

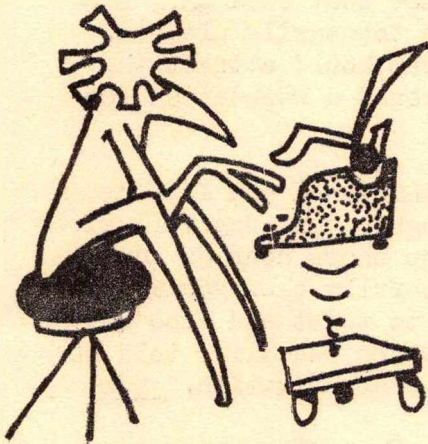
"Pssst, buddy.....



Look here.....

This is the third issue of:-

THE ZINE THAT HAS NO NAME



*Atom Paul Skelton*

Produced by Skel and Cas at:-

25 Bowland Close, Offerton,  
Stockport, Cheshire, SK2 5NW.

This issue is dated:-

14th November 1982.

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Confessions of a Stock-Market  
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You Wyndham up and you let 'em go

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\*Warning\* --- token sci-fi writer

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Faned reveals neoish tendencies

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Langford's parents finally meet,  
thus setting into motion a momen-  
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The gospel according to St. Ted

ARTWORK ATom 1.22.24.25.26.27.28  
Eric Mayer 3.4.5

## SMALL FRIENDLY BIT -- PART ONE

The more observant of you may have noticed something subtly different about this issue of SFD. No? Go on, look again Mike, we'll wait. Yes, that's right, it isn't SFD! Whether or not this is enough of a change from my last issue to satisfy people from Mitcham... well, we'll just have to wait and see. Also, if any hirsute Canadian chappies complain about a lack of me in this issue and mutter darkly about me being my own best contributor, I can only ask them to go back and re-read the names on the cover/contents page. Which about brings us up against the 'WHY?'.

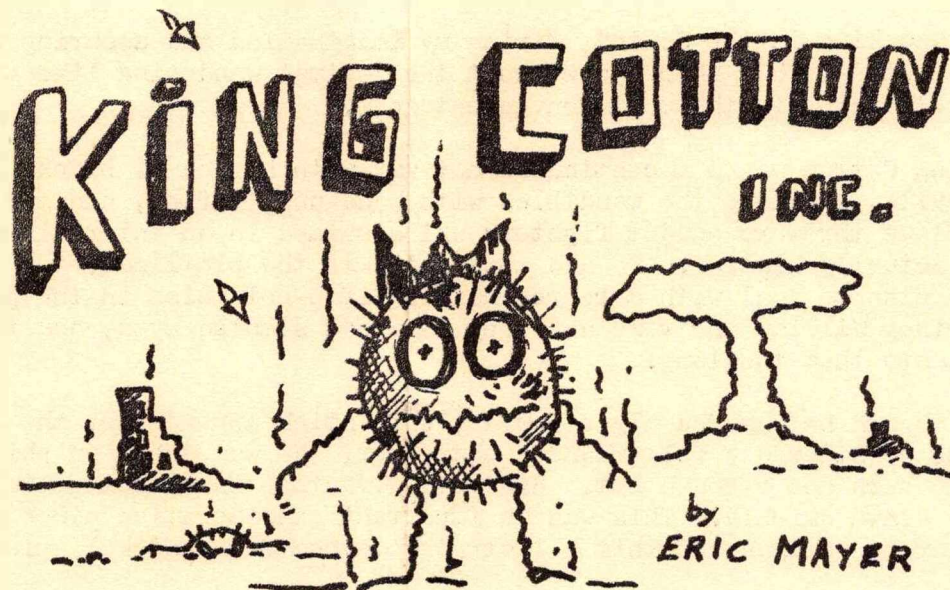
I don't really know...is the simple answer, though of course it's no answer at all. I guess I felt like a change. At least, that's part of it. SMALL FRIENDLY DOG is not dead, it will continue. TZTHNN 3 is but a temporary aberration. From nowhere, absolutely from out of the blue (all the better sub-consciouses are blue, dontchaknow?) came this idea for a specific issue of TZTHNN and a 'need' to publish it. A thematic issue. No, I'm not going to tell you the theme, you're supposed to work it out for yourself. Read carefully, there might be a test later.

You have to go back some years to trace the origins of other threads that are warped into this issue. Back in fact to July 1971 when Brian Robinson and I published our first fanzine, HELL. Unfortunately we were both too new to fandom to be aware of what had been done before, nor were we sufficiently involved in the then current scene to have access to the best fanwriters. We did however have one ingredient sadly lacking in much of UK fandom at that time - enthusiasm. HELL soon developed into being a reasonably well produced, adequately (if unimaginatively) laid out, regular vehicle for not very much. We hoped that the 'quality control' angle would be taken care of by the fact that we'd only publish material we both liked, but apparently we were both too easily pleased. It was our hope that the existence of a quarterly platform would attract the better fanwriters of the day. A naive hope. HELL developed a reputation for good packaging but poor content.

Perhaps in subconscious agreement my interest in HELL waned and I/we began INFERNO/SFD in the second half of 1973.... "But," I thought, "one day I'll give the buggers 'content'." This is it. The packaging is no where near as adventurous as the later HELLS but the content, man, will hopefully blow you away. This time I know some people. I know which arms I want to twist and also how to twist 'em. I also learnt some things. I was amazed when Ted White told me that I was the first English fan to ask him for a fanzine contribution, ever.

I suppose I shouldn't have been too amazed though. Even after more than ten years editing fanzines I am still reluctant to approach fans who write professionally, figuring that they have better things to do than waste their time writing for me. Had Cas not heard DJ Terry Wogan reading out letters from Bob Shaw I would never have realised that he was absolutely desperate for someone to write to/for. Is it any wonder therefore that there aren't more ace fanzines around when so many editors are wary of approaching the better fanwriters and whilst the fanwriters themselves sit around, unwanted, listening to Radio 2 or insulting Buck Coulson?





