune).. I try to play around them hopefully finding the ones that sound right, instead; and they aren't always present! I only play well on a familiar instrument; I've a finely tuned mini-grand and when I've fooled around for perhaps half-an-hour, and I'm in the right sort of mood, I start to make sounds that satisfy me. I suppose my supreme moment as a performer (in fandom) was at the Pittcon when I played in the con-hall for thirty minutes or so whilst the con-committee tried to find who-was-on-next.... I had them glued to their seats - but must admit that this may have been partly due to the fact that Harlan Ellison and Randall Garrett were singing to my accompaniment....



THE WILD WEST  
THE WILD WEST  
THE WILD WEST

Last issue I made certain comments on fanzine reviewing, and reviewers, which (predictably, perhaps) upset D. West, and Greg Pickersgill....since they were mentioned in my comments. Greg fulminated at Novacon; Don sent the letter I'm about to print. I don't agree with much of what Don has to say, but I like the way he says it.

" While I enjoyed TRIODE 25 I must say that I consider your remarks do less than justice to Greg Pickersgill and myself. Your representation of our opinions is both inaccurate and misleading. This would be less important if it could be assumed that most of your readers were familiar with our work, but judging from the names in your letter columns this seems unlikely. In the first place, setting aside the question of my hollow-chestedness - I'll admit to no more than a graceful concavity - I must point out that any breast-beating I may do is more akin to the angry rage of a gorilla than anything in the mea culpa line. I'm all right - it's these other people who've got problems. The hair shirts you refer to are being worn not by the fanzine reviewers but by those editors who take on the role of martyrs every time they get a review that's less than wholly flattering. You could hardly have picked a worse support for your argument than Kevin Easthope. Judging by the propitiatory remarks in LOGO 3, Easthope was all set to be number one Pickersgill fan; comes an unenthusiastic review in SBD and there's a sudden switch to hostility. Easthope's claim that he publishes LOGO "for one reason only - for fun" is far from convincing when he displays an almost hysterical reaction to the fact that not everyone receives his efforts with total enthusiasm. If he really was producing the thing just for fun he wouldn't wander off into these paranoid delusions of being persecuted by some mythical fannish "Establishment". After all, reading fanzines is like watching tv: if you don't like what's being shown you don't have to look." - Only partly true, Don, fanzines are much more personally oriented than tv, and are intended to communicate, and encourage communication; most tv isn't....your letter, itself, is indicative of response to a fanzine comment. -

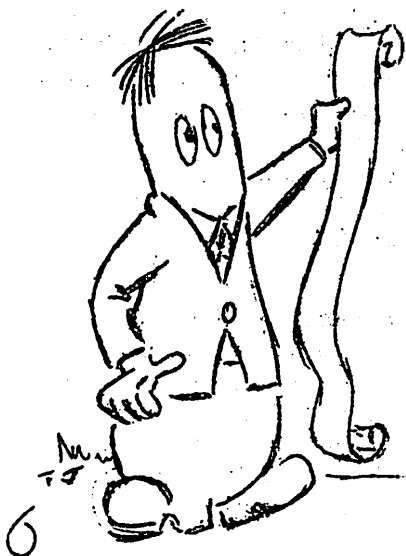
There's nothing Pickersgill or I can actually do. We can't - and don't even want to - stop Easthope from producing his fanzine, and we can't - and don't even want to - stop other people from reading it. Both Easthope and yourself seem to have seized on some remarks of mine (in THE WRINKLED SHREW 7) that Pickersgill was in danger of being identified as the new Establishment. You disregard the fact that while the real Establishment ( in the sense of controlling elite) has various ways available to enforce its will, any fannish Establishment has no controlling powers whatsoever. Indeed, this fannish Establishment is quite literally all in the mind. If the criticisms made by Pickersgill or myself carry any weight it's because we have valid arguments, not because we are laying down some incontrovertible Establishment law." - Martin Fesselbinder in "THE MECHANICS OF ESTABLISHMENT" said that it is not necessary for those who constitute an establishment to actually wish or desire to do so. An establishment exists because a group of people with similar outlook and concern, vice that concern. I'm sure that's the case with all groups of fans who have, from time to time, exerted influence on fandom and fanzines. They don't consider themselves an establishment, but (unwittingly) do act as one. -

" Pickersgill and I have differences on a good many points, but we are united in the belief that fanzine criticism should be honest: that good is good and bad is bad, and if one is to get a pat on the back the other gets a boot up the backside. We don't subscribe to the notion that fandom is - or should be - one great big happy mutual admiration society in which everyone is careful to be kind and never rock the boat by making nasty remarks. Even if the nasty remarks happen to contain the truth. "

" Whether or not Pickersgill and I are accurate in our critical judgements seems to be wholly irrelevant to the people who attack us. The objection to our criticisms is not that it is wrong, but that it exists at all. Taking fanzines seriously enough to be willing to dispense with politeness is the kind of subversive behavior that threatens to undermine the whole structure of self-satisfied complacency on which fandom is based. A lot of faneds seem to regard praise as being theirs by natural law: you produce a fanzine and the readers tell you how wonderful it is. Many make the fundamental error of equating achievement with effort - they've put in the work, so it must be good. Some sweat at it, some obviously do the absolute minimum. In neither case is the mere fact of production enough to justify praise or the withholding of adverse comment. As I've said before, fans should stop expecting to be treated with the indulgence reserved for children. Or are they still living in a world which contains nothing nastier than mean old fanzine reviewers ?

" The trouble is, I don't regard fandom as some sort of a refuge from reality, a cosy corner in which everyone has agreed to remain blind to each other's faults. That's the way it is for a good many people, and if I thought that was the only way it could be, I'd just give up altogether. The sneer of "Fannish Sercons" in LOGO was probably meant to be taken as a frightful insult, but really it's quite an accurate description of my position. Sercon material tends to bore me, due to the entire absense of life, skill or personality, but the more extreme sorts of fannish writing are even less attractive. Foolishness is foolishness, and I don't derive much enjoyment from deliberate trivialisation. The childish cuteness, the laborious lightness and general feebleminded reliance on catchphrases, that characterise the most brainless side of trufandom. To judge by what he says in QUARK (in the course of lambasting me for daring to criticise Walt Willis) Tom Perry sees the developement of a fan as a linear progression from serconist neo through increasing degrees of fannishness to final incorporation in the pantheon of faanish ( or fhannish) gods such as Willis. This notion of getting steadily dafter doesn't really appeal to me. Trufannishness is more regression than progression: the final cop-out. If you don't take anything seriously then there's no way you can ever be wrong. It's all a joke - just a ghoddam hobby - so where's the risk ?"- Obviously, we are talking/arguing from a different base, Don, and it's probably true that you had to grow up in the kind of fandom which, in the main, treated fanzines as something-to-have -fun-with to like/appreciate the type of writing which you find 'Foolish' and which I find (when its well done) to be entertaining. The thing is that all good fannish writings depend on knowledge of the individuals or characters found therein. On personal knowledge. I wouldn't expect you to really appreciate the fannish writings of, say, the fifties, because even if you went through all the fanzines of the period: you still would not know of all the in-jokes and idiosyncracies that fleshed out those fannish tales - foot notes never have been fannish. The same would apply to some future fan reading certain of Graham Charnock's wildly funny references; they would appear 'Foolish', because the reader couldn't know what or why... -

"And where's the interest. I'm sure a lot of people take a look at fandom, ask themselves, "Is this all?" and drop out again. There's not much stimulation in being surrounded by a bunch of yes-men and underacheivers. There's not much incentive to excel in the company of people who set their critical standards at the lowest common denominator. Why bother ?"





- " Any old fannish rubbish will bring in the same egoboo. Or would, if you could rely on everybody to co-operate in the back scratching. But Pickersgill and I won't play that game. If X's fanzine stinks, we say so. And naturally, when he reads this, poor X's illusions start hurting and he sets up a howl of anguish. What do we have to take it so seriously for? It's only a game, goddamit! And we've knocked over the pile of bricks he was imagining as the Taj Mahal..." - But fandom has never been under-critical, Don, I'm afraid you have misconceptions (which appear to be widely shared) that fifties fandom (for instance) was all sweetness and light, and HYPHEN and myth. It wasn't like that at all (no pro-West, pre-Pickersgill fandom was)...there were more fanzines being published in that fannish period than there are now, and whilst its true that the members of the 'unwitting Establishment' of those times had similar tastes there were plenty of other factions, highly critical factions, effective in their criticisms...there was, in fact, far more fueding and strife than now. Which is possibly why certain of the fanzines published then - the survivors! - are often waved about as examples.

---

" Okay, so you graduated Fnz Reviewer Cum. Laude from the L.S.E., what else is new!"

---

" Then there's all this stuff about our being "insular" and "parochial". The implication is that we are deliberately shutting our eyes to a wealth of overseas talent. But the reason why Pickersgill and I do not bother with US fanzines is simple enough: we don't think they are worth the effort. As Pickersgill put it in one of his earlier issues: why bother with American rubbish when we have enough of our own? (More than enough, I should say.) To obtain any significant number of American fanzines regularly means an expenditure of time and money - writings lots of loes, increasing the print run - that at the moment seems merely wasteful. Last time I was down at Greg's he had a borrowed pile of US zines a foot high. There was scarcely anything in it that made me feel I was missing out. Nothing there which could rouse more than a mild interest. American fanzines are dull. I know there's titles I haven't seen at all, but I'm going to be mighty surprised if it turns out that by some remarkable chance I've read all the bad ones and missed all the good ones. In fact, I'll be rather surprised if it turns out that there are any good ones. This isn't to say that the US product is downright bad. The standard of production is generally much higher than here, and very often the contents are better than some of the awful crap available in these parts. But you can't tell the bloody things apart. They're all so laborious - so dumbly earnest or heavily humorous - that you feel like going off and taking up knitting for a bit of excitement. Even what they are pleased to think of as fan-fueds are about as thrilling as watching two anaesthetised slugs try to trample each other to death. The poor sods seem to be suffering from terminal constipation." - Right, so you've formed your conclusions (presumably) from second-hand US fanzines.... whether it was a one-foot stack or a two-foot pile is irrelevant. But if you are going to enjoy or understand any fanzine you need to see a run of issues and to read them as they are published and (thatway) get to know the people involved. You surely don't expect a synopsis in each issue to let you know what has gone before - you wouldn't publish one, would you? This is the sort of attitude I find insular and parochial. -

" I went into this matter of "International Fandom" at some length in WS7. As a significant entity, I don't believe in its existence - it's more of a wish than a reality. I'm not necessarily against it (something else I said in WS7) but I would like it to be based on a realistic recognition of the differences between British and American fandom."

"As for the effects on newer fans - well, I took care to include in the B.S.F.A. Yearbook piece (written nearly a year ago) an injunction to neo's not to take the word of any fanzine reviewer, but to see for themselves. (Incidentally, I don't think either Pickersgill or I very often put off people from reading the fanzines we review; they're more likely to feel curious about why we are in such a rage. And, of course, we are generally writing for an audience that has already seen most of the fanzines in question.)" - This is not being 'insular' ?

"Insular and parochial ? Panning 'any new fanzine (or so it seems) that does not conform to his norm.' Where's the quotations - or even the references - to support these claims ? Pickersgill has praised new fanzines (ONE-OFF, INVERTED EARTRUMPET) as often as he's panned them. And where he's started out panning them (TITAN) he's been willing enough to give praise when there was improvement. And I don't see how you can say a purely sercon zine like Rippington's TITAN (now SF ARENA) 'conforms to the norm'. Look back over STOP BREAKING DOWN and you'll find kind words for such as NEBULA, GLIMPSE, and OUR FAIR CITY, all titles very far from being the sort of fanzine he aims for himself. Bloody hell, in the latest issue he even gives VECTOR a good word. (And look where that got him.) Where the material is not his style, he says so quite plainly. What more can you expect ? " - Yes, well, I didn't accuse you both of being consistent! -

Don goes on for a couple more paragraphs, but these neither add nor detract from his stand on fanzine reviewing. As I said at the beginning, I don't agree with his (or Greg's) basic approach to fandom and fanzines. I do, however, agree with some parts thereof, and I do find that which Greg and Don write of interest; and frequently entertaining.

\* \* \* \* \*

I'm unsure, at the moment, as to what direction the next issue of TRIODE will take - which is one of the things that makes fanac interesting - this issue is noticeably more personally oriented than previous issues; largely because several of my usual contributors haven't come through I've had to write (or edit-up) most of the contents. I'd prefer to publish a fannish genzine of reasonable regularity, but I need more (suitable) material than I've been getting of late. Editorial requirement is basically for material that takes a slightly sideways glance, with an element of humour, at any topic possibly of interest to fandom. And me. Is there anyone there ???

Eric Bentcliffe.





9

We staggered into the Marathon Beach with our cases and pressed a button. Only a couple of lights were on, it was almost 3a.m. A bleary eyed man appeared behind the desk.

"The Berry's," I said, and showed him the hotel booking form. He scrutinised it, then gave us a dirty look.... my first impression was that Greek's get annoyed very easily

"I sent a taxi for you but you weren't there," he growled.

I gave him one of my innocent naive looks, and didn't mention that we'd been waiting at the coach depot.

# Marathon

Our visit to the Acropolis was a splendid adventure. First of all we walked from our hotel to the village of Nea Makri...a one-street place with a little cinema, a couple of shops, a garage and a village square. There we caught the local 'bus to Athens. The 'buses were specially designed for provincial runs to Athens, held about twenty people..and were unique to me in that venetian-type blinds were fitted to the windows. The driver had a miscellany of religious ornaments dangling in front of him, with here and there amongst the crosses, photo's of footballers.

As we neared Athens the roads became busier, and during our journey into the centre of the city we were surprised how many soldiers and police were about. This visit was made during the reign of the Greek Colonels, and although I did not see any visible signs of military oppression the ever-present military was a reminder that the government in power was dependent on troops for its survival.

We got off the 'bus at Green Park, the terminus. It was incredibly hot. Diane and Kathleen said that the heat lifted off the pavement slabs and wafted up their dresses. The local populace were keeping carefully to the shadows of the large buildings in the centre of Athens, and only tourists, mainly the English ones, were boldly walking in the stifling rays of the boastful sun.

We decided to go to the Acropolis via the Athens underground...I was a bit bewildered about the method of purchasing tickets and it must have shown, for a moustached shirt-sleeved Greek asked us in perfect English where we wanted to go, took my money, purchased the tickets and told us which train to catch. It was a long uphill walk from the station to the Acropolis, demanding frequent calls at little cafe's for refreshment.... we walked upwards along a cobbled road, and up a long flight of marble steps, paid our 50 drachmae admission fee, and there it was before us.

The sun was behind us, and shone directly on the superb structure, which had stood for many centuries intact until some Turkish cretin had exploded a store of gunpowder there a couple of centuries ago.

It was huge, the vertical pillars looking immense, like tree trunks in a forest. I took cine shots of my wife and daughter walking towards it. It was so hot that they both had to wear scarves over their heads. We stood at the base of the pillars, and I noted that uniformed attendants were strutting around, not permitting people to sit on the huge steps around the structure. It was pretty obvious that they didn't want people to start knocking bits off the Parthenon for souvenirs...let's face it, there are several million visitors to the Acropolis each year and if every selfish bastard started to take bits of it, there'd soon be nothing left.

That's what decided me I'd have to get a bit of it. I could not leave this place without a little piece of marble that actually came off the Parthenon. Obviously, I was too shrewd to bend down and pick up a piece of marble myself, so I took the subtle course of asking my wife to do it. I explained to her that attendants were on the lookout for marble-pinchers, but I said that although I would be a very obvious suspect, she would be beyond reproach because of her shy and sensitive countenance. I did not want to be in the vicinity when the crime took place, so I walked to a nearby lump of marble, leaned on it, and attempted to look casual.

This wasn't easy for her larceny was about as subtle as a total eclipse of the sun. First of all she pulled out a white lace handkerchief from her handbag, and mopped her face with it. Then she dropped it. Bent down to pick it up...but instead of making one deft movement she dabbled about as if trying to tickle a trout. Her self-satisfied expression indicated that she'd found a vagrant piece of marble; unable to control her patience she opened the handkerchief to see what she'd caught. Just at that moment half a dozen attendants converged on a couple of Americans, roughly dressed in jeans, who refused to get up from the steps when ordered to. This undoubtedly saved my wife from being a guest of the Colonel's.

She walked across to me with a big smile. "Is this piece large enough?" she asked proudly.

My expression must have been frightening to behold. I gave a huge smile of pleasure, but at the same time, like a ventriloquist, scowled at her and muttered, "Put it in your handbag, for crissake!"

\* \* \* \* \*

The tour to the Temple of Poseidon at Sounion was highly commended to us by people at the hotel who had made the journey there, so at the appointed time we three climbed into the luxurious excursion coach. The coach followed the main road to Athens which the provincial 'bus took, and after passing through the capital we turned south along the coast of Attica for some twenty miles. We stopped for refreshments at a small hotel, and from the nearby beach we could see the Temple of Poseidon set atop high cliffs against the skyline.

We found the temple impressive, considering that the Persians wrecked it about two and a half thousand years ago; a German archeologist had excavated the site and reconstructed the temple in the mid-nineteenth century. I know it isn't fair to criticise this labour of love, but the pillars were built of sections about a yard high, and they didn't conform to the gradual decrease of width as they neared the top...sections were put in the wrong place, or so I thought, as though he had a few bigger sections left over and wanted to use them all up.

The coach returned to Marathon diagonally across Attica, it was dark and it was difficult to make out details of the countryside or the little towns and villages we passed through.



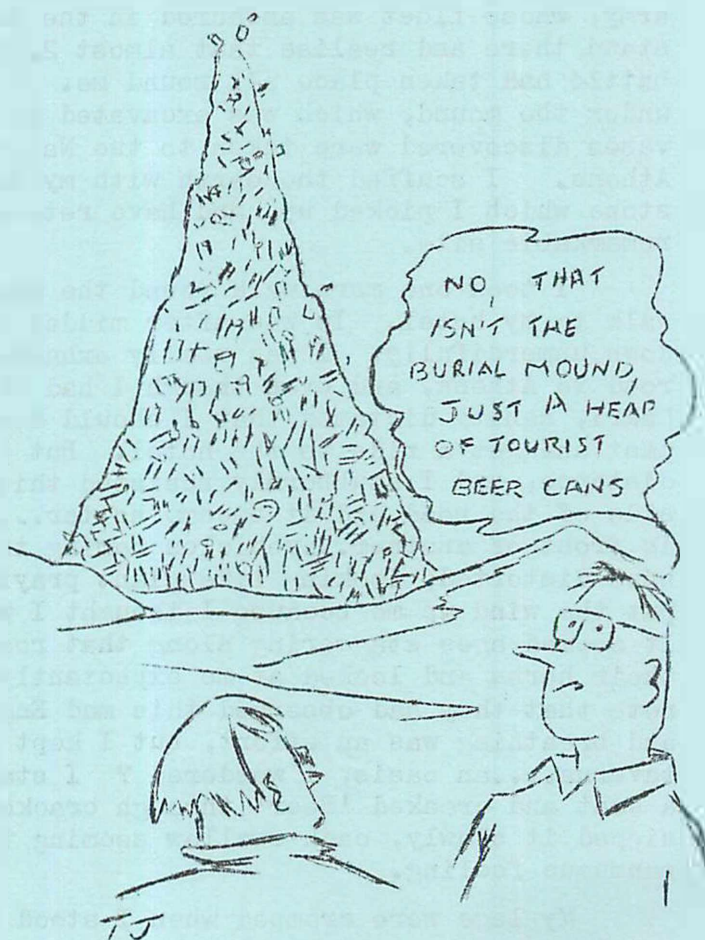
However, a modern phenomenon asserted itself in the coach that night. My daughter, in discussions with another girl of her own age who lived in England, discovered that a nightly tv serial about a motel, which they both liked, was in fact six months behind in England...we still lived in Belfast at this time, and for some reason the serial had sneaked ahead. Consequently the girl wanted to know what happened to certain characters and situations in the serial. Soon, the word spread that we knew what had happened, and as the coach catered for the British clientele at the hotel, most of the women in the coach also followed the serial, and Kathleen was in her element describing in gory detail all the pathos and scandal that they were due to see in the months to come. Behind us were two old women who obviously followed the serial as well, they didn't ask questions, but were just satisfied to listen to the narration. I chuckled as all this was going on, because they were all absorbed in a sloppy tv serial and its blasted cardboard characters, yet spoke about them as if they were real people...Kathleen was answering questions about an older woman in the series who, it seemed, was unduly interested in a man much younger than herself. "...and then they eloped," explained Kathleen.

"Well, I say," I heard one of the women in the seat behind say. "Isn't that disgusting, that woman should be ashamed of herself."

\* \* \* \* \*

One day I was sun-bathing on the roof of the hotel, and in the distance saw a brown mound of earth which was obviously very large since it was visible for miles. My enquiries revealed that it was the burial mound of the Athenian dead after the Battle of Marathon in 490 BC...it was thrilling to realise that this famous battle took place such a short distance away. I recalled that an Athenian called Pheidippides had run all the way from Marathon to Athens with the news of the victory, and of course this was the origin of the Olympic Marathon race of just over 26 miles. It was obvious that although the village of Nea Makri had probably not existed then, he had had to pass through the site on which it now stood, because the sea was on his left and high hills on his right. I resolved that next day I would walk from the hotel, via Nea Makri, to visit the burial ground, and in deference to Pheidippides I would walk back again...this distance probably being about ten miles.

Of course, next day was the hottest day of our holiday, it was over 'one hundred in the shade'. Everyone said I was mad to walk there and back, especially as 'a bus service sometimes went that way,' but I had made up my mind.... of course, my wife and daughter wouldn't accompany me.



I soon reached Nea Makri, and turned north along the main road. I trudged along on the left-hand side of the road for about three miles ....with high hills on my left, where the Athenian army had camped the night before the battle. Soon it was so hot that I took my shirt off and draped it over my camera strap. I wasn't worried about the sun on my body, because after ten days at the hotel and continuous sunbathing I had a nice bronze tan...but I was a bit worried about the blazing sun on my head. After about an hour I saw a sign pointing towards the sea with the mystic symbol TIMVOS which I knew indicated the mound, although, contrary to what I expected, I couldn't see it in the distance.

I turned right and trudged along the road for about another mile, and suddenly I saw the mound, a sort of baked brown colour...and across the road was a cafe. Sitting at a table were a young couple from our hotel who most of us thought were on their honeymoon, because they regularly missed breakfast and dinner and gobbled their lunch. I sat at their table and ordered a beer...it was ice-cold, and I drank it slowly. It was gorgeous. They said they had visited the mound and it was very nice, and that in half an hour's time there was a 'bus back to the hotel. I said I wanted to really examine and photograph the mound, and this would take some time. They looked at each other, and the man very kindly gave me his white hat.

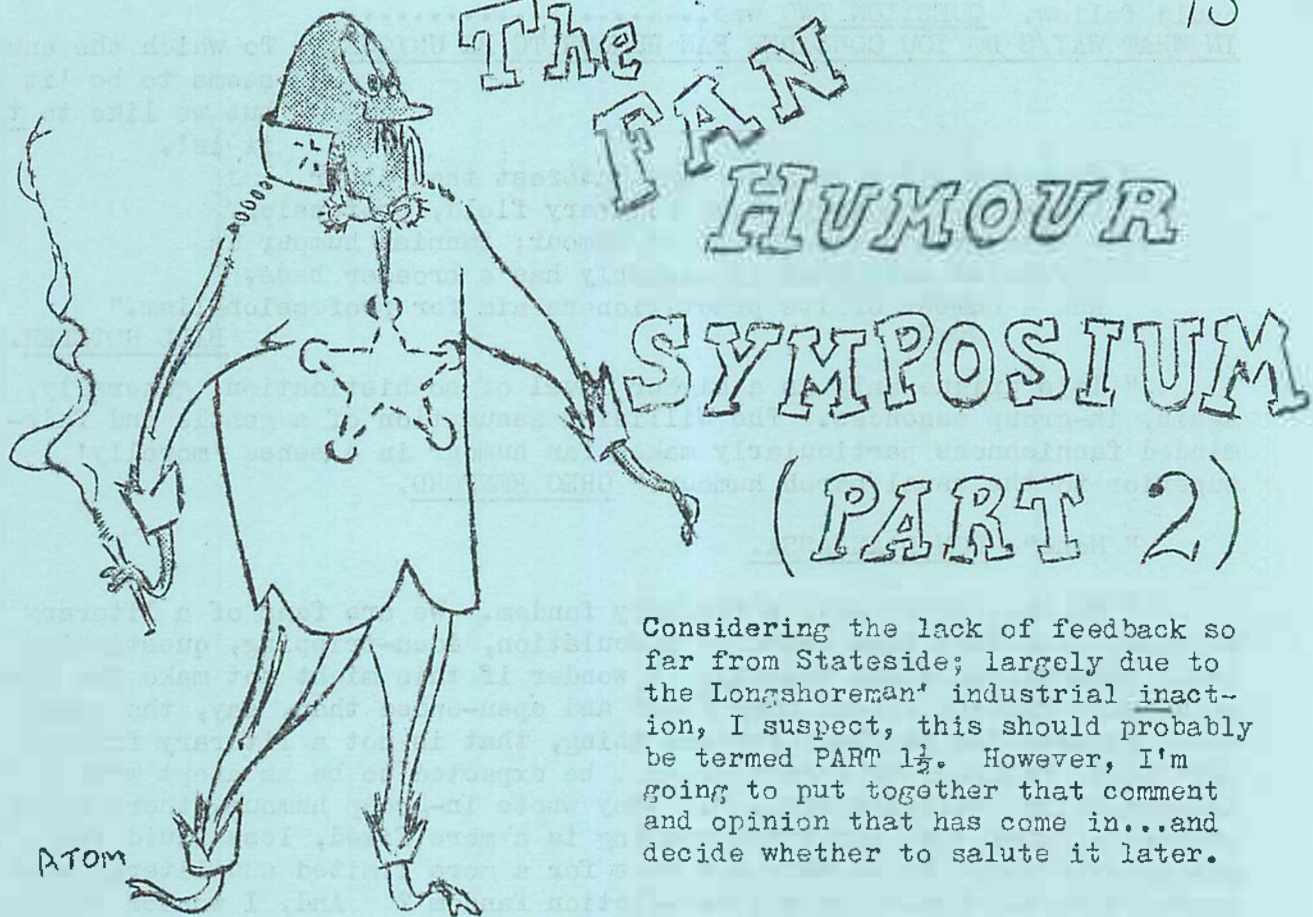
There were something like fifty wooden steps leading to the summit of the mound, which gives an indication of how high it is. Round the mound are concrete slabs with one or two seats, surrounded by tall ever-green trees of a type unknown to me, but similar to a yew tree. I climbed up the mound and stood at the top. I looked all around me...to the south I could see our hotel...to the west, the sea and in the distance, the hills of Chalkis...to the north the hills Agriliki and Kotroni where the Greek troops were positioned before their charge down onto the Persian army, whose fleet was anchored in the bay of Marathon. It was superb to stand there and realise that almost 2,500 years previously the great battle had taken place all round me. The 192 Athenian dead were buried under the mound, which was excavated in 1890, and the ashen bones and vases discovered were taken to the National Archeological Museum in Athens. I scuffed the earth with my sandals, and exposed a small brown stone which I picked up, and have retained as a souvenir of this remarkable site.

I took one more walk round the mound, then commenced the return walk to my hotel. It was after midday and the sun was overhead, beating down unmercifully. I was really exhausted by the time I reached the main road to Athens, and even though I had willed myself only to walk to Nea Makri, sanity dictated that I should stop one of the many taxis driving past and get a ride to the hotel. But I had vowed that I would walk the distance, and I stubbornly resisted this argument. I walked along the side of the road and it became hotter...I found it hard to put one foot in front of another...vehicles coming towards me appeared out of the heat haze distorted, looking like giant praying mantis about to strike. This put the wind up me because I thought I was suffering from heat exhaustion. It seemed ages staggering along that road...some taxi drivers sounded their horns and looked at me expectantly...or possibly, they wanted me to note that they had observed this mad Englishman. My head was on my chest, and breathing was an effort, but I kept on until, in the haze I saw a taverna....an oasis, I wondered? I staggered towards it, collapsed into a seat and croaked 'Beer' through cracked lips. It was utter luxury...I sipped it slowly, each swallow seeming to encompass my whole being with a sensuous feeling.

My legs were cramped when I stood up again, and the mile to the hotel took a long time...lunch was over, and I was starving with hunger, but I lay on my bed in the hotel and everything gradually disappeared into infinity.

...JOHN BERRY





Considering the lack of feedback so far from Stateside; largely due to the Longshoreman' industrial inaction, I suspect, this should probably be termed PART 1½. However, I'm going to put together that comment and opinion that has come in...and decide whether to salute it later.

QUESTION ONE (you may recall) was...  
HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE FAN HUMOUR.

With difficulty, seems to be a consensus of opinion; but also...

" In-group, wide-ranging, occasionally brilliant. Mostly inverted."

BILL ROTSLER.

" Humour is composed of incongruity and ridicule in varying amounts, and fan humour depends on private references for both." GREG BENFORD.

" I wouldn't. Fan humour is no different than any other type of humour, except that it has a few in-jokes, and in general lower standards than other written forms of humour." DON D'AMMASSA.

" Humorous articles etc written by fan but not necessarily about fans or fandom." MARY LONG.

" ...to be lexicographical, 'humour written by, or characteristic of, science-fiction fans, marked by hyperbole, word-play, and allusion; but, like other forms of literary and artistic humour, it may dispense with any or all of these attributes. It is often parodic, not often satiric in the classic sense. Since its audience is limited in size, it tends to be in-groupish, but within its constraints it can be as funny as any other sort of humour." SAM LONG.