In 1961 the shadow of the bomb fell across the suburban lawns of Dallas Pennsylvannia. My father was convinced that nuclear war was inevitable. "Not if, but when," he stated at the dinner table one evening, placing the situation squarely before us like a plate full of liver.

Time Magazine had run fancy diagrams illustrating the mysterious missile gap which was leading us inevitably to disaster. I pored over them and concluded that the Russians had much taller missiles than we did. By "we" I mean, of course, the United States and not my family personally, though we all felt a proprietary interest towards ICBMs in those days.

My father outlined our civil defense strategy in the grave tones he usually reserved for discussing the propensity of the school board to buy football uniforms rather than kilns for his art classes. As soon as NORAD had spotted the missiles coming over the Pole and the Borough Hall siren had gone off, we would crawl into the windowless coal bin in my grandparents' basement, along with the dahlia bulbs, and shoot the neighbours. I don't know what my grandparents thought about this plan. I suppose my grandfather would have been happy enough to put some buckshot in the bank president who lived next door.

I spent my final hours drawing comics during arithmetic period. What was the point of learning long division when in another ten years we would be beating mutants off with sticks? Besides, the money I made selling the comics during recess kept me in wax lips and jawbreakers which would not be available after the holocaust until the survivors had managed to get civilization back on its feet.

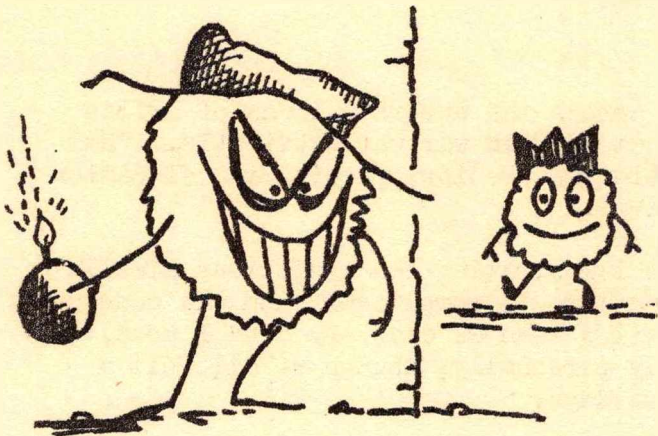
My comics centred around the exploits of King Cotton, a bipedal cotton boll. During history class one day my fifth grade teacher, Mrs Hughes, noted that

"Cotton was king in the South", firing my imagination and assuring that to this day I cannot put .809 into .56 without the decimal wandering like a lost drunk before collapsing in the most convenient spot.

King Cotton waged a continuous hot war with hordes of black, prong-nosed boll weevils, armed to the mandibles with handguns, rifles, handgrenades, bazookas, flame throwers and jet fighters which maimed in an entertaining manner without actually killing. To add more spice to the plotlines, the beleaguered king had also to deal with a reprehensible fifth-columnist in the person of his evil brother William who wore a floppy hat, had slanted eyes, and threw bombs... or held onto them too long.

Although he was roughly circular, with stick appendages, the king could hardly be considered a well-rounded character. He was short on philosophy. He tended to burn and bleed a lot. His main advantage as a protagonist was that he could be drawn quickly. This was an important consideration since my classmates were eager to purchase of this illustrated mayhem for a nickel apiece.

Being reticent about hawking my own productions I enlisted my friend Allen as playground representative and we split the profits. Business boomed but soon we grew jaded and progressed from wax lips to licorice whips and similar luxuries. "We need diversification," suggested Allen, whose father was a businessman and only home weekends.



So I began a series based on a talking dog named Morgan and followed this steady seller with Elmo the talking fish. I invented color comics. That was the beginning of the end. Immediately we encountered cash-flow problems. By this time King Cotton had blasted off for outer space in search of new story lines and his

gleaming spacesuits, rayguns and rocketships required inordinate use of gold copper and silver colored crayons which came only one each to a jumbo-size box.

By the end of the winter our financial position was grim. One evening we were at Allen's playing Summit. I was piling up military bases in Guatemala as usual but Allen seemed not to be concentrating. When, after our third negotiating turn, he conceded me India for Peru without my playing a single power chip, I realised his mind wasn't on the world situation.

"I've been thinking about business," he admitted, "and I've come up with a solution." During the next five minutes he gave me a detailed explanation of the stock market which he knew all about since his father owned two shares in AT&T. "So you see," he concluded, "all we have to do is incorporate and sell shares."

The shares would cost 25¢ and the dividends would be only 5¢ a week. I



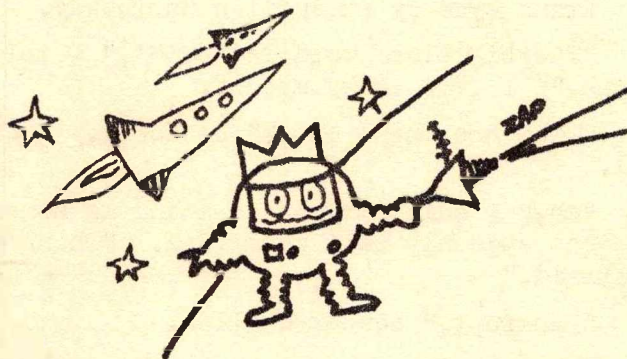
couldn't place decimals but I could figure out that such a scheme would, in essence, give us five weeks of free licorice whips and copper crayons. In those days five weeks seemed an eternity and there was, as well, the unspoken assumption that the Russians just might have something to say about whether we would still be paying out dividends in that distant epoch.

"Besides," Allen said, nodding his red-haired head sagely, "we'll just keep on selling more shares."

King Cotton, Inc. was formed on the spot, over the smoking ruins of Brazil. Next day shares sold on the playground like Florida swampland at a Rochester retirement village. The scheme would've worked too...if Allen hadn't sold four shares to Frank.

Frank, if I remember correctly, was about 6'8" and had been in the fifth grade since before Mrs Hughes was born. It wasn't that he was mean, exactly. He was sort of Big Bird with a short fuse. It was poor marketing strategy selling shares to him since he was already our prime market for captionless comics and whatever other quickie productions I could dash off on quiz days. But he always had plenty of spare change and Allen couldn't resist making him our biggest shareholder. He seemed inordinately pleased when he collected his first dividend.