\* \* \*

My own feelings, stemming from that which has gone before; is that the best fan-humour is based on the same basic as the best s-f, ie, What Would Happen If...to take a well known example, the humour of RET and HYPHEN was based on 'what would happen if we extend our crazy fannish pursuits to their logical absurdity'. Dave Langford in TWILL DHU is currently doing much the same thing, by extending the characters of the fannish characters he's involved with, and accentuating their foibles and idiosyncracies. He, hasn't yet started placing them in an incongruous setting to create fannish-myth, but that

could follow. QUESTION TWO was.....  
IN WHAT WAY/S DO YOU CONSIDER FAN HUMOUR TO BE UNIQUE.

To which the answer seems to be 'it isn't, but we like to think it is'.

" Probably wider in range and interest than other forms of "in-group" humour. Every field, profession, ethnic group, etc has their humour; fannish humour is different only that it probably has a broader base. And a number of its practitioners aim for professionalism."

BILL ROTSLER.

" It's unique only in a higher level of sophistication, generally, and again, in-group essences. The Willisian assumption of a gentle and fair-minded fannishness particularly makes fan humour in a sense 'morally' superior to the usual harsh humour." GREG BENFORD.

" None". DON D'AMASSA.

" We are, after all, a literary fandom. We are fans of a literary form. Moreover, of a form that features speculation, idea-tripping, questioning of basic assumptions about reality. I wonder if this might not make the humour of science-fiction fandom more fluid and open-ended than, say, the humour of model railroading fandom. For one thing, that is not a literary fandom. Most model railroading fans would not be expected to be as adept with words as most science-fiction fans. If they wrote in-group humour, there is the stumbling block that model railroading is a more fixed, less fluid thing than science-fiction. Would this not make for a more limited and literal kind of humour than the humour of science-fiction fandom? And, I wonder whether anything so highly developed and multilevelled as Willis and Shaw's The Enchanted Duplicator has ever been written based on a different fandom. If any such piece of equivalently brilliant and subtle fandom humour exists elsewhere, I'd like to read it, to see what it is about that makes it such. Does model railroading fandom, for instance, have an equivalent of The Enchanted Duplicator? I doubt it. But this world is so complicated that maybe there is a fandom somewhere that has something that supasses TED."

GARY DEINDORFER.

\* \* \* \* \*

Whilst I feel Gary is in danger of getting onto the wrong track.... He's nicely emphasized some of the factors that do make s-f fandom and fan-humour unique. Perhaps another facet that has relevance is the unique (as far as I know) make-up of our fandom, the close-relationship between pro' and fan; and the humour that often arises from this relationship. All other fandoms I know of have the pro's on a pedestal and their fans indulge principally in 'hero-worship' in their fanatic. The best examples of this fan-humour distinction as applied to s-f fandom can usually be observed at con-times and the esoteric pro'/audience exchanges which are quite often about nothing related directly to science-fiction. As they would be at other-fandom conventions. Bob Shaw speeches, and Brian Aldiss/Harry Harrison double-acts, being good examples.



Jeeves



QUESTION THREE sought to define the elements of fan humour, and their importance.

" Wit. Incongruity. Slapstick. Punning." BILL ROTSLER.

" Wit. Incongruity. Punning. Slapstick." GREG BENFORD. DON D'AMMASSA.

Since we have a majority of two-to-one here....I'm going to hurriedly pass to the next question before indecision sets in.  
WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER TO BE THE THREE MOST EFFECTIVE STYLES OF FANNISH HUMOUR.

" Acute observation...exaggeration...puns."  
BILL ROTSLER.

" Understatement. Multiple meanings in one remark (ie, puns of content, as it were). Esoterica." GREG BENFORD.

" Personal reminiscence slightly exaggerated, what Richard Harter calls the Erma Bombeck school of fanwriting. Satire - not often done any more. Odds and ends - like Rick Doy's "How To Write Swell". DON D'AMMASSA.

" Lively faan fiction is a genre I've always enjoyed. Mastery of that art is rare. Parody. Faanish adventure, ie, conreps, trireps, ghoominton game reps &c &c, if done well." SAM LONG.

" One thing I have noticed about fan humour is how it reminds me of Hope and Crosby. For years Hope and Crosby had these running jokes about each other that they would use in movies they made and on each other's tv shows. This seems to be one aspect of fan humour: a couple of fans will make running jokes about each other over a long period of time. For example, Tucker and Bloch. These running jokes acquire a venerable character. The point is reached when other fans pick up the same running jokes and add twists of their own. The end result is that fannish humour sometimes confers a mock-celebrity feeling: as though these running jokes are so well known that, in a way, the fans participating in them are known to as many people as Hope and Crosby." GARY DEINDORFER.

\* \* \* \* \*

QUESTION FIV.: WHO ARE THE BEST EXPONENTS OF THESE STYLES. A highly subjective question and naturally, one which got a wide variety of answers - all equally valid from the individual viewpoint. However, Burbee, Willis, and Shaw were all mentioned repeatedly and received top-listing - presumably with Burbee playing the part of Dorothy Lamour!

Question Six; enquired if fan humour must, by definition, be esoteric. And received an almost unanimous answer. "No, but it often is."

\* \* \* \* \*

The other questions asked should (if a larger response had been received) have provided a listing of the Top exponents - both as regards written and visual humour - of this type of material. However, the sampling has not been wide enough for me to print a meaningful list. Especially, as I had hoped to separate, historically, the various stylists and relate them to the particular era of fandom they inhabited. It's possible that sometime in the future, time and energy permitting, I may attempt a more definitive survey along these lines...that's if I can get the aid of one of the 'mass-media' fanzines to distribute the questionnaires.

THIS HAS BEEN THE FAN HUMOUR SYMPOSIUM: PARTS 1½ through 52.

\* \* \* \* \*

# 16 The Sound (if any) Of Music

By

DAVE LANGFORD.

For TRIODE'S special music issue, I ransacked my earliest memories without success. Aged relatives assure me that when small ( and equipped, Lord help us, with golden curls) I betrayed great enthusiasm for banging drums and blowing through anything that made a noise. They were delighted with this musical brat, and waited for many patient months in the hope that I might extend my repertoire from one note to two. It seems I never did.

The nature of my troubles didn't really emerge until, at seven or thereabouts, I moved to a larger school with larger classes, there coming over as notably more stupid than before. A wise old music master listened to my first attempts to play the recorder, and tenderly said " Get out." In class I was labelled as one who had to be watched...unless they put me right at the front of the class my attention seemed to wander... One day a succession of light-bulbs flashed over the headmaster's curiously shaped cranium ( When I next changed schools, my father said "You've had four years of a Head whose head looks squashed-in side to side: well, your new one has a head that looks squashed-in top to bottom...") "The lad is deaf!" he hinted to my parents, who took it phlegmatically enough. It hadn't been long since they found I was short-sighted in one eye; this had been concealed for years by my own ingenious reasoning that since my left hand was so much clumsier than the right, the left eye could hardly be expected to make out things more than a foot away.

Inspired to pessimism by my defective state, my mother cast about for other interesting things that could be wrong with me. A chance eruption of spots, she decided with dread, was the result of blackcurrant juice allergy...so I drank no Ribena for about six years. The craving came over me then, and having no Ribena Anonymous to talk me down, I swigged a mug of the deadly liquid. No spots.

I didn't seem obviously diabetic or consumptive: the possibility of colour-blindness was next in line.

" What colour's that pen?" said my mother one day, well primed with Reader's Digest articles.

I looked. " Red."

" David! What colour is it?"



I looked again puzzled, " It's red."

"Oh God! You don't mean that. Are you sure?" She had gone quite white.

I picked up the pen and demonstrated on the back of my hand: it wrote in red, as I'd expected. Anyone could see the pen was made of blue plastic, but who'd ask about an irrelevant thing like that? A pesty brat, but a logical one. Mother clipped me on the ear from sheer relief.

It wasn't long before our wonderful National Health Service hiccuped and ejected in my direction a hearing-engine ( Marvels of Victorian Technology No.33) about the size of a present-day pocket calculator. Or a small cigar-box. Miles of wire, enough to strangle in, linked its earpiece to the main body. The thing was supposed to clip into the top pocket of the Gents' Natty Jacket I wouldn't be wearing for some years; as a compromise we hung it round my neck. That way I had a choice. Inside my sweater, the rubbing of the microphone against woolly cloth produced a constant whoosh and hiss, swaying me to sleep with sea-sounds; worn outside the sweater, the device would dangle and swing, striking rythmically against my ribs and smiting my ear with the heavy thudding of a lumberjack's axe. My school performance did not improve.

In SF, the mildest of handicaps is liable to be balanced by all sorts of useful powers. The only arcane ability I could muster was an undue sensitivity to the tiny whine of a tv line-output - the sound of the picture, so to speak, audible with the volume control right off. The trouble was that although I'd complain loudly about this sound, the rest of the family either couldn't hear it or weren't bothered. Strange..... Likewise, in SF, mechanical aids tend to be better than the original. I was amazed to find myself unable to detect tiny sounds at vast distances through the wondrous future technology of the Device; if I tried, an eardrum was liable to be wrenched loose by the fearful din of my own fingers upon the volume control.

Back at school, they still seemed obsessed with music; this, after all, was Wales. The Choir was so packed with natural-born singers that there was never need to scrape the barrel (me). Worst of all was our very own Infant Prodigy, a child who played the piano-accordion. So vast were her alleged talents that she was often encouraged to perform to the forcibly assembled school. Ah, the suffering; Bosch and his Musical Hell had nothing on Susan A. It was during one of her sessions that I discovered the blest advantage of hearing-aids, the secret power which exalts their wearers above mere mortals. You can turn them off.

Shifting to another school, I aquired a more sophisticated aid which went invisibly behind my ear, or would have if I'd been allowed to grow a little more hair. It had a tendency to feedback, producing curious beeps at irregular intervals. Since the tonal quality was pretty minimal, the overall effect was of those stirring lines we later heard from outer space, as man acknowledged his conquest of the high frontier with the immortal phrase " Garble grackle garble grackle beep." At this time my musical career was in full spate owing to two years of compulsory O-level course in that squamous subject. Again, this being Wales, the music class was dominated by half-a-dozen superkids like Dai Price, whose exam marks fluctuated only slightly from a basic 98%. Daio was a dab hand with recorder, violin, piano and harmonica. My most notable achievement was a failure to recognise "God Save The Queen" either by ear or from the score. ( I know this was Wales: but I couldn't spot "Land Of My Fathers" either...)

I know how to deal with music now ( apart from pub juke-boxes, which induce in me a murderous rage). From time to time a friend plays me extracts from Wagner etc; and I sit attentively reading a book, with the machine turned off. Defeatist...but I can't make head or tail of this melody business, the mystic paraph<sup>n</sup>alia of harmony and discord and whatnot. Gimme a rythm and I'll sway to it as best I can; the rest is gibberish.

Gibberish, of course, was the only thing that the Oracle of the Telephone would say to me for many years. Lately we've hired a phone with a built in amplifier of such power that you can rattle the windows with the dialling tone. Turn up the volume and a shriek of feedback fills the room, echoing down the lines and no doubt scaring some distant GPO engineer into wetting himself. Martin Hoare finds childish fascination in this phone, and plays with it whenever he visits; I experienced childish triumph just recently when calling Rob Jackson - I could hear him and he couldn't hear me. Victory!

Despite a brand-new hearing aid (courtesy of a motorcycle which shattered the old one even as I wore it) I still react atypically to some sounds. Hazel wakes me occasionally to tell of the terrible thunderstorm that's raging, and then goes to hide under the table while I lie counting the flashes and straining to hear this awful, fabled thunder.... On the other hand, the fridge keeps making me jump. It shudders from top to bottom as if no longer able to contain the intolerable cold; inside, bottles clink and chime like a milk-float dropped from forty feet. Hazel has promised to make little felt jackets for them, but I suspect her of joking... Then there are the totally strange noises. Last week there came a sound of evil laughter, thick, hoarse and monstrous, freezing me to the typewriter chair -

"Hazel! What was that? Were you...laughing?"

"It was a car horn, dear."

I don't understand these things at all...

"Sorry, Hazel? What was that about...yoghurt fritters?"

"Ubiquitous, dear."

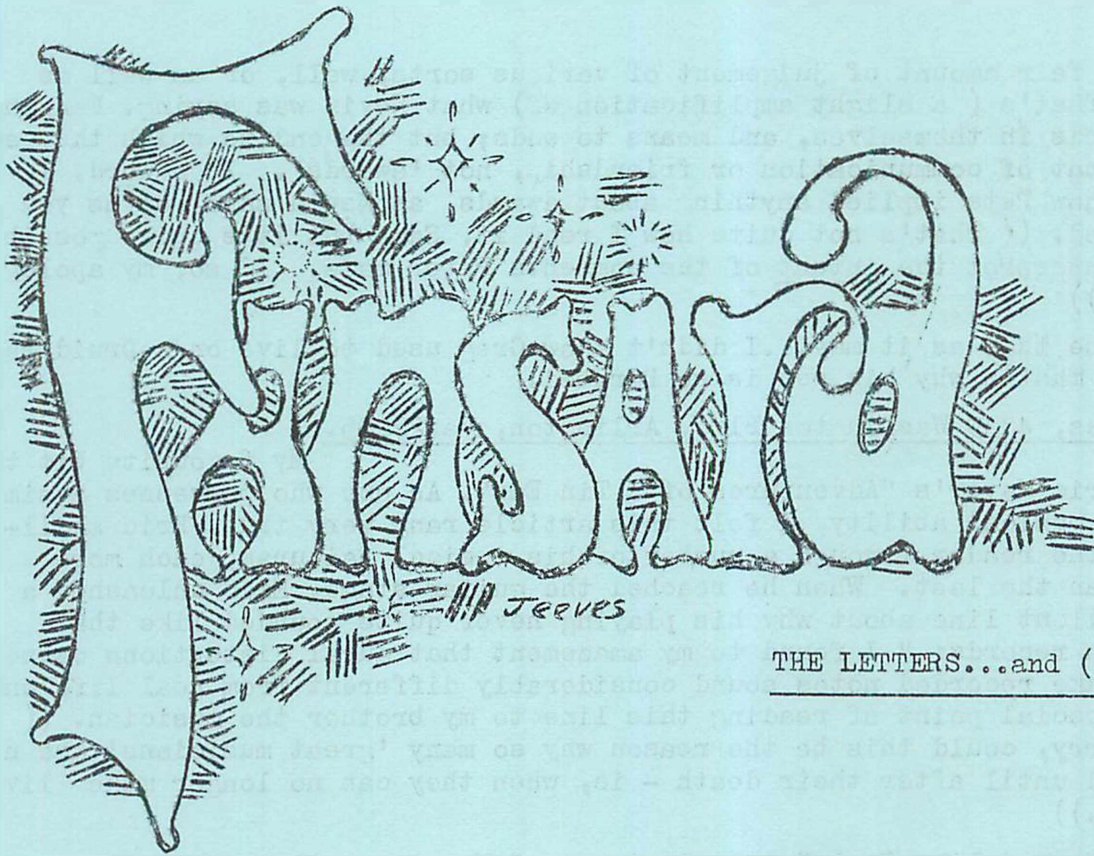
True tone-deafness, I was told quite recently, is rare. Maybe I don't have it after all. Maybe I'm just musically illiterate. Possibly my apathy when faced with the mysterious sounds of music is a carry-over from Susan A. and the purgatory of Welsh music classes.