The next weeks were filled with sugar dots on paper and colored water in tiny wax bottles, but all the while King Cotton, Inc. was ticking away like one of those defective time bombs brother William was forever skulking about with. On the playground, on the hill behind the witch's hat, snowdrops pushed up through the March drifts. The sun rose higher each day over the distant Canadian tundra where the great dish antennae stood sentinel, but the polar skies remained empty and we were left to face our doom. On the sixth week Frank approached us as we futilely tried to flog shares at the swings, where we could catch our classmates sitting. "Dividend," he demanded. It was the first two-syllable word I'd heard him utter. I put him off with a free comic. I figured he would soon forget the whole thing. I hadn't reckoned with the awful dogedness the very dull display when it comes to money. The first free comic lead to a second. "Words," Frank told us, his voice crashing down out of the sky.



"But you can't read," I pointed out reasonably.

"My five cents," Frank countered. "Words."

Recess became a time of dread. "We can't clean blackboards forever," Allen pointed out one April morning when the sun slanting through the tall schoolroom windows hinted at a beautiful spring day outside.

"No," I agreed, "Someday we'll graduate from high school and Frank will kill us." I had always thought it would be romantic to survive a nuclear war. It would be like living in an SF novel. But if the mutants turned out to be like Frank, I wasn't so sure.

Long after the last echoes of the bell had faded from the empty hallways we slunk out through the backdoor and made our way to Allen's by a circuitous route that took us across the Memorial Highway and along Bowman's Creek. Although it was arguably above freezing and only a scum of ice hung to the creek banks, we couldn't work up enough enthusiasm to shed our coats. Even when we got down to Summit and the world tottered on the brink, our thoughts were of King Cotton, Inc. and our own private little Armageddon. This time it was my turn to have a brainstorm. When it came I knocked over all my popular support chips in Malaysia. "Crayons," I cried. "Crayons."

The following morning we ventured onto the playground for the first time in weeks. Frank launched himself from the very top of the monkey bars and loped hungrily towards us. I clutched the comic I had prepared and stood my ground. "Here are your words," I said, holding the single sheet out to him in a trembling hand.

Frank eyed my production dubiously.

"The big black word is 'BOOM'," I told him, "and these shaky red ones say 'aarghh.'" I felt shaky myself.

"What are these ones?" he asked, jabbing a big finger at the penultimate panel.

"Oh," I said, trying to sound as nonchalant as I could, speaking through lips that suddenly felt mummified. "Those say 'The End'. We're out of business I'm afraid."

"Bankrupt," squeaked Allen.

"The weevils got the bomb. It must have been William, the snake."

Frank stared in silence at the page, a hideous landscape of charred cotton bolls, mushroom clouds and gloating weevils - hieronymous Bosche at Sesame Street. "More," he said hopelessly, not sounding 6'8".

"There's no hope," I said. "The King was too close to ground zero. He has radiation poisoning." I paused for dramatic effect. "It's best to remember him as 'he was.'"

Radiation poisoning. You couldn't argue with that. Frank turned white. Then he just turned and trudged away toward the merry-go-round. We saw him later pushing it round and round, his long legs pumping, forcing the creaking wooden vehicle to an acceleration it had never approached before. A few fourth graders stood at a safe distance, watching in awe. Dust gouted up from under Frank's big sneakers and was whipped away in the slipstream beside the whirling edges of the merry-go-round. Then, with a convulsive effort, he yanked his lanky frame up onto the whirlygig and disappeared in a blur, like the tigers who were after Little Black Sambo. And that was that.

It is difficult to separate Wyndham from the rest of the 'science fiction' writers of his time on the basis of theme. Wyndham's themes are, without a doubt, those of much science fiction. He deals with post-holocaust societies (The Chrysalids); walking plants (The Day Of The Triffids); space travel (The Outward Urge); Invasions from outer space (The Kraken Wakes); extended life spans (The Trouble With Lichen); and mental powers (The Midwich Cuckoos). This being so, what is it that so distances his works from others who dabbled in those themes? I feel that the answer must lie in allegory. In my article on 'The Day Of The Triffids' (MDR 4) I established Wyndham's fondness for allegory. He takes the techniques of Jonathan Swift and Eric Blair and points out the evils he sees in our society.

Thus 'The Day Of The Triffids', a novel which ostensibly looks at the effects of an exotic plant on the people of England, is actually a clever allegorical examination of the effects of marijuana on the English. The similarities are obvious. The plant grows like a weed, much as marijuana plants have been found in the avoaroos of unsuspecting bird fanciers; it can be used in its raw form, but is far more valuable when the oil is extracted from it; it packs a potent sting; and ninety percent of the populace are blind to its evils. The fact that Wyndham's protagonist, Bill Mason, is so vehemently opposed to the evil weeds, makes Wyndham's position on the matter perfectly clear.

His conservatism is also evident in the short story 'Consider Her Ways', which examines a society in which all the men have died through the release of genetically mutated diseases originally designed to kill rats. The society functions well and happily, and yet the woman of our time who visits it by means of a drug experiment is shocked to find that there is no love as she knows it.



and so, on returning to her own time, she takes steps to ensure that such a society will never come to be. The fact that the shock ending to the story derives from her apparent failure to carry out her mission shows Wyndham's belief in the status quo, and his fear of women, and what he sees as "unnatural" sexual practices.

It is, I feel, unnecessary to give a complete listing of Wyndham's conservatism. The 'cop-out' ending to 'The Trouble With Lichen', in which Diana Brackley abandons her feminist movement, and a promising homosexual relationship with Zephania Saxover, in order to marry Francis Saxover, gives ample proof of his views on feminism. The short story 'Chinese Puzzle', in which an argument concerning the political status of dragons is allowed to devolve into a twee "love is more relevant than politics" ending shows Wyndham's contempt for the struggles of the working class. 'The Outward Urge', in which Australia, the depository of England's heritage and bastion of free enterprise, reclaims the colonial expanses of outer space from the upstart Brazilians, can be seen both as bombastic jingoism and as a strangely prophetic, if slightly inaccurate, glance at the Falklands Crisis.

Perhaps though the most open of Wyndham's political statements is his novel 'The Midwich Cuckoos', which was later filmed as 'The Village Of The Damned'. Here Wyndham takes an overview of the generation gap in terms that clearly demonstrate which side of the fence he is on.

That Wyndham sees the youth of his time as strange alien creatures is shown in the origin of the Children. Midwich, a quiet village in England, embodying the old ideals of rural Albion, has a "Dayout". The villagers become unconscious and, when they awaken, it is discovered that all the women in the village who are of child-bearing age are pregnant. (That Wyndham does not describe the process is more a mark of the more stringent censorship laws of the time than it is of his conservatism.) In having the Children come onto the scene in this fashion, Wyndham insinuates that age-old parental admonishment "If I hadn't been present at your birth, I'd swear you were a foundling left with us by the gypsies...."

Even from birth, the Children are as strange as their genesis. They have mental powers that their parents can't understand. Their physical appearance is at the same time attractive yet unnerving. (The fear and yet attraction of incest are clearly represented here.) In these two aspects, we see the fears that parents in the Fifties had as they watched their children grow up. No longer could Dad help with junior's homework. The children's minds were developing in a way that their parents could not follow. The uniform appearance of the Children represents something that adults have always seen in the younger generation, whether it be in the leathers and motorcycles of British youth of the late Fifties, or the long hair and love beads of the hippies.

The golden eyes of the Children can be seen as outward manifestations of the starry eyes of youth. That youthful enthusiasm and idealism can infect adults is something that has long been accepted and Wyndham shows us this in the way that the Children take control of some of the adults in the village. Their treatment of the Chief Constable is symbolic of the way that youth movements



render the police impotent. Indeed, it is only Wyndham's hero Zellaby who is fully aware of the dangers posed by the Children, and the fact that Wyndham intends us to empathise with him shows his conservative outlook.

Wyndham is most thorough in his examination of the youth phenomenon. In the way that the Children can force their parents to feed them, and in the way they can work their will upon adults, forcing the adults to take the Children to specific places, we see, from a Wyndham's-eye view, the so-called youth-market - those baubles, foodstuffs and entertainments that children insist that their parents buy for them.

The Children's "mental barrier" that can keep adults away, is simply Wyndham's representation of the Force Ten Stereo and dank sock miasma that teenagers use to keep parents from their bedrooms.

That the Children have total mental communication, to the point that all the boys share one mind while the girls share another is another example of how the old exaggerate the way that youth follows trends. That this uniformity manifests itself in violence is further evidence of the mistrust the people of Wyndham's generation had for the young. His generation believed that uniform behaviour was irrevocably linked to warfare. Conditioned as they had been by two world wars, this attitude is not surprising. However, projecting this expectation onto youth acted as a self-fulfilling prophecy. The media religiously reported isolated examples of youth violence, thus making the youth of the time conscious of their internal differences, eventually resulting in the pitched battles between the Mods and the Rockers, which allowed the old Colonels to say, in their best B.B.C. accents, "I told you so."

True, not everything that Wyndham says about youth in 'The Midwich Cuckoos' is false. He does pick out one of the basic characteristics of youth when he looks at the way the Children attempt to defend themselves from the older generation. Youth does tend to over-react to threat, largely due to its inability to gauge the necessary retaliatory force - a mark of inexperience. This is seen in 'The Midwich Cuckoos' when the mother, who accidentally pricks the baby while dressing it, is forced to repeatedly jab herself with the same pin. Thus, Wyndham can show us that the adult violence towards the Children tends to be accidental, but the Children's reaction is malicious, cruel, and unnecessary.

Wyndham's sexism comes once more to the fore in 'The Midwich Cuckoos'. For a start, the book resurrects the traditional male fear that the child his wife is bearing is not his own. The title of the book brings to mind images of cuckoldry, as, in effect, the entire male population of Midwich is made to don horns by the events of the Dayout. Note Zellaby's exaggerated sense of relief when he discovers that his wife's is not one of the Dayout babies.

As a matter of fact, the role to which Wyndham assigns the women of Midwich, that of breeding vats, is another example of his archaic attitudes. One can also note the way that the women's role fades away once the Children have been weaned. One exception to this is Miss Lamb, who throws in her lot with the Children, demonstrating another traditional male fear, that the children will alienate the affections of the mother from the father.

Wyndham shows himself also to be an advocate of the theory that women and men think in a qualitatively different manner as, when the Children are shown to be mentally linked, we are shown that the girls form one mind and the boys another. Thus the boys and girls must speak to each other in the same inefficient fashion that we do. Their telepathic linkage is reduced to the equivalent of the male and female secret societies that some would say already exist in our culture. Seen as an endless Tupperware Party, or a perpetual drinking school, the Children lose much of their mystique and become the symbols that Wyndham obviously intended them to be.

Wyndham's portrayal of the quantitative differences between the collective boy-mind and the collective girl-mind is mere icing on the cake. He takes it for granted that the "boy" will learn to read before the "girl" and that it will be the "boy" who conducts most of the negotiations with the "adult" world.

Wyndham though cannot resist one last chance to prove the superiority of men in important matters, so he drags in the "women as a universal force of nature" theory that has so often been used to justify and excuse the fobbing off of women and their relegation to the kitchen and the nursery, i.e. "All this male talk is silly really. You women are the ones who are really important because you can have babies. Now don't be silly, let us men talk about our little concerns in peace." Zellaby dredges up 'women's intuition' while attempting to justify his wife's inability to accept the obvious danger of the Children.

All in all, Wyndham's sexual attitudes are clearly as reactionary as those of any member of his generation.