I don't know what I'm missing, you say - but to be frank, it doesn't bother me. All I ask is an undetectable means of disabling juke-boxes; then I'll drink my ale and chat in peace.

About music, even. But keep it strictly verbal.







THE LETTERS...and ((EB))

Mary Long, 425 W. Lawrence, Apt 7, Springfield, Illinois 62704.

Mal's article is the best I've seen in a long time, I think because I am very fond of that sort of gentle humour which is based on truth. Did we not all have a room crammed with books (or at least, with many books in it) when we lived at home, and looking back, isn't it true that we don't know however we got them all in? I had a tiny room to myself when I was older, but in it were a bed, bookcase, desk, two wardrobes, a small table and things under the bed, on the windowsill, on the wardrobe, etc. Mal's article raised several chains of thought - Narnia (wardrobes reminded me of that. I personally spent a lot of time in the big wardrobe as a child looking for the way to Narnia); and polygamy (one of the things I swore on oath when emigrating here was not to engage in it), which are, I suppose connected. Yes, I think this is a fine article. I'd liked to have written it myself, except that I don't have a brother called Vernon. I've got one called Mike, who; used to keep a motorcycle (in parts) under his bed, and once accidentally set fire to the mattress because he was looking under the bed with a lit candle... (( I suppose he was trying to find his way to Ancient Grease!))

Sam Long; address as above.

I enjoyed Mal Ashworth's tale, but I'm afraid I don't really have any comments on it, save that my father's 'shop', the store-room built on the back of the house, is so full of sundry collected magazines, papers, etcetra, that every once in a while something comes crashing down on his model railway. No real damage yet, but one of these days ol' No.97's goin' to be highballing along the main line when, WHAM! it gets creamed by a box of letters from 1963 obeying the laws of gravity, and the Osteen, Cow Creek & Samsula Railway will never be the same again.

I think Kevin may have misunderstood Peter Weston's remarks, and (if I may say so), you slightly misunderstood him too. Pete's saying merely that a top fanzine, one widely read and sought after is one that gets its readers involved in itself. A healthy lettercol is the sign of a healthy zine. He's saying nothing more. He's merely describing characteristics of certain zines. He's not saying why the zines are pubbed in the first place, which is, of course, for fun and the satisfaction of doing something rather complex, something that

requires a fair amount of judgement of various sorts, well, or as well as one can. That's ( a slight amplification of) what Kevin was saying. Fanzines are both ends in themselves, and means to ends; but the end to which they are means is that of communication or friendship, not 'awards'. In a word, I don't see how Pete implied anything about awards, as Kevin said, or as you extrapolated. (( That's not quite how I read it, Sam, but it's quite possible I did misinterpret the intent of the comments Peter made. If so, my apologies to Peter.))

But be that as it may...I didn't know Greg used to live on a Druid ranch ...perhaps that's why his pen is so Bardbed.

Terry Hughes, 4739 Washington Blvd, Arlington, Va.22205.

My favourite bit this time was Eric Mayer's "Adventures of a Tin Ear". As one who possesses a similar lack of musical ability, I felt this article rang very true. Eric skillfully led the reader through a number of his musical failures, each more amusing than the last. When he reached the guitar stage, Eric unleashed a truly excellent line about why his playing never quite sounded like that recorded on records: " I found to my amazement that aural distortions caused by vinyl make recorded notes sound considerably different from real life ones." I made a special point of reading this line to my brother the musician. (( I wonder, Terry, could this be the reason why so many 'great musicians' are not appreciated until after their death - ie, when they can no longer make 'live' broadcasts.))

"We Honked Like Seals" surprised me. A Mal Ashworth contribution and no indication any where in the issue that it is a reprint. Is it new or did you omit prior credit ? If it is new please send me his address - a request made in my greedy faned style. I enjoyed his battle of the books very much. Like Eric Mayer's, Ashworth's piece requires no knowledge of fandom to be enjoyed. All that is needed is a room full of books sometime in the readers life. (( Yes, it was a reprint, Terry, and the omission of credit was a deliberate one; I wanted it to be judged on merit rather than as an example of 'early' fan writing. It originally appeared in TRIODE 15 - Winter of '58.))

Jim Cawthorn, 106 Oxford Gardens, London W.10.

It was great to see Mal Ashworth back in Triode....So the title isn't an anagram of 'EDITOR' ? ((My Ghod, I never thought of that!)) Standing on street corners was a time honoured occupation back in the dark days (ie: my childhood) on Tyneside. Yet I don't remember my own generation taking it up, even though our male relatives only a few years older than ourselves gathered there regularly for a social hour or two, smoking, chatting, placing bets. And spitting. In the decade or so before W.W.2, I suppose there wasn't anything else for some of them to do. Although tv seems to try to create the impression that Tynesiders spent all of their time marching from Jarrow. If you'd ever seen Jarrow, you'd realise that it was only lack of nourishment that prevented them from running. (( I suppose it was the advent of tv that ended Street Corner Society, too.))

Seems as if Terry was fortunate to visit Venice while the Horses of St. Mark were still in their traditional setting. I hear that they're going to be taken indoors before the atmosphere, or something, rots them into scrap-iron. Maybe we'll have to take the whole world indoors, eventually.

Your news about the Heathrow con was a total surprise - I hadn't thought about the Easter '78 do at all, and there aren't many con-going fans around Ladbroke Grove to remind me. Now that the new tube extension has opened, I must take a trip there. (( Personally, this is a convention I have certain reservations about...if Burgess starts hawking his pies in the International Departure Lounge it could lead to the end of civilisation as we know it, particularly if there are any Israelis around at the time; they'd shoot 'em on sight!))



Michael Banks, P.O. Box 312, Milford, Ohio. 45150.

The cover is excellent - to use an inadequate adjective - and quite a switch from the style of the last couple of Triode covers. Somehow, it brings to mind Lawrence of Arabia (probably because I saw the movie on tv just last week). Fine repro', too; was that an electro-stencil, or what? (( It reminded others, variously, of DUNE, and 'Luke Skywalker and a Jawa'. It was an electro, from a pencil-sketch of Jim's.))

I found your comments on fanzine purposes clarifying, in the sense that I've been hearing about the serious/for fun points of view - and the battle they seem to be generating - for some months now and have been wondering where the debate (?) was going. For my part, I consider fanzines fun in all aspects - writing, publishing, etc. And that's the way I think it should be. I mean, if you set out to win a Hugo - using your zine as a means to an end, as you say - you're going to miss a lot of the fun, being preoccupied with turning out a graphically perfect and editorially significant product. Not to mention the fact that you will probably end up spending more time and money than a hobby is worth. And in the end, you'll likely be frustrated by the fact that you didn't get an award, because it appears - from out here in the boondocks, at least - that the awards are primarily based on some "political" aspects (fan politics) such as who and how many you know. So, my view is: why spend all that time fighting and sweating to no purpose, when you can have greater compensation in putting out a non-competitive zine. Besides, when you get down to it, it is very difficult to take fanzine publishing all that seriously - the farthest one can go is being a big fish in a small pond (I can hear the battle-cry's of FIAWOL already), yes, Fandom Is A Way Of Life, but I still don't think it has to be a stressful one.

Regarding your comments on my **\*\*PERMANENT FLOATING SF CON\*\***; yes, there is a con almost every weekend, but what I was talking about was setting things up so that people could do nothing but live at the con. Yes, there are a few people who seem to have that down already, but for most of us, it's not possible. Probably what would happen, if we could do this, is that many members of the PFSFC would take to leaving on weekends to visit and work in the mundane world, anyway. (( And the others would just go bananas!)) As for Tucker's bricks, I understand that he's building a warehouse for somebody named Jim Beam to keep bottles in...

Chuck Harris, 32 Lake Cres, Daventry, Northants.

The typer is in dock again, (NO, not having the "I" key replaced.) so perhaps you'll excuse the scrawl. I thought Triode 25 was superb, perhaps the best issue I've ever seen from you. ((Yes, I'll excuse the scrawl...)) I never thought I'd see more from Mal Ashworth or Eric Needham. I still don't know how you managed to persuade them down their respective pedestals. Who do you feature next month, Vin/ Clarke? ((Alas, both pieces were reprints from earlier Triode's; I'd love to have them back here with new material. If I could locate them!)) Nice letter column too, especially the Rick Sngary and Harry Warner locs. I'd like to see Harry publish the new fan history himself...(( I wish he had, I've had Parts Two and Three from Joe Sielari of WEALTH OF FABLE, but despite letters, no Part One!! Whatthehell, Joe!!))

I was sorry to hear about Bloch's nephew who gets seasick sitting in the loo. I suppose you know Gertrude Carr had a similar problem. She found some relief by holding the loo-brush handle between her teeth, (possibly this had a similar effect to a wire-walkers balance pole), but even this failed after she sold her fanzine collection and bought the penthouse in downtown L.A. I last heard that they had ripped out all the plumbing and installed an earth-closet. This worked admirably and people came from miles around to admire her window boxes. ((Man ure joking!!))

Gary Deindorfer, 447 Bellevue Ave, Trenton, N.J. 08618.

The guy on the cover seems to be a young Beethoven or Goethe type, what with that noble brow. Surely somebody with at least a 500IQ. I have no idea of his relationship to the mysterious Arabic figure in the chair. Maybe they are only pen-pals who happen to have got together for the first time at a convention for Arabs who have Beethoven/Goethe-like pen-pals. I am puzzled by how the noble genius' wrist seems to extend itself into what looks like an electric hunting knife. And is that rolled up piece of paper an Eric Mayer article? ((No sir, that is the long-lost map of the long-lost city of Doodenstadt....and I'd be quite interested to know if anyone out there knows its location. Doodenstadt, that is; I know the map is on the table!))

Since fanzines are presumably as close to being an expression of their editor's will as a magazine can be, I guess it makes sense, after all, that a faned has the right, if he wants, to publish only for a chosen coterie or in-group and to discourage people outside that coterie from contributing. Makes sense, I think. Fortunately most faneds aren't this exclusive. I know that reading that Greg Pickersgill discourages readers outside his coterie has caused me not to write a begging letter for a copy of his zine. For one thing, I refuse to beg for anything. And worse than begging and getting a copy of the zine would be begging and not getting a copy of the zine. Still, I think Greg Pickersgill has the right to limit his circulation this way; after all, his fanzine is a hobby, not a business, and he has the right to send it or not send it to whom he wishes. (( I agree...and I'll help defend his right with the last drop of his blood! My point, not well made perhaps, was that I thought it wrong to cut himself off in this way from many of the influences of fanzine fandom and yet to review fanzines (in a definitive, knowledgeable style) that are so influenced. I deplore this particularly because Greg is a good writer, his fanzine is a good one; and I think he and it would benefit from those influences - as would fanzine fandom.))

I wish someone would put out a huge circulation fanzine titles AWARD SEEKING FANZINE. He could state in his colophon, "This Fanzine is baldly and nakedly dedicated to walking away with every award that fandom has to offer, and will crush anybody who dares to prevent it from doing so." We could use some of that honesty.

I have a very good ear for music and am an accomplished musician (Flute and alto-sax) so Eric Mayer is coming from a completely different direction in "Adventures of a Tin Ear". Nicely done article. Some well turned phrases, such as: " I weighed about 55 pounds, none of which was lung tissue." My tastes in music are so catholic that I stand in danger of being elected Pope someday. I really like what I like in a given area of music and disdain the rest. I started out with jazz, play jazz (though not professionally), and have a special love for classic bebop and cool jazz. But I also love the music of Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Fats Waller - remember the old Fats Waller song "Your Feet's Too Big", one of my all-time favourite put-down songs (makes some of Dylan's put-down songs sound tame and whiny and self-righteous by comparison), remember "your pedal extremities are enormous"? (( Loved it, loved it. Have you ever heard the Four Freshman's "April in Fairbanks"? A somewhat fantastic send-up of "April in Paris". Hmm, this is still a s-f fanzine, in case you just came in, and anything that two fens enjoy talking about is fanac!))

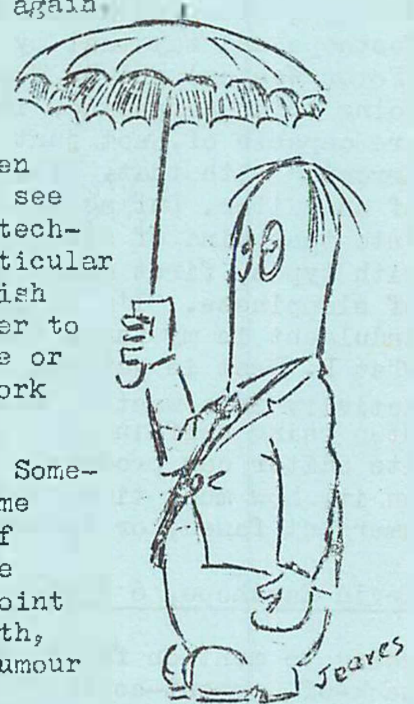
I also like many earlier musicians, and a number of jazz musicians that came along after bop and cool jazz, though hardly any around today. (Though Lee Konitz is still going strong, and his playing has been a major influence on my own saxophone conception.) ((What about Basie, and Hampton ...they're still doing nice things. Have you heard Hampton's version of "Thus Spake Zarathustra" ? )) Actually, there is quite a lot of rock that I like, but of all music I guess I love that which is mislabelled classical the most.



The thing is, I love music I love beyond all limits, though frequently it exists alongside of music in the same genre that leaves me completely cold. ((Gary goes on to list many of his favourite artists and composers, but I'll hit him with mine privately...otherwise Jeeves might get out his Zither during collating time!))

It was good to read something by Mal Ashworth again. I hadn't read anything by Mal in years and I had forgotten what a superb writer he is. The numerous asides concerning who could or could not sleep on the cupboards, bookcases, etc, really made the article for this reader. These kind of asides are often featured in the writing of Bob Shaw. Interesting to see how Mal gives his own particular twist to the same technique. American writers don't seem to use this particular writing gambit nearly as well as you English and Irish fans. (( If I had the task of choosing one fan-writer to represent the fifties to an audience who knew little or nothing of that era; Mal would be he. Most of his work is remarkably timeless.))

"The Dehydrated Goldfish" is a strange piece. Somehow it reminds me of a Grimm Brothers ((Did they come after the Clarke Sisters ?)) fairy tale. And also of Mickey Rooney in "The Sorcerers Apprentice" with the goldfish as the apprentice. It also reminds me to point out the variety of fan humour in this issue. Ashworth, Mayer, Needham and Jeeves each serve up dishes of humour quite unlike each other.



Bill Harry, 148a Queensway, London.W.2.