But not content with rubbishing youth and women, Wyndham has to throw in a 'reds under the bed' scare. What the Children have in their mental unity is the ideal form of communism - so ideal in fact that even the U.S.S.R. is obliged to wipe its village of Children off the map with an "atomic cannon", allowing Wyndham to get two shots for the price of one: One at the dangers of the Children's group mind, and the other at the hypocrisy of a nominally communist government which so blatantly rejects true communism. That the young are more susceptible to a belief in the equality of people - in particular in the equality of youth, and a fear of the way that this equality is subjugated to the demands of the adult world - is yet another stereotype that Wyndham waves under the reader's nose in 'The Midwich Cuckoos'. His method of dealing with the problem is typical of the essentially right-wing thinking of his time. A strong and charismatic figure, willing to accept self-sacrifice in order to maintain the purity of the race, is needed and Zellaby fits the bill to a 'T'. He charms the Children into trusting him and then destroys them at the cost of his own life.

Given these blatant prejudices, it worries me that Wyndham's works are an integral part of the South Australian English syllabus. I do not feel that such works should be allowed to pass on their messages of sexism and out-moded political philosophies to those who possess the one characteristic of youth that Wyndham does not portray in his examination of the Children - innocence. I feel it is time to throw Wyndham onto that same discard pile that has become a home for Kipling, W.E. Johns, and Enid Blyton. We can't afford to allow children access to such mind sapping material for a lesson longer



## SALMAGUNDI

- 1 : "Worm casts, which sell for at least five dollars per kilo..."  
John Alderson in THE MENTOR 34 (October 1981).
- 2 : "You see, I don't expect anyone else to make me the star of their movie - but I insist on being the star of my movie..."  
Avedon Carol in THE DIAGONAL RELATIONSHIP 19 (October 1981).
- 3 : "When I asked for a perfectly straightforward, normal Lovecraftian limerick the response was, 'Oh, my ghod, what rhymes with Nyarlathotep?'"  
Lorna Toolis in NEOLOGY, Volume 6 number 6 (February 1982).
- 4 : A certain South American junta  
thought it'd really be funta  
take over the 'Malvinas'  
but became far less keen as  
they discovered they'd nowhere to runta.
- 5 : "Before a single dead loved one, the concepts of civilization defended and honor reaffirmed dissolve into fume and blow away, like cannon smoke. Even with no one of my own to mourn, I knew that much; the knowledge had grown in me."  
Michael Bishop in 'Beneath The Shattered Moons'.
- 6 : "Two days passed in the disrupted peace as the circle grew, every foot of it adding a whole yard of security."  
J. Hunter Holly in 'Death Dolls of Lyra'.
- 7 : "Too many stories of this type feature cardboard cutouts which exist solely to be eaten by Things. (Which I suppose tells us something about the nutritional requirements of Things.)"  
Darrell Schweitzer in SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW 42 (Spring 1982).
- 8 : "The first person to ask me my astrological sign was a prisoner I was interviewing in the San Francisco City Jail. 'Libra.' 'Me too,' replied the prisoner. 'That means you have a deep, intuitive understanding of people.' That cheered me until I noticed that my new friend with the equally deep intuitive understanding of people had been arrested for selling weed to an undercover agent."  
Arthur D. Hlavaty in THE DIAGONAL RELATIONSHIP 17 (April 1981).
- 9 : "...Skel's violent North of England swearing..."  
Bob Shaw in THE BEST OF THE BUSHEL (originally appeared in HYPHEN 21).
- 10 : We were sat in the lounge of the Royal Angus Hotel during the recent Novacon 12 and Gerald Lawrence revealed that the previous night he'd lost 50p on a bet with Mike Meara that ace punster Brian Smith could come up with ten puns on any subject within 15 minutes. After ten minutes wrestling with the subject Mike supplied, 'Guru's underwear', he gave up without a single pun.

# WHEN FANDOMS COLLIDE



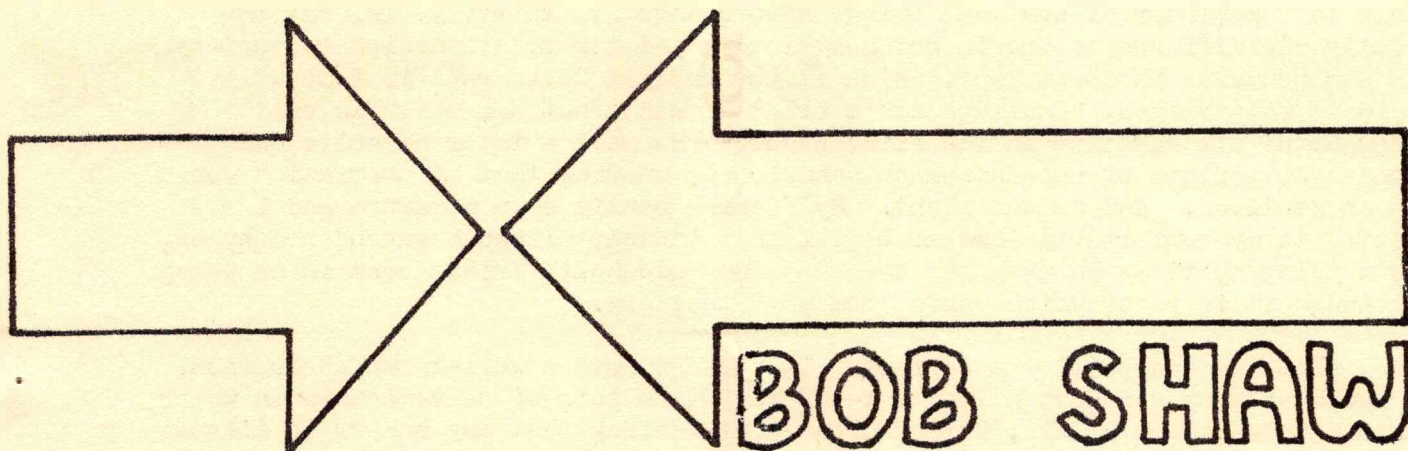
When I entered fandom around the beginning of the 1950s a bottle of Guinness cost 5p; portable radios looked like small suitcases and operated on glass valves; some food was still rationed; the movie-going public believed to a man that Robert Mitchum's eyelids had got that way because he had once smoked some marijuana at a Hollywood party; dirty dishes were washed with soda crystals, detergents being unheard of; gay meant cheerful; cigarettes didn't give you lung cancer and butter didn't give you arteries like pipestems; you could always recognise an engineer by the slide rule sticking out of his breast pocket; a loaf of bread placed at the bottom of a shopping bag could withstand a stone of potatoes on top of it and not get squashed.....