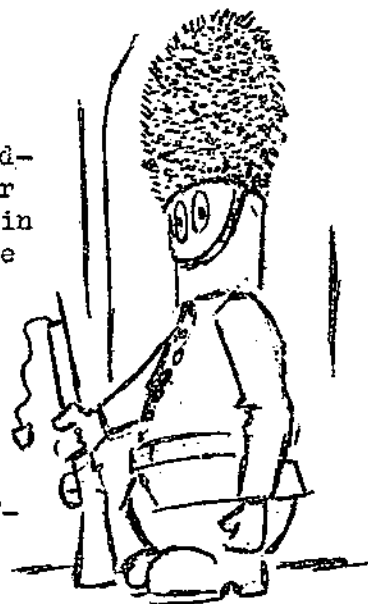
The other week I read an article in the Sunday Times Colour Magazine about a nudie-caper on the Thames. This was a junket in which a shipload of nude models spent a day on the river with photographers from all over the U.K. I had visions of a legion of rain-coated men with box brownies ((...and no film !)) nervously clicking away at Amazonian ((More likely, Esquimonian, on the Thames.)) broads. The reporter was interviewing various pilgrims who had attended and one of these was an Alan Dodd of Hoddesdon, Herts. Could this be the long-lost editor of Camber ? (( Quite possibly, Bill, and I must write and see if he'd like to do a photopage for the next Triode!)) Why not do something on the lines of "Whatever Happened Too...." and see if your correspondents can trace the myriad of Fifties fand who gafiated; e.g. JOHN ASHCROFT, one of the original organisers of Southport Fandom and editor of Arcturus, is now happily married and working as a copy-taker at the Liverpool Echo; and has recently completed an s-f novel. ((Well, if you'll care to take on the chore of going round the U.K. 'on the knocker' to research such a series... I'll naturally excuse you from going into Wiltshire...? Mebbe. Incidentally, didn't your Sunday Times reporter give Chuck Harris a mention in his report ?))

Ned Brooks, 713, Paul St, Newport News, Va.23605.

I like the cover that Jim Cawthorn did for you better than anything I have seen of his in a long time. Back in the 60s I thought that he would be one of the great fan artists, but he seems to have done a lot of things that I thought were worthless - I even bought several of the ghastly "Bantan" books because they had Cawthorn art... nor did I much care for the art he did for the new edition of DeCamps TRITONIAN RING. And yet this cover for you is great...(( I'd suspect the evil limitations imposed on artists by "art editors" here, Ned, they rarely appreciate the unfettered-style of art which an artist can use in fanzines. For me, Jim is one of the best artists around, but I don't think he's had the breaks his talent deserves.))

Brian Earl Brown, 55521 Elder Rd, Mishawaka, Ind.46544.

I've been seeing a few of those agonizing fanzine review columns that you mention and have somewhat contradictory feelings about them. If confronted with the Peter Weston quote printed here, I'm sure I'd respond like Kevin Easthope and say that my fanzine is just for fun. What he (Peter Weston) and D. West are saying is that if one is going to do a fanzine, it should be the best fanzine you are capable of, not just the easiest. I find myself agreeing with that. I'd rather receive the best effort of an editor. But as an editor, I don't want to get into that kind of struggle. So my zines are riddled with typos, first draft writing and an overriding sense of sloppiness. I'm entertaining myself. I'm being self-indulgent in my fanac and I think this is specifically what D. West is getting at - self-indulgency in any activity is a waste. Alas I don't feel noble enough to stop being self-indulgent. (( A fanzine should be of the highest standard its editor can produce - subject to how much money he can afford to spend on it, how much time, and talent, but it's wrong to be over-critical of an emergent faned, or to criticise his style and purpose for publishing.))



Kevin Easthope, 6 Ipsley Grove, Erdington, Birmingham B23 7SY.

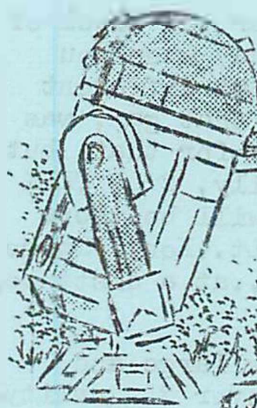
I wasn't going to mention fanzines as such in this loc but the dread disease of lack-of-comment-hooks forces me to direct my thoughts once again in that direction. I entirely agree with you when you point out that certain persons are taking fanzine publishing too seriously. If fanac becomes so much a way of life that it displaces reality, then I'd imagine there's something seriously wrong with that person's balance of mind. That's not to say you shouldn't strive for excellence in your hobby, but merely that you should keep a sense of proportion. You are also right when you say that the former revolutionaries have become the new establishment. They've nothing left to kick against except new ( and not so new) faneds who won't follow their Golden Path. (( This old saw about FIJAGH and FIAWOL crops up at least once every fannish decade, and as I've already devoted more lineage to it than the subject deserves ( being all in the eye of the beholder), I'm ending the correspondence on it as of now.))

All that talk in the lettercol about sf daydreams reminds me that I seem to be one of the few people who regularly have s-f dreams whilst asleep. I've been to Mars in my dreams, been shot in the arm with a laser pistol and piloted interstellar craft. Every time there is the conviction that what I experience is really happening - it's probably the ultimate in future awareness. One of my most vivid dreams (of a dimly lit world with two distant suns, and strange purple forests composed of tall rock-like life forms), I turned into a painting which was very effective in conveying the mood of menace I experienced in the actual dream. (( Aha, another fan who's supper consists of cheese and pickled onions, I suspect.))

Ben P. Indick, 428 Sagamore Ave, Teaneck, N.J. 07666.

I did like the Fan Humour seminar. After reading Bob Shaw in MAYA, I'd be inclined to say it begins and ends with him, the funny guy par excellence. Of course, many fans like fannish stuff, whereas his is somewhat more general ( like that use of "tinkle" as spaceship fuel...or is that pseudo-science ?). (( I don't think that that part of the male anatomy you are refering to could be described as a pseudopod, Ben...although Newcastle-Brown, I'm told, can have strange effects on the body.)) He makes me laugh out loud, which even that genial Dave Genrette and the lad Dave Locke don't often do. The gaffiated Cagle did, but that was sometimes because his scatological lines were delightfully unexpected, and maybe one laughs in self-defense, or shock.





# INTERLUDE

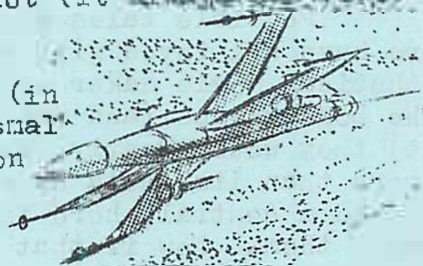
by  
TERRY JEEVES

Star Wars may (or may not) be a terrific film, according to whatever turns you on; when (or even if) you encountered fandom; and even on the current state of your pet ulcer. Whatever you think of the film, the fact remains that it ranks pretty high as a technical achievement. Moreover, it is a pretty brave attempt to bring large scale SF to the cinema. Over and above all this is one undeniable FACT. Star Wars is one of, if not THE greatest money-making films ever made.

So blue-pencil what? calls the bloke at the back who mooched his copy of TRIODE instead of buying it. So this! I egotistical y smirk as I devote my little section of space to the topic. When a movie mogul and his backers (the boys who will take a chance on any 50% profit scheme) hear the soft sweet music of lolly falling into their piggy-banks, they immediately seek out ways to hear the same tune again and again. This of course is the sort of reasoning which brings you, 'Son Of The Bride Of Dracula Meets Daughter of Frankenstein's Uncle'. That isn't all the story however. When Catamount Films hits the jackpot with 'Holocaust', all the other studios rush their versions into production... 'Havoc', 'Inferno', 'Pyrotechnica' and hordes of similar titles flood into the theatres. Probably the people who make the most from such follow-ups, are the Insurance Companies - people will rush home and up their premiums. Misguided or not, when one film maker finds a new mother-lode of money-making film fodder we very soon get a glut of it from all directions.

Already, the small screen boys are leaping on the band wagon. Over Christmas we got the slow-motion, laden-with-meaning (if you could spot it) 'SOLARIS'. 'SILENT RUNNING' made the holiday week, as did the dreary 'DARK STAR' a film hilarious in parts, but tediously slow in others. We got an edited version of Dr. Who as he tangled with the ROBOTS OF DEATH and as I write, he is waffling his way through yet another series of so. SPACE 1999 made a comeback, but in my area it had been relegated to the 11 to midnight slot which is way past my bedtime. Then the BBC have made a valiant, if not entirely successful bash at SF with the serial 'BLAKE'S 7', but despite some excellent sets and use of front and mixed projection shots it suffers from the two faults which plagues SPACE 199 and so many other such shows.. feeble plotting and puerile acting. When will the media learn that good, convincing acting can put across the weakest plot (It always has done) but not the other way round.

Scattered hither and yon, with gay (in its proper sense) abandon and with utterly abysmal quality, are 'Men From Atlantis', 'Empty-Million Dollar men, women, boys, cats, dogs and so on. There are various varieties of 'Fantastic Journeys', 'Time Warps', 'Space Children' and





assorted spin-off cartoons. All this of course is classed under the label of SF. Little wonder that the man-in-the-street sidles quietly away when you reveal that you are a devotee of the stuff. You're talking about different things. About the only programme which came near to bridging that gap, was STAR TREK. I don't rave about the show..it had too many faults for that, but it did try to tell a straight (if often banal) SF story. Happily, STAR TREK does live! 22 further episodes are to be shot. The old cast will be there with the exception of Spock, he is replaced by a full Vulcan, Lt. Xon. There is also a new female navigator (no doubt she will fall in love..at a distance, with Captain Kirk).

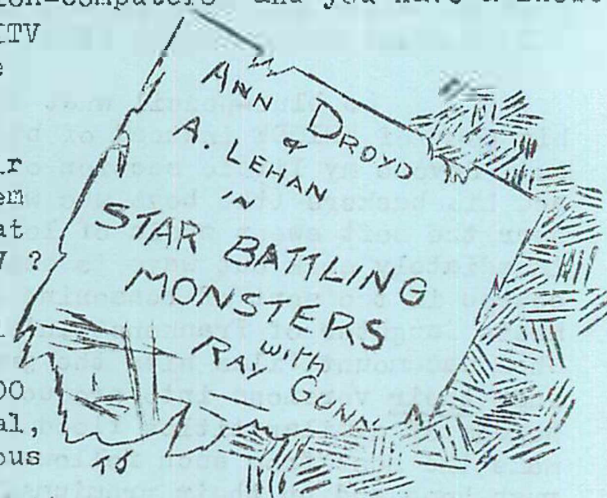
In view of all this, what might we expect on screens large and small in the future, once the Star Wars syndrome really takes over? Quality-wise, I'd predict very little change. To the Sci-Fi (a term employed by the utter neophytes and parvenus) whiz kids, the genre means monsters, robots and spaceships. Permutate these in various orders and varieties, throw in a few references to 'time warps' and 'nuclear-fusion-computers' and you have a show. One reason for this is that neither BBC or ITV can expect to produce anything on the scale of Star Wars. They lack the money and the facilities. Even if someone made them a present of such a film it would only up their rating for an evening, it would NOT make them a fortune. Who would pay £2 a head to sit at home to watch a special show on their own TV?

Happily, the outlook for the local flea-pit is more hopeful. True, for a while we can expect a slew of 'MONSTERS FROM 20,000 MILLIMETRES', each of which will have immoral, if impractical designs on some pulchritudinous sex-symbol.

But -- and this is almost inevitable, various companies will attempt to out-spectacle the spectacular. They will seek any variant of whatever Star Wars has, but with more of it. Oh we'll get the monsters, the spaceships and the robots...but we'll get good acting too, just as Star Wars gave us Guinness (I don't mind if I do) and Cushing. We shall also get the good old battles twist good and evil. Probably even now, they are burning the midnight oil in search of THE STORY, as they plough through the stacks of published SF.

What do you think they'll come up with? What yarns would you expect a film maker to select? No, I don't mean which stories would you choose..the answer to that would be as varied as the whole range of readable science fiction. What would a producer go for? Remember he wants the mixture outlined above..he has to have that because Star Wars had it..and look at the money that has made. Pause ten seconds before peeking at the 'answer'.

Possible tales abound....Heinlein, vanVogt, Clarke, Clement and many others have all toyed with Space Opera...and Space Opera is obviously what our hypothetical movie maker seeks. Moreover, having enviously eyed the success of the Bond movies (and tried to emulate them with Matt Helm, and Our Man Flint) they would dearly love to pick up a space opera series which not only had more than its quota of spaceships, aliens and large scale battles, but which had a central, hero-figure who could tackle ever mounting odds and overcome them. Now if that doesn't remind you of a possible superfilm





just waiting for someone to bung it on the silver screen, what does ?

Scoff if you like, but I'm betting that we see Doc Smith's good old Lensman series at the local Odeon before long. Consider a moment before you say it can't. The Lensmen are the forces of good ranged against the black evil of Baskone...and straightaway you have a tie-in with their drug and gangster activities. Aliens by the carload, space battles by the multi-cubic parsec, whacky, if not downright mad, scientists, and of course the love interest in the shape of Clarissa McDougall...although it might be better if she and Minnisson never got married in the film version..that way you can hint at an extra marital set up, and also let him have affairs on all the planets he visits. Then again, as was obvious with the slinky torch singers in harem pants who got injected into 'CONQUEST OF SPACE', film makers have coddles of nifty proxies waiting to get into ~~bad~~ films. Think of all the luscious lassies encountered by Minnisson... Dessa Desplaines, Helen of Lyrane, Carilla Minnisson and many others. You can even get in quite a bit of permissive nudity when Clarissa McDougall strips down to visit Lyrane in the course of duty.

Just who would play the part of Kimball Minnisson is anybody's guess. Sean Connery at the height of his Bond career would have been a good choice. My knowledge of the current crop of screen heroes is too meagre to permit a reasonable selection for the part.. but someone will be found and that actor will be sure of superstar status in short order.

Strictly speaking, there are only six 'Lensman' novels. 'Vortex Blaster' is in the same universe and could easily be adapted, so that makes for seven. Then we have the William B. Ellern yarns set in the Lensman Universe, and a competent script-writer could probably make over Doc's earlier yarns to suit... 'Spacehounds of IPC', and the 'Skylark' yarns could all be brought into the fold. I'd venture that the available material would exceed the stamina of the public to shell out shekels on ever escalating battles among the stars...but it would be great fun for a while. Such a film would have another built-in advantage. Whether or not you are a Doc Smith fan, could you resist going to see just what sort of a job a film maker has made in bringing it to your screen ? No, and neither could thousands of other SF fans - a ready-made audience if ever there was one.

With speed and sagacity, Catamount Productions may well sign up the rights to all the Smith material, but what about Campbell's space opera ? Arcot, Morcy and Wade may yet roam the celluloid starfields. Once you start, the list is long. van Vogt's 'Weapon Makers', or Gosseyn and the A stories, Heinlein, Clarke, Clement and many others. Maybe Star Wars will achieve more for screen SF than all the fanzine (and prozine) articles on the genre have ever achieved. The mind boggles at the prospect.

O.K., so I may be totally wrong...but wouldn't it be great if I'm not.... keep your fingers crossed.