The main reason for the above list being... er... above, is that I enjoy compiling such things, but it does illustrate how the world has changed in the last thirty years or so, and it leads to an important point.

Fandom has changed as much, or even more.

What, you might say, is so important about that? Well, I'll tell you -- otherwise it would have been a waste of time to bring the matter up in the first place.





Fans act, react and interact in a manner appropriate to the fandom of their time.

The fact is worth emphasising because it's at the heart of some current widespread dissension, also because it's one which cannot be appreciated too well without a time base spanning decades. I notice a parallel in my 20-year-old son (I'm enjoying this Wise Old Fan act) who is a country-and-western fanatic. Occasionally he tells me how lucky I was to be a teenager in the 1940s when I could have bought certain records for just a few bob. What I can't get him to appreciate is that I wasn't able to raise a few bob for records, and even if I had it wouldn't have helped because I had no record player and didn't even know anybody who owned one. He has trouble absorbing that message because he simply can't visualise my life in the 1940s.

Returning to fandom, the dissension mentioned centres around fannish tradition, especially in fan writing and fanzine publishing. The argument is familiar to most of us. One side believes that in the old days the fanzines and writers were better; BNFs were more worthy of the title; the customs and prevalent attitudes were pleasanter and more civilised; and that in general fandom

was a more enjoyable place. The other side holds that most of the old fanzine output is over-praised; that the long-established BNFs who haven't totally gaffed tremble in their shoes at the thought of youthful, vigorous and innovative competition; that old-style fandom was a boring mutual admiration society which just had to have a few hornet nests thrown into it.

To know all is to irritate all, so I'm going to admit up front that my grip of fan history isn't good enough to enable me to analyse and explain fully the two positions outlined above -- but I have a personal opinion on how many of the differences arose.

Oddly enough, science fiction has a lot to do with it.

The list of quaint or nostalgic items in the first paragraph of this article is a reminder of how much things have changed in thirty years, but the really big differences are in science fiction and its relationships to society. On one occasion in about 1951, which it embarrasses me to recall, I actually said to Walt Willis, "Fanzines don't print enough about SF, which is what brought us all together in the first place." He gave a tolerant smile and handed me a plate of egg-and-onion sandwiches, knowing that my aberration would be short-lived. And he was right. My fannish sanity soon returned and I reverted to my comfortable insular belief that fandom, although engendered by SF, is a thing apart -- in much the same way that alcoholic drinks contain no yeast although it is yeast which makes them what they are.

That idea is partially correct. It springs from a well-known phenomenon. A bunch of fans can have a long get-together with lots of conversation in which SF isn't mentioned at all, but one leaves it feeling that any hunger to discuss SF has been satisfied. Communication has taken place on a second level, because everything that was said was filtered through minds whose attitudes have been shaped by a liking for and a knowledge of SF. I'm claiming that the SF element is still there, still vital -- so let's compare what the term "SF element" meant at the beginning of the 1950s with what it means today.

Destination Moon appeared on movie screens in 1950 to initiate the SF film boom of the ensuing decade and to give us a tantalising hint of the comparative respectability that SF would one day achieve, but for the average fan it was very much a false dawn. I remember sitting in the Classic cinema in Belfast, with four pints of XX Guinness in my stomach, as the credits for Destination Moon appeared. When Robert Heinlein's name came up I glanced around in the darkness, smug as hell because it was almost certain that not one other person in the cinema had any inkling of what it stood for. In the case of Chesley Bonestell it was definite -- nobody else in that large, crowded picture house could feel the magic of the name, could appreciate the sheer wonder of that unique set of letters being miraculously transposed from the pages of ASTOUNDING to an ordinary movie screen on which for years crowds of mundanes had been content to gawp at the likes of Nelson Eddy and Joan Crawford.

I was one of the star-begotten, you see. A slant. One of the secret elite who had to keep their superiority hidden lest they be overwhelmed by outraged, uncomprehending masses. I was a fan -- one of the five known to exist in the whole of Ireland, one of the few tens known to exist in the whole of the UK.



Does the above paragraph seem overwritten? Exaggerated for literary effect?

Not to an old-time fan, it doesn't. We had grown up in an era in which professing a liking for science fiction brought automatic derision, even hostility, from all around. We had had magazines torn up by parents because some had Bergey covers which were sure to inflame unhealthy yearnings. We had gone through World War 2 on one BRE ASTOUNDING (64pp) every second month -- an exquisite form of drip torture which in some ways was worse than having no SF at all. We were universally scorned because we believed that men would one day fly to the moon, that radios would one day be small enough to be worn on the wrist, that computers would one day be able to play chess.

I, personally, had been forced by a physics teacher to stand up in front of the class and explain just how I thought a rocket could get to the moon, and the class had gone into hysterics while the teacher had sarcastically and "scientifically" demolished every one of my half-articulated notions. I had been victimised by school bullies for having been seen carrying SF magazines. In the first place I worked there was an illiterate, innumerate moron called Bertie, employed as a charity to a friend of a director, who was the butt of a lot of unfeeling humour. Bertie resented that a lot, but there was one bright spot in his life, he was able to poke fun at me because my liking for SF demonstrated that my mental deficiencies were greater than his!

Are you getting the general picture? I know I'm going on and on about this, but it's important to an understanding of what fandom was like in those days and what it meant to people. If, after a few years of the treatment described above, a lone prot-fan was lucky enough to meet others of like persuasion it was a near-religious experience. Actually to meet somebody who knew who John W Campbell was! Who had a collection of pulps and was prepared to lend you the ones you had missed! Who had read all the stories you had and was prepared to spend hours discussing them! Who was willing to put hard-earned money into buying a duplicator and learn how to use it and publish a magazine of sorts!

An encounter like that gave rise to powerful emotions -- joy, relief, security and... let's make no bones about it... love. When you met somebody who had been through what you had been through, somebody who was committed to standing by you and wearing the label "SF FAN", you felt a surge of brotherly affection of an intensity which fully justifies the use of the word love. When I entered Irish Fandom as it was in those days I looked on all its members with love. When I began to venture into England and meet other fans -- Vince Clarke, Ken Bulmer, Chuck Harris, Ted Tubb, Ken Slater, Eric Bentcliffe, Alan Hunter, Terry Jeeves, Bob Foster, Sid Birchby, Ron Bennett, etc -- my feelings were the same, and they persist to this day although time and the inevitable ablation of ideals have taken their effect.

This brings us to the comments about old-time fandom being a mutual admiration society, far too cosy and stiflingly polite. I can see why new-generation fans react that way, but old habits die hard. When it has taken you years to find your soul mates, and there are no other likely prospects in the whole wide world, you tend to cherish and nurture the relationship, and to work at keeping it going. Oscar Wilde, trying to be clever, said each man kills the thing he

loves. What crap! Most of us have too much sense for that. It is a sad fact that at some time everybody has to forgive each of his friends for causing him pain, but there is an overriding gladness in the realisation that friendship is worth it.

Bearing all the above in mind, one can see why there was little in the way of feuding and needling -- jokey or otherwise -- in the old fanzines. When a new fan editor showed up on the scene and began publishing he was something to be treasured. He was one of us, one of the beleaguered few, and he had to do something really drastic before we would consider pushing him out through the airlock of Spaceship Fandom. Defects like having no eye for page layout, being unable to spell properly, having a poor literary style, or even being a fugghead were regarded with tolerance and often with indulgent affection as indicators of a quirky fannish personality. We made the mumpsimus an art form.

Fanac was less wearing in those days. For the new fan publisher, it was enough to have wrought the miracle of bringing a fanzine into existence in a universe where such things had been unknown since the beginning of time. Fan writers, with no tradition to uphold, wrote unselfconsciously in any vein on any subject in fanzines like Vince Clarke's SCIENCE FANTASY NEWS, Walt Willis's SLANT and HYPHEN, and Ken Bulmer's NIRVANA. The emphasis was on SF-related topics, but there was room for general commentary and whimsy.

A very common, very popular type of article was one in which a fan gave a blow-by-blow account of a skirmish with the inhabitants and/or machinery of the mundane world. Sometimes the fan would triumph by virtue of his null-A thinking but more often than not he would go down with a humorous bleat of despair beneath the Juggernaut of the Ordinary. Either way we were in there rooting for him, laughing at all his in-jokes, cringing at the unimaginative crassness of his enemies, bonded by the warm realisation that we were brothers, the only few people in the cosmos who could understand terms like BEM, gafiate, egoboo and annish.

--O-O-O--

The years, as is their habit, went by. So did the decades. The galactic wheel turned through a tiny fraction of a degree, a fraction so small that no astronomer could have detected it, but events on Earth were moving faster....

Science fiction experienced a series of booms, building on the near-respectability which began with the advent of the sputniks. The number of readers and actifans increased. Major and minor SF films were produced, and SF series appeared on radio and television. Kingsley Amis gave the field the Good Intellectual's Seal of Approval and brought it to the attention of academics. The number of readers and actifans increased faster. Flying saucers decanted a new mythology. Universities -- yes, universities!, dear Jophan -- began to have SF clubs. Conventions proliferated, bringing in new kinds of fans. Neil Armstrong made his giant leap for fandom. Science fiction became so trendy that public figures, who probably didn't know Orson from H.G., claimed to be devotees of sci-fi. SF publishing trebled, then tribbled. The man in the street learned to declaim the names of the BACH Quartet -- Bradbury, Asimov, Clarke, Heinlein. The number of readers and actifans increased faster and faster. CE3K was chosen for the Royal Film Premier; half the commercials on TV became micro SF movies.



The word fanzine was accepted in larger dictionaries...

The old UK fandom didn't pass away, but discerning it became a somewhat tricky job. These were new times with new attitudes and new ways of doing things.

And three important changes had occurred: (i) SF was now plentiful, not only easy to obtain but almost unavoidable; (ii) SF was now acceptable in the eyes of society; (iii) fandom was large, easy to find, easy to get into.

(Everything I have written thus far refers to UK fandom, but in the old days we were aware of US fandom. To us it was a strange, exotic place because, from the start, there had been quite large numbers of fans -- probably due to the fact America was a younger and more informal and flexible society. In America fan groups were so large that if a disagreement arose the chief contenders could split off and take their supporters with them, and the result was two viable clubs in place of one. Members of a typical four-strong UK group would have felt themselves to be right berks for splitting into two pairs gazing glumly over lonely pints.)

Harking back to my opening statements, the changes in the times produced inevitable changes in fandom and its inhabitants.

There is nothing wrong with this -- it's part of a natural process. Nowadays if I'm meeting a new fan I will probably like him, I will possibly get to like him a lot, but I'm not predisposed to love him -- and that's because I know he didn't go through what I went through to get into fandom, didn't pay the same dues. To my eyes he has come into fandom as easily and casually as someone popping into Boots to buy a toothbrush, which is his right, and he is liable to leave at any time in the same fashion, which is also his right. Therefore, whether I like it or not, my relationship with him is not going to be the same as if we had met thirty years earlier. But that's fair enough. Something has been lost, something has been gained.

I have changed, and intend to go on changing, so I was saddened recently by a remark made by a prominent senior fan. We were discussing one of the most likeable, intelligent, humorous, talented and energetic fans to appear in the last five years or so. (I'm not going to quote his name -- feel free to treat the description like one of those life-sized fairground paintings of a human figure and smile coyly through the hole where the face ought to be.) I was busy extolling this BNF's virtues when my friend abruptly shook his head and said, "I'm sorry -- he hasn't proved himself to me." And I was saddened. I felt my friend was reinforcing the very barriers that I strive to tear down, that he was not accepting the new ground rules.