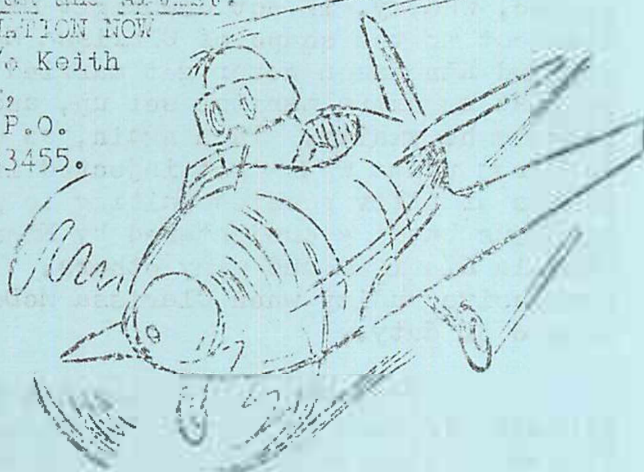
Terry Jeeves

## BACOVERAGE

TERRY JEEVES who, at the moment is (not very tunefully) singing such songs as "Do You Know The Way To San Jose", "Route 66", and "By The Time You Get To Phoenix I'll Be Waiting"; should (if his only 17,000 p.m. succeed) be attending the IGUANACON, The 1st WORLD S.F. CONVENTION in Phoenix, Arizona. IF YOU would like to see this artist, the Singer, this maker of Music, this long-time Fanzine fan and Artist. This...this...FAN. SEND A DONATION NOW to THE SERIES TO PHOENIX FUND c/o Keith Freeman, 269 Wychem Rd, Reading, Berks. RG6 1PL. or, Dave Kyle, P.O. BOX 1587, Hobe Sound, Florida 33455.

And even if you won't be at the IGUANACON, help Terry get there, eh, he deserves it. Prior to the WORLDCON he hopes to spend twelve days or so in the LOS ANGELES AREA (Watch your tv screen for 'Husky and Search Meet The Soggles'), arriving in the L.A. area on August 18th.

Offers of hospitality can be channelled through Bruce Pelz, 15931 Kalisher St, Granada Hills, Ca. 91344.

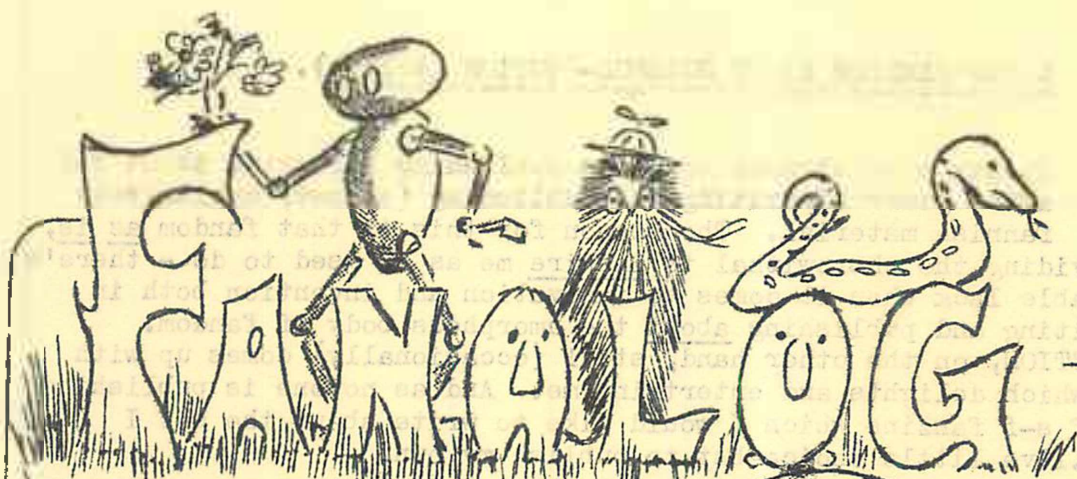


FANTHOLOGY '76 is a hundred-page selection of the BEST Fan-writing of 1976. It is a very fine selection, including material by Bob Shaw, Harry Warner, LeRoy Kettle, Bob Tucker, Tom Perry, Lee Hoffman, and many other fans who produced fine writing during '76. It's also immaculately duplicated, and well-illud by some of the best fan-artists around. Its edited and published by VICTORIA VAYNE P.O. Box 156, Stn-D, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. M6P 3J8. The price is \$3.50, and it's worth it.

THE WEALTH OF FABLE in "A Wealth of Fable" by Harry Warner, jr. is fine and fannish and very informative...it's Harry's history of Anglo-America Fandom in the 1950's; well detailed, well-written. Published in THREE parts by Joe Siclari, 2201 N.E. 45 St, Lighthouse Point, Florida 33064. I was going to review this in detail....but Joe hasn't sent me PART ONE YET....but Parts Two & Three are excellent. Write Joe if you are interested, I don't know if there are copies left -- and remind him about my Part 1, eh?

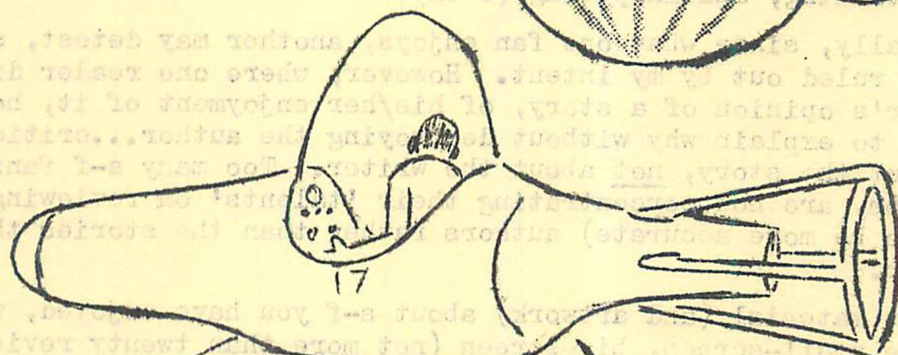
MERSEY BEAT: 'The Beginnings Of The Beatles', is nothing to do with The Hephaestus Plague, The Andromeda Strain, or The Ant Who Ate The World...but is a book about John, Paul, and Thingy by BILL HARRY former editor of BIPED, from which he went on to publish a professional-fanzine (Mersey Beat) in the depths of the Liverpool Cavern. The book contains extracts from that beat-fanzine, and is profusely illustrated; it is a visual souvenir of the Beat-scene 1960 - 63. Say's Bill. It may even have photo's of Norman Shorrocks doing the Watusi in the background, says I.





Jeeves

TO 3N



MAGNETIC GRAPPLE ONLY. 11

ROTLER

" I suppose that if blame for this fanzine is to be correctly apportioned, the American Longshoremen should be awarded a nod of recognition: for it was during, those long, loooong weeks when nothing that travelled sea-way from the U.S.A. arrived in my letter-box (and while TRIODE 25 was festering on some bare and barren dockside, and depriving me of locs) that I started reading more S-F, again. "



## FANALOG

FANALOG - A NEW FANZINE ABOUT SCIENCE-FICTION (Yclept).

## FANALOG

It may seem strange that I'm publishing a fanzine about s-f after years of writing and publishing (almost) exclusively fannish material. The reason for this is that fandom as is, is not providing the wherewithal to inspire me as it used to do - there's a considerable lack when it comes to innovation and invention both in fannish writing and publishing about the amorphous body of fandom. SCIENCE-FICTION, on the other hand, still (occasionally) comes up with something which delights and entertains me. And as nowone is publishing the kind of s-f fanzine which I would like to write about the s-f I enjoy in...I've little choice but to publish my own.

FANALOG'S 'editorial policy' is, naturally at this stage a little vague, but my intent is to publish material about s-f which I ( and hopefully, my contributors) have enjoyed. I want material about s-f that are positive rather than negative. Articles and reviews about s-f which has been interesting and entertaining; to you. Not over-critical, destructive, nit-picking examples of how much cleverer the critic is than the author. ...and I'd like artwork which grangerisers s-f that the artist has found entertaining, and inspiring (even).

Naturally, since what one fan enjoys, another may detest, controversy is not ruled out by my intent. However, where one reader disagrees with another's opinion of a story, of his/her enjoyment of it, he must be prepared to explain why without destroying the author...criticism must be about the story, not about the writer. Too many s-f fanzines, in my opinion, are now concentrating their 'talents' on reviewing or reviling (to be more accurate) authors rather than the stories they have written.

I want material (and artwork) about s-f you have enjoyed, whether it be on the small-screen, big-screen (not more than twenty reviews of STAR WARS, please!), or printed-page; whether it be in the latest issue of your favourite magazine or a rare old mildewed tome you've found in some (almost) unmentionable place. I'm interested in publishing entertaining material about entertaining s-f.

I'm not, on the other hand, interested in publishing Checklists, Biographies, Autobiographies, tedious listings of esoterica, or, (the currently prevalent bore in s-f zines) author-interviews...unless it happens to be about some author who is prepared to tell-all about how he really managed to be all the things listed by his publisher - ie, mercenary, short-order cook, stunt-man, pimp, and gang-runner - and still churn out 10,000 words a day!

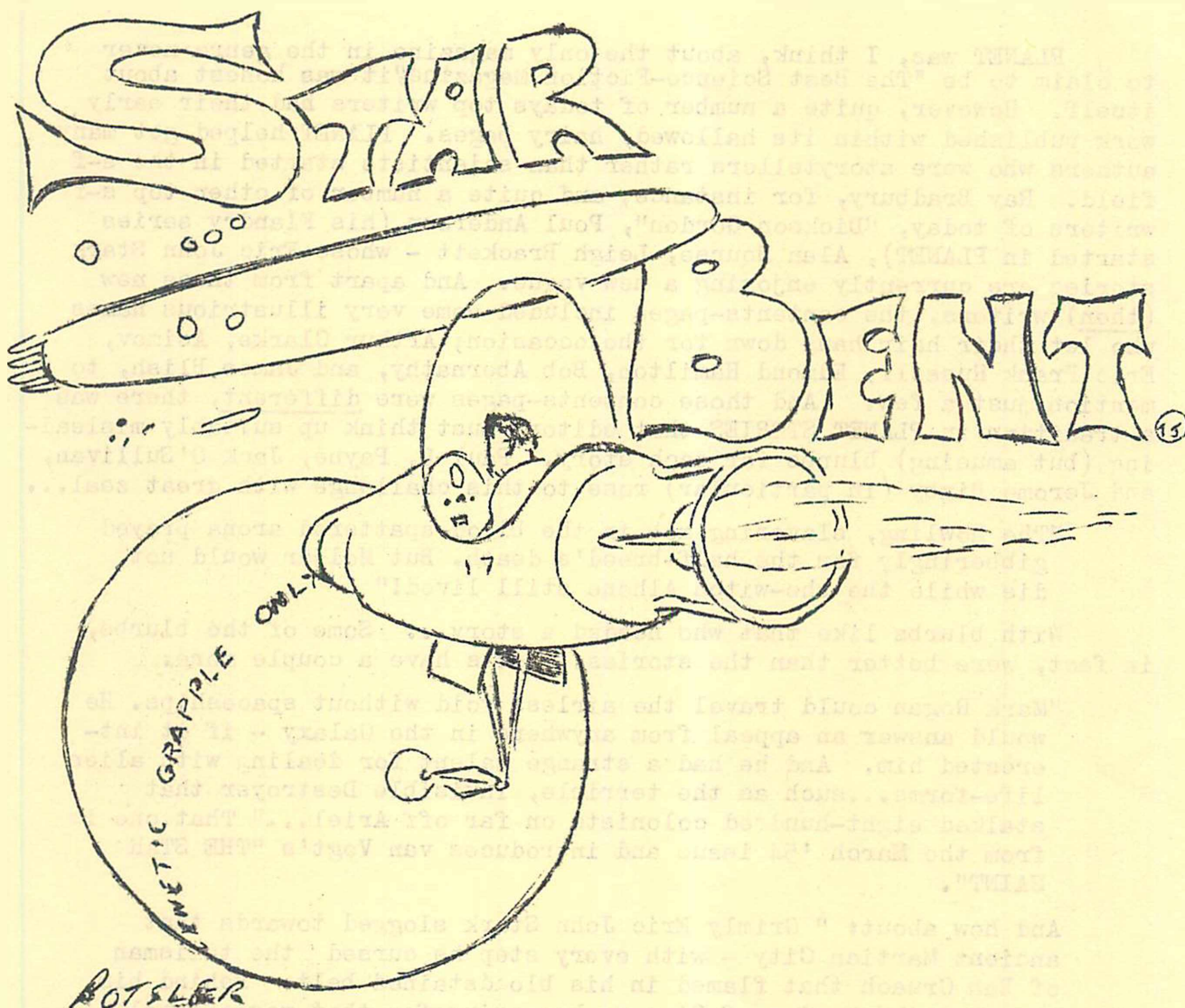
I don't want contrived essays on the hidden-meanings behind the story-line. Most s-f, as most other types of fiction, is escapist in nature, and recognition of this isn't going to kill the genre. Neither do I want written examples of how much cleverer you are than he is. And if anyone wants to write of the latest SFWA fued, this is not the fanzine to send it to...

This issue is going to be mainly editorially written, and the subject material, s-f I've enjoyed at one time or another. NEXT ISSUE, well, that depends on you.... Eric Bentcliffe.

+++++

FANALOG is edited by ERIC BENTCLIFFE, 17 Riverside Crescent, Holmes Chapel, Cheshire, CW4 7NR. England.





PLANET STORIES LIVES.....

It does, on the shelves of my den anyway, and also I'm sure in many another old-fan's memory and collection. It was, I think, a greatly underrated magazine in that to look at it was typical of the image the general public (those with the nasty upcurled lips) had back then of science-fiction; garishly-covered with brass-bra'd amazon's struggling in the clutches of some evil, many tentacled Bug-Eyed Monster...and printed on poor quality pulp-paper with fully untrimmed edges. Somehow PLANET stories seemed not merely untrimmed, but positively hairy.

However, all this was something of a facade (possibly even a gambit to stop the uninitiated from reading the magazine), and when the reader got past the gloriously garish covers with their promise of lustful adventures on far-away worlds he came across stories with a surprisingly high entertainment content. They weren't literature with a big 'L', and it's right to term most of them Space-Opera, but, by Klono's Five Flaming Hells they were fun, and that's an element that is sadly lacking in much of today's s-f. The writers ignored, or bypassed, any of the scientific principles that got in the way of telling a story (what good author, with a plausible line doesn't, when necessary) and, in retrospect PLANET's contents could better be termed 'Science-Fantasy' than science-fiction...but back then it was S-F; not the coldly equated stuff but the imaginative, entertaining type.

PLANET was, I think, about the only magazine in the genre never to claim to be "The Best Science-Fiction Magazine"; it was honest about itself. However, quite a number of today's top writers had their early work published within its hallowed, hairy pages. PLANET helped get many authors who were storytellers rather than scientists started in the s-f field. Ray Bradbury, for instance; and quite a number of other top s-f writers of today, "Dickson Gordon", Poul Anderson (his Flandry series started in PLANET), Alan Nourse, Leigh Brackett - whose Eric John Stark stories are currently enjoying a new vogue. And apart from these new (then) writers, the contents-pages included some very illustrious names who let their hair hang down for the occasion; Arthur Clarke, Asimov, Eric Frank Russell, Edmond Hamilton, Bob Abernathy, and James Blish, to mention just a few. And those contents-pages were different, there was a tradition in PLANET STORIES that editors must think up suitably misleading (but amusing) blurbs for each story. Paul L. Payne, Jack O'Sullivan, and Jerome Bixby (in particular) rose to this challenge with great zeal...

"The howling, slaverling mob in the blood-spattered arena prayed gibberingly for the half-breed's death. But Moljar would not die while the she-witch Alhone still lived!"

With blurbs like that who needed a story... Some of the blurbs, in fact, were better than the stories. Let's have a couple more.

"Mark Rogan could travel the airless void without spaceships. He would answer an appeal from anywhere in the Galaxy - if it interested him. And he had a strange talent for dealing with alien life-forms...such as the terrible, invisible Destroyer that stalked eight-hundred colonists on far off Ariel..." That one is from the March '54 issue and introduces van Vogt's "THE STAR SAINT".

And how about: "Grimly Eric John Stark slogged towards that ancient Martian City - with every step he cursed the talisman of Ban Cruach that flamed in his bloodstained belt. Behind him screamed the hordes of Ciaran, hungering for that magic jewel, ahead lay the dread abode of the Ice Creatures - at his side strode the whispering spectre of Ban Cruach urging him on to a battle Stark new he must lose!" That could well describe innumerable Sword and Sorcery Novels, and may well have supplied the plot for several, but refers to Leigh Brackett's "BLACK AMAZON OF MARS".

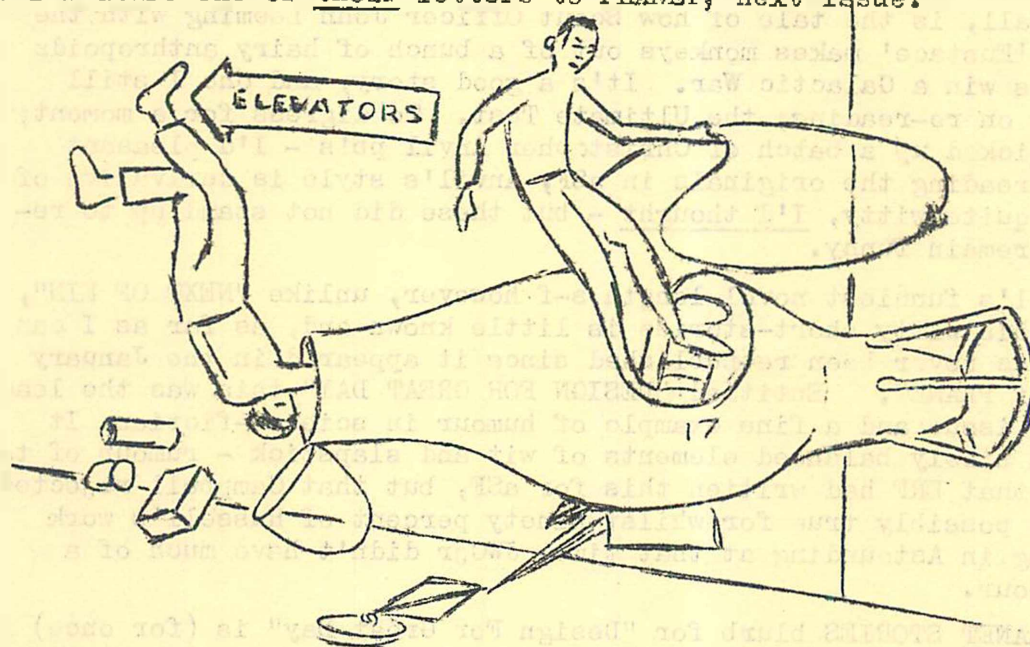
There was another PLANET STORIES feature that endeared the inveterate reader and fan to that magazine. THE VIZIGRAPH; the letter column. This latter, together with the letter-columns in STARTLING STORIES and THRILLING WONDER STORIES (when edited by Sam Mines and Sam Merwin) may quite possibly be responsible for fandom becoming fannish in its fanzines. It was in these now-yellowed pages that fans, science-fiction fans, first started to have fun in print. Previously, s-f magazine letter-columns had been predominately serious in tone featuring laudatory letters with no real interaction with the magazine's editors: PLANET, and the other prozines mentioned, changed all that. Latterly, I think it's true that the fans bought these magazines as much for the interplay and entertainment in the letter-columns, as for the stories. In PLANET, the readers voted each issue on the best three letters in a previous issue, the writers thereof then received an original illo from the magazine and, a fair amount of egoboo. It's not pure coincidence that the writers of many of these letters later became active fans (ego-boob, as we all know, is addictive) and, professional writers.

Having excerpted PLANET's story-blurbs, its only right to give examples of the sort of encouragement the editor received in his flights of purple-prose. There was more than a little interaction here, too.



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For example... " The orange-furred, eight-tentacled corpse of the rayed zwilnik slung across my massive shoulders, I staggered wearily across the Martian desert. For days I had seen no signs of life - save for the zwilnik, whose attack I halted by the dis-beams of my atomgun. But now even the atomgun needed recharging, and that must wait until I refound my space-rocket. The emergency food rations were getting short, too. The Norg, the two-headed man from Rigel 3 was a prisoner in the tower of the Bat God at Yeolarn, and the graceful Princess Morona.... Wearily, I thrust these dismal thoughts from my tired mind. The glowing purple blood of the blasted zwilnik trickled down my arms as I mounted another of the monotonous red dunes of hot sand. Might my spaceship lie beyond this dune? The radioactivity dial on my space-tanned wrist showed a source of atomic energy close by. I staggered to the crest of the dune of rosy Martian sand. And there, before me, in the wan light of a distant sun lay - was it a common Martian mirage? Or was it...cold perspiration beaded my brow....was it the Winter ish of PLANET?" The author of this introduction to a loc was Lin Carter, in the Spring '47 issue. Also present that issue were other well known fans (and pro's...Chad Oliver was one) who are still around. (Hello, Rick Sneary..) I'm tempted indeed, to warn recipients of this publication that if they don't respond with a loc, I may well feature one of their letters to PLANET, next issue!



ROTSLER

I doubt that PLANET STORIES if published today could be a financially successful magazine; although much of the material published therein was very closely related to that which is now known as Sword&Sorcery. It was a magazine for less sophisticated times, and as such should be evaluated. It was a vehicle for escapist literature that fitted well into the market of the period in which it was published. It's ambience intimated that to entertain was its aim; and it succeeded in its intent. However, whilst PLANET STORIES, per se, would not be the ideal sort of s-f magazine for a publisher to bring out....it's entirely possible that a cleaned-up (as regards make-up and style), up-dated version could be just what today's s-f readers would go for; for if one is to judge the market from the popularity of STAR WARS, and space-opera in general, the general-public is now at the state of s-f awareness that the proud-and-lonely-fan was, then. Even Auntie BBC has recognised the genre with its new series "BLAKES SEVEN" - not the sort of recognition the avid fan wanted, but it will appeal to the reader who is just discovering the heady delights of Other Galaxies... I await, with some eagerness their recognition of Ghu and Foo-Foo as suitable subjects for a Religious Affairs programme. PLANET STORIES LIVES ?

## ETERNAL ZEMND MUST NOT DIE....

Whilst looking back through old-issues of PLANET STORIES - to ensure the piece you've just read was thoroughly researched, y' understand! - I came across one of the few genuinely funny s-f novels. There aren't many of these; in fact, there aren't many (intentionally) funny s-f stories of any length. A hopeful anthologist attempting to put out a book with this theme would have difficulty doing so.

There have been numerous attempts at humour in s-f, but few that have achieved their aim. Among those that have are, I think, Poul Anderson and Gordy Dickson with their HOKA stories (collected as "EARTHMAN'S BURDEN"), Reginald Bretnor with a few shorts in F&SF...and the often puckish Eric Frank Russell who, in my opinion is (was) the best exponent of humour in s-f both in short-story form and at novel length. Few authors in any genre can write a truly funny novel, it isn't easy to sustain humour over this length. Harry Harrison tried it relatively recently with "STAR SMASHERS OF THE GALAXY RANGERS"...and failed notably. I'd looked forward to reading this one; Harry has injected some nicely funny schticks in his short-stories and made them come off, but SSOTGR was so badly overdrawn that it failed to provoke even a mild chuckle. From me, anyway.

Probably the best known of Eric Frank Russell's humorous s-f novels is "NEXT OF KIN" (also published as "THE SPACE WILLIES") this, as you'll probably recall, is the tale of how Scout Officer John Leeming with the help of his 'Eustace' makes monkeys out of a bunch of hairy anthropoids ....and helps win a Galactic War. It's a good story, and one I still find amusing on re-reading; the Ultimate Test. To digress for a moment; I recently picked up a batch of Christopher Anvil pb's - I'd pleasant memories of reading the originals in aSF, Anvil's style is derivative of Russell and quite witty, I'd thought - but these did not stand up to re-reading and remain funny.

Russell's funniest novel-length s-f however, unlike "NEXT OF KIN", and many of his witty short-stories is little known and, as far as I can ascertain, has never been re-published since it appeared in the January 1953 issue of PLANET. Entitled "DESIGN FOR GREAT DAY" this was the lead story in the issue and a fine example of humour in science-fiction. It incorporates nicely balanced elements of wit and slapstick - rumour of the time had it that ERF had written this for aSF, but that Campbell rejected it; which is possibly true for whilst ninety percent of Russell's work was appearing in Astounding at that time, JWCjr didn't have much of a sense of humour.

The PLANET STORIES blurb for "Design For Great Day" is (for once) a surprisingly accurate one. As previously noted, PS blurbs were amusing but not always closely related to the stories they introduced - I'm not sure which PLANET editor invented the 'Hyperbole-Drive' but they all used it!

### " A NOVEL OF DISTANT WORLDS"

...DESIGN FOR GREAT DAY...All hail Lawson of the Solarian Combine. Lawson of the Cosmos-wide Supermind; Lawson the supreme egotist. Lawson who was man plus men plus other creatures...who believed...who knew, that wits top warheads; that tactics surpass instruments; that a super-glib tongue rules the Galaxies."

I don't recall that Lawson did have a cosmos-wide supermind, but the rest is relevant to the story in which a sole representative (Lawson of course) takes apart the administration of a warring alien world, and breaks-up the reader as well.

Have a quote.....



"...Rounding a rock, he came face to face with Yadiz, a common trooper momentarily paralyzed by sheer lack of an order to go forward, go backward, shoot the alien, shoot himself, or do something. He looked casually at Yadiz as if different life-forms in radically different shapes were more common than pebbles. Yadiz became so embarrassed by his own futility that he swapped his gun from hand to hand and back again.

"Surely it's not that heavy," remarked the alien with complete and surprising fluency, he eyed the gun and sniffed. Yadiz, of course, dropped it. The feat is far from easy when one has four normally agile hands, it requires the cooperation of a mind quick to swirl into hopeless confusion. But Yadiz had a brain not to be daunted by the difficulty of the task. It muddled itself most successfully and turned all his fingers into thumbs and temporarily abolished his coordination. He dropped the gun which promptly went off with an ear-splitting crash and a piece of rock flew into shards and something whined shrilly into the sky. The alien turned and followed the whine with his eyes until finally it died out. Then he said to Yadiz, "Wasn't that rather silly?"

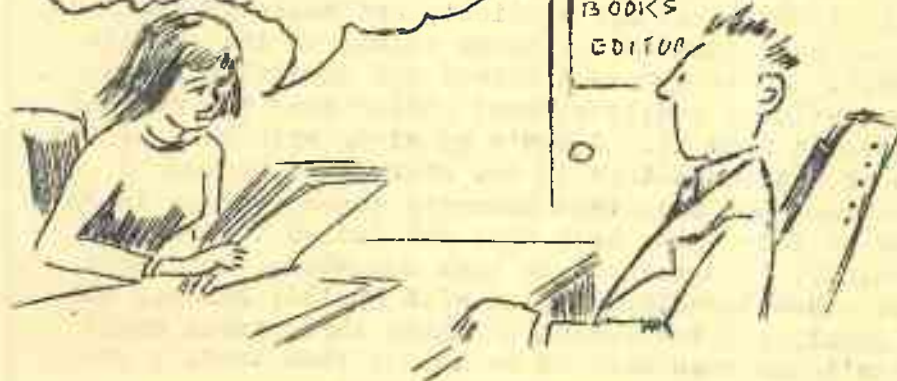
There was no need to answer. It was a conclusion Yadiz had already reached about one second before the bang. He picked up the gun with a foot-hand, transferred it to a real-hand, found it upside-down, turned it right way up, got the strap tangled round his fist, had to reverse it to get the limb free, turned it right way up again. The other studied this with such interest that Yadiz, completely unnerved, decided to shoulder it in the approved on-guard position. Whereupon a harness-buckle obligingly caught the firing stud and the thing went off again.

Once more the alien observed the missiles screaming flight. Returning his attention to Yadiz, he enquired with pleased anticipation, "How many more tricks can you do with that? "

\* \* \* \* \*

"DESIGN FOR GREAT DAY", isn't just a tour de farce;; it's also a well told and entertaining story involving elements of philosophy, the reasons why wars are fought, and mankind's possible destiny - not 'heavily' written, but smoothly, palatably - it involves the (very) different beings that make up the Solarian Combine: Callistan Bee's, Rhean Ghosts, Homorachnids from Venus, and their separate and shared motivations. It's also an often hilarious tale of bureaucratic bungling on the part of the opposition. The 'Solarian Combine' idea follows on from EFR's development of the 'Associated Species' in the April '49 ASF novellette "THE UNDECIDED". Both are fine examples of genuinely humorous science-fiction. Rare examples of their kind.

ER... WHILE WE DON'T  
DOUBT THAT A MARKET  
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"WHIP-QUEEN OF THE  
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ISN'T QUITE ....



# FAWEARONADE

MESSANGER OF ZHUVASTOU By Andrew J. Offutt. (Magnum Books - Methuen Pb.)

This is a bloody good story. A fine and entertaining science-fiction adventure. The tale of what happens when Scion Keniston - son of a Galactic Senator, tennis-player, of interplanetary renown - and misfit, sets out to seek a mercenary female who has killed his brother; and to accomplish his intent has to undergo depilation and deprivation on the planet SOVOLD. Sovold is a backward world - compared with Earth - a teaming brawling world, very well realised and extrapolated, and populated with a host of believable races and characters by the author. Keniston (or, Sir Balyen Javolo, as he becomes after being shorn of his body-hair and given a skin-tone change) encounters a nicely bizarre assortment of peoples during his quest for revenge, both pleasant and unpleasant and (naturally) succeeds in the end in achieving his aim. The plot-line is not original, but what Andy Offutt has done with it is. Ken Slater, who recommended this one to me, said it reminded him of Sprague de Camp's fine and memorable "HAND OF ZEII", and there are certain similarities between the two but not, I'm pleased to say, to the detriment of "Messenger of Zhuvastou". I enjoyed the story immensely; and also the fun Andy Offutt had with his chapter headings.