The newish BNF had done all that was necessary to earn his laurel wreath but the proving that my older friend demanded of him would have involved building a time machine and going back three decades. Mission impossible. The message is that we have all got to be shock wave riders, skimming along on the crest of the present, letting the past drop cleanly away behind us. Fans are the same kind of people they always were -- they simply react in a manner appropriate to the changes in fandom itself. And understanding that has to be a two-

way thing. New fans should appreciate that there is nothing alien about another fan because he was around before the Brighton world con, or the demise of NEW WORLDS, or the adoption of the A4 sheet, or any other temporal landmark.

A thing I hate to see -- and I've witnessed it many times over the years -- is gaffiation through fixation. It happens simultaneously in every branch of fanac, but perhaps it is most visible in the context of conventions.

Typical case history: A fan becomes a BNF, swimming strongly and joyfully in the river that is the fandom of the day. He/she becomes a key figure at conventions, working purposefully, on the platform a lot, always in the centre of the action, surrounded by friends, having a good time. And then because, as the Chinese sage observed, you can't step twice into the same river, things begin to change. Our BNF ceases to be a key figure at conventions, and tends to react by gathering together as many as possible of the "old gang" and spending a lot of time with them at closed room parties, re-creating and reliving his or her heyday.

That phase may last quite a few years, and in an odd way become more enjoyable than the original golden ere. But eventually there comes a time when there aren't enough members of the old gang about or, even worse, the few that are available have changed in such a way that they are no longer eligible. Next, our BNF can be seen putting in shorter and shorter appearances at conventions, complaining that he/she no longer knows anybody, refusing to accept new faces in place of the old. Finally, our BNF lapses into permanent gaffiation -- and I really hate that. We have lost too many that way.



We've all got to adapt to each other and make room for each other -- the old for the new, and the new for the old.

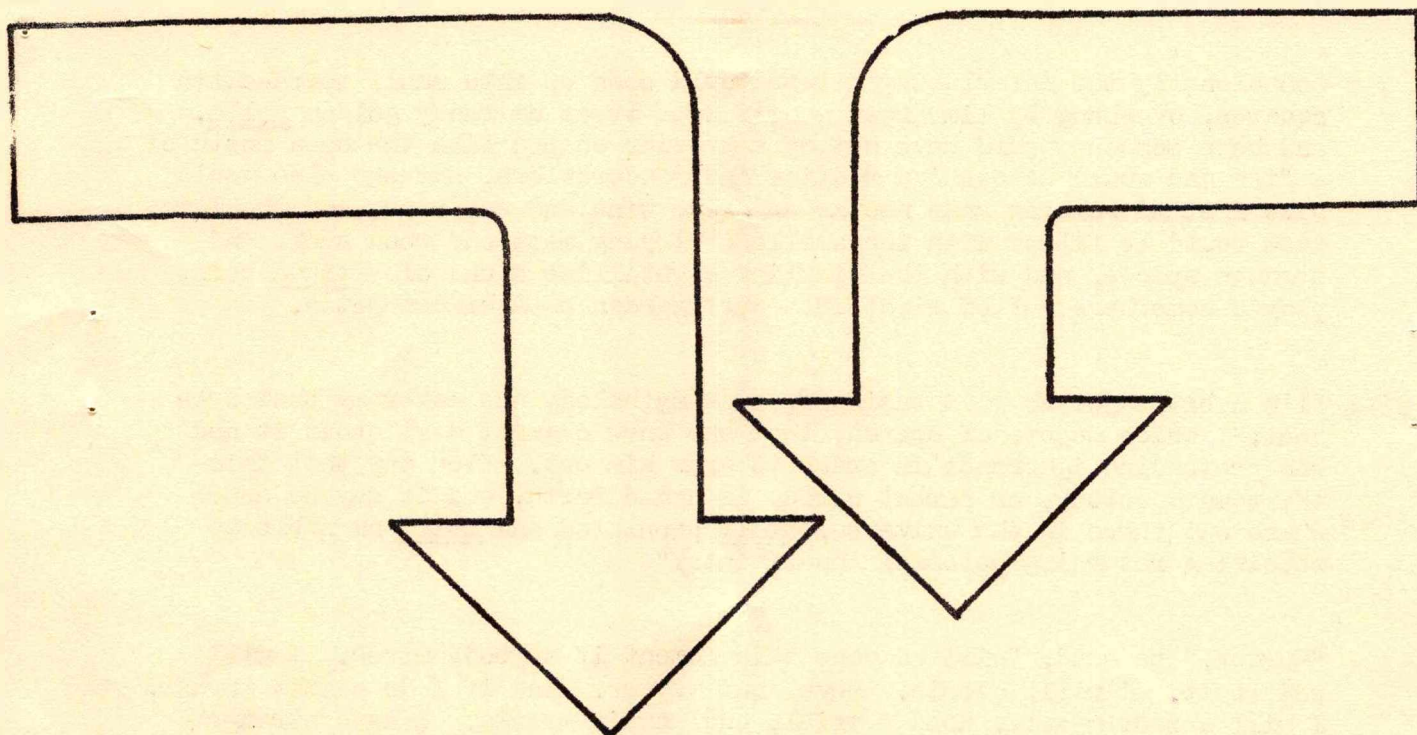
Fandom is big nowadays, easy to find, easy to enter -- but that doesn't mean that it's easier to exist in it. A fanzine is no longer a kind of revered immaculate conception. There is now a long tradition of fanzine publishing, and new faneds are aware of it and some are genuinely nervous about how their first efforts will be received. They are justified in being nervous, because fandom being big means that fans are expendable, and anybody who doesn't like a fanzine may have no compunction about giving its editor a scrotum-enlarging kick. And if the editor is a sensitive type he may drop out of fandom as quickly as he came in and take up hang-gliding or video games. The Glades of Gafia are full of wondrous diversions these days -- which is another factor