THE LOST TRAVELLER By Steve Wilson. (PAN S-F. Paperback.)

I enjoyed this far more than I expected to after reading the publisher's blurb. That lead me to expect a piece of 'speculative fantabulation' (towards which I have a certain antipathy) in that it was to be the story of a group of Hell's Angels, survivors of an atomic holocaust. That is, indeed, what the story is about, but Steve Wilson has written a fast-paced and entertaining yarn which, whilst it is almost a Western in s-f trappings, bike's being substituted for horses, is also a colourfull and entertaining story. And since it is subtitled "A Motorcycle Grail Epic Quest and Science Fiction Western", the author is being fair with the reader. There is, perhaps, a little too much gratuitous sex and violence for my taste, but it's certainly never dull and is a good escapist read.

EYE AMONG THE BLIND By Robert Holdstock. (PAN S-F. Paperback.)

I'm quite impressed by Rob Holdstock's first novel; it has flaws (what hasn't), but they are minor when compared to the scope and largesse of the tale and its development. It's a sombre tale, reminiscent in style to Ursula Le Guinn at her moodiest, and tells of the impact (and its unforeseen consequences) of human values on the intelligent races of Ree'hdworld. It is a very involved and involving story and not one which can be reviewed easily without giving away too much of the plot to those who haven't read it. I can't go along with some of the actions and assumptions of the characters in the story, but because I can't go along with them does not mean that humanity cannot change in ways that I can't conceive of at this time, only that Rob failed to convince me that it could. Certainly, he convinced me that somewhere, out there, sometime, there could be a Ree'hdworld, peopled with Ree'hd, Rundii, and Pianhmar, and that the peculiar interrelation of these three races might be possible. And you can't ask much more of an author than that. A story which I'll probably enjoy re-reading, and thinking about.



WAR OF THE WINGMEN By Poul Anderson. (Dobson S-F. Hardcover.)

I always enjoy an alien race created by Poul; lesser-authors often fall into the trap (not always intentionally) of creating an unbelievably alien-race and then either reveal them to have human motivation or no motivation at all. Obviously, the latter gambit should be true s-f and marvelled at by one and all, for an alien race should be alien...well, shouldn't it? Unfortunately, if it is completely alien in the true definition of the word the reader isn't likely to understand what the writer is writing about, even if the author thinks he does. Poul Anderson creates believable aliens - a contradiction, I know, but one that has to be accepted along with 'Hyper-Drive', 'Time-Travel', etcetera, as part of the rationale of s-f - Poul is one of the best writers around when it comes to creating believable aliens, and his winged Diomedean are a fine example of the art. Their motivations are not human, but they are understandable to humans. Of the many s-f stories dealing with beings who have the power of flight this is one of the best realised in terms of the type of society that could evolve from such a gift. The story involves Trader van Rijn in his earlier days (WAR OF THE WINGMEN was first serialised in Astounding in '58), when he was still out and about the Galaxy and not just the puppet-master of later tales in the Polysotechnic League series. He, together with world-factor, Eric Wace, and Lady Sandra Tamarin (who turns up again in the recent MIRKHELM) crash far from the only human settlement on Diomedea...and the plot is about how he and his companions survive. The story is about the Diomedean, and it's an excellent one.

THE WITLING By Vernor Vinge. (Dobson S-F. Hardcover.)

It's interesting to compare this with the above story since they both have the same basic plot idea, ie, maroon humans (few in number) far from base (and farther from home-planet), and get them to safety before they die from native-food which is accumulatively poisonous. I enjoyed Poul's version, but I found THE WITLING even more enjoyable for it has a particularly well realised background and nicely details how a race of aliens with the ability to teleport could develop a viable non-technic civilisation. There are some nicely thought out ideas here. Take, for instance, the idea of providing a series of Transit Lakes as 'roads' for teleportation - you have to exchange something there for something here when you teleport and water is ideal; much better than a built-in 'sense' that prevents you devastating the scenery by not arriving inside a mountain (and which isn't easy to believe in, anyway). It's one of those ideas, like 'Hyper-Drive' that other authors will probably now adopt because it is so obviously right...now that Vernor Vinge has thought of it for them. Yes, there are some nice touches here, including a Royal Palace some thirteen-hundred miles long (not at all ridiculous within the clever framework of this story), and the use of blasts of air (teleported onto target) to make war with. The story of how the marooned humans escape their doom is well told, but as with the Poul Anderson yarn, it is enhanced and made into true s-f by the authors clever development of a good basic idea of a world that is different from ours. Excellent.

THE KING IS DEAD By Alexander Thynn. (The Longleat Press. Hardcover)

This is labelled as s-f, but I'm unable to accept it as such; in fact, the nearest I can come to a satisfactory classification is to say that it vaguely resembles what used to be termed a 'Science-Romance'. However, since it uses science-fiction rather than science as a vehicle for social comment on society, that description is not a wholly precise one. Frankly, I find it extremely difficult to say anything good about the book; it is written in a most peculiar form of English which often appears to change direction, or style, in mid-sentence, and the naming-of-names is abysmal -

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- perhaps one of the effective art-forms (if you'll forgive my sounding pretentious for a moment) within the s-f genre is the subtle naming of characters (alien and otherwise), of planets, of cities, et al, to help evoke the mood of the story, to achieve the right sort of 'colouration', and to make suspension of disbelief easier. Alexander Thynn is a complete disaster at this...when I come across (on page one) planets called 'Chingsuz' and 'Woggopek', and a war-lord called 'King Cobra', a 'President Medallion'...I blench. Permissible names, I suppose, if you are re-writing Gilbert & Sullivan but, somehow wrong for science-fiction. I couldn't finish this book, and lost interest almost entirely after the first few paragraphs of gobbledegook.

DARGASON By Colin Cooper. (Dobson S-F. Hardcover.)

To say that something is 'a pleasant little offering' often sounds as though you are damning with faint praise, but nevertheless, the phrase is apt in this instance...and not intended to demean. DARGASON, is the story of how music critic Franklin Digby discovers that several new pieces (yclept) of modern classical music has strange influences on the audience....and his attempts to find out who, why, and why so sotto-voce. I won't go into just what the effects are on the listening public, for that's the crux of the story. In attempting to discover the composers of the music and their intentions, Digby gets involved with some amusing and quite believable characters. It's the characterisation, really, that makes this book - the author is connected with the world of music and it is obvious that he has met some of the people he's transposed into this story. Franklin Digby bumbles his way through the plot in a pleasantly fallible way and I enjoyed his antics and adventures.

MONSTERS IN ORBIT By Jack Vance. (Dobson S-F. Hardcover.)

This is vintage Vance, pulp-magazine Vance, but none the worse for that; most of the older writers did their best writing in their earlier years when ideas were coming freely to them - this one was published first in THRILLING WONDER STORIES back in the '50s as "THE ABERCROMBIE STATION", and later appeared as an Ace pb with that title. It's pleasantly entertaining (non-mind-boggling) s-f, remarkable only in that it was one of the first (I think) s-f stories to have a female lead. She is a designing, and well-designed, character, who embarks to the Abercrombie Station with the intent of marrying into money. Since she is svelte, and Abercrombie Station is a 'fatties' satellite orbiting Earth, certain difficulties are obvious from the start; less obvious and more interesting ones arise later.

THE SURVIVAL GAME By Colin Kapp. (Dobson S-F. Hardcover.)

Colin Kapp has taken all the ingredients of space-opera; well, almost all...he's mixed in a couple of fractious star-kings, an emergent Terran Federation, fugitive heir apparents to a star-king throne, a trace of a race of galactic secret-masters, a planet that is decidedly inimical to humanoid life...stirred very thoroughly, added a neat plot twist here and there and written a highly entertaining space-adventure. The principal action takes place on the aforementioned inimical-planet, Alvida (almost a ringer for Harry Harrison's DEATHWORLD), where Colonel Bogaert (Col. Bogey, of course) has to survive against the wickedly deadly life-forms, and the equally deadly efforts of a former native of the planet set down as his opponent (this is the survival-game of the title), as the result of a wager between two star-lords. He also has to protect Miram star-king-wife and her son Zim, and daughter Arma, who have got caught up in the action and marooned with him. The well-paced adventures on Alvida are nicely set against a well-detailed backdrop of interplanetary chicanery. Its good blood-and-thunder space-opera and, unlike many attempts at the form, hangs together well and provides an exceeding good read with few discrepancies. Excellent stuff.



RAISE THE TITANIC By Clive Cussler. (Michael Joseph. Hardcover.)

Science-Fiction ? Yes, I think so. It is set in the 1980's, involves an event that hasn't happened, but logically extrapolated could, and makes that event believable. It deals, as the title boldly announces with an American project to raise the liner Titanic from its watery grave; the reason for the attempt also being based on s-f premise - the prescience in the strong-room of the Titanic of the world's only known supply of Byzantium ( a very rare element, found only in the strong-rooms of sunken liners!) which is needed for a vital defense project. It's a very well written novel with a fine attention to detail and seemingly accurate science; an adventure with a credible background of international intrigue and skullduggery. It has many of the elements of the better spy stories, a la Alistair MacLean, and proceeds apace through good convolutions of plot. One thing that did mar the story for me was the 'Washington White House' language used by certain of the characters; maybe they do use phrases like... " You forget, I carry more weight with the President than Admiral Sandecker", in Washington, but such phraseology has become trite through over-use and tends to turn the characters into cardboard - for me. An entertaining novel, though, and it could be easily transposed into the rescue of a spaceship from the bottom of a heavy-gravity-well if you are in that sort of a mood.

THE THORBURN ENTERPRISE By John Rankine. (Dobson S-F. Hardcover)

Not very enterprising this one...at least if you have read other of John Rankine's novels, I don't think you'll find it so. It's set on and about the same planets Rankine created earlier for his Dag Fletcher (Euro-space troubleshooter) series, and adds nothing to the scope of this particular future scenario. I'm tempted to say that only-the-names-have-been-changed for Commander Kurt Foreman (the intrepid hero of THE THORBURN ENTERPRISE) is cut from the same card as Dag Fletcher, and his adventures are predictably similar to those of Fletcher. For anyone who hasn't read previous Rankine novels this is probably a pleasant read, but I found it sadly derivative. Pity, it could have been a good story with only just a little more originality.

THE EXILE IN WAITING by Vonda N. McIntyre. (PAN S-F. Paperback) This is a clever one, and depicts finely a most unusual city - CENTER, a wholly underground world - and has a telepathic girl 'heroine' who reminded me slightly of Telzey Amberdon; only slightly for Mischa has a personality all her own. Her story, and that of Center, make for one of the most entertainingly different s-f novels I've read in quite a while. THE ANYTHING TREE By John Rackham. (Dobson S-F. Hardcover.) Is a light but entertaining tale of a world where vegetation has achieved an awareness of its surroundings and evolved into powerful and interesting forms.... the most interesting and powerful of which is THE ANYTHING TREE. Here too, we have, in the person of Selena Ash 'undercovered' agent, we have a female person as the main protagonist. She's an interesting character, too, if more stereotyped than Mischa, and her adventures herein make good reading. I'm beginning to wonder tho', is s-f being slanted more towards the female than the male ? COSMIC KALEIDOSCOPE By Bob Shaw. (PAN S-F. Paperback.) Is a fine selection of Bob's short stories including two which (I think) are seeing their first publication, "Skirmish on a Summer Morning" and "The Giacoma Caper". I've never read a dull story by Bob and this is a nice showcase of his varied styles of writing. I wonder, when will some inspired publisher discover, and publish, Bob's convention speeches...most fans have them in one fnz or another, but they deserve wider publication. ANDROMEDA 1. & 2 (Dobson S-F. Hardcover.) are two excellent collections of original science-fiction well-blended as an entertaining whole by PETER WESTON. They're real ( and not dull) s-f, too, and I applaud Peter's choice and his publishers decision to only publish ANDROMEDA when sufficient good stuff is to hand.

DOWN BILBO . . . . .  
HEEL FRDO . . . . .

I was musing the other night about the LORD OF THE RINGS; no, not about what a fine creation it was, what a hell-of-a-good-story it is...no, oh no, my musings are always much more perverted than that.

I was thinking what a darn good s-f story it could have been if things were changed around and a different viewpoint adopted. Not that I would want to change the original, you understand, but....consider if, instead of the story being written from the viewpoint of the Hobbit's, what would develop if it had been told from Mordor's Eye. Here we have an emergent technological society (admittedly this seemed like magic to the Hobbit's....admittedly it was using slave-labour, but that's been known...) fighting against the powers of witchcraft and tradition. Also, admittedly, it was fouling its nest (what emergent technological society doesn't!) and creating all sorts of foulness where previously there had been pastures-green and rural 'grandeur', and all was pleasantly pastoral. But, in most other s-f/fantasy stories it goes almost without saying that the technological view is the right one; those who promulgate it are the goodies, those against it, the baddies (except in Simak stories, of course).

Since we never really get to meet Sauron in TLOTR we don't really know what his ultimate intentions were, it's quite possible he's as evil as his orc's, but he could have been a technological messiah with bright dreams of making the world a better place for ~~xxx~~ everyone to live in; after he'd destroyed the myth and magic that had the populace in thrall. Like other technological messiah's, maybe his minions were a little heavy-handed (somewhat brusque, even) in their interpretation of his intent. I seem to recall other fictional TM's who have suffered a bad press because of over-zealous underlings...real one's, too. Hitler made the same mistake, too much emphasis on 'make warm not love'...Musso' did it, too, he got the trains running on time but forgot to install muzack!

Perhaps, if anyone get's round to telling the story from the reverse of the coin they'll correct these minor importunities and give the man (or alien) a better image. I reckon if Sauron had help from off-world (as he would in any decent s-f story) he could have done a lot better, and no doubt if someone picks up on my musings, he will.

Mind you, I'm not sure I could bring myself to read the story even if old Sauron turns out to be a fully paid-up member of the Philosophical Corps...and has the excuse of having to force technology on the world so it can build PTL ships to escape an imminent nova. It would destroy too many cherished images in my mind.

Maybe I shouldn't muse so much....

[illegible]

OKAY... 'HUGHES GUYS.....IT'S TERRY HUGHES FOR TAFF!!!

((( )))

I'd LIKE TO THANK Terry Jeeves for duplicating this issue...Bill Rotsler and Jim Cawthorn for illo's....and M/S. Dobson Books Ltd, and PAN BOOKS Ltd, for sending along Review Copies of some of the titles herein reviewed.

I didn't plan-it that this issue would be mainly about PLANET (STORIES) but, nevertheless, I'd like to thank wife-Beryl for not dusting my den so that hoary old s-f magazines such as this can still give me pleasure...

Letters-of-comment, material about s-f, and artwork about s-f, are invited to inspire the next issue.

Eric Bentcliffe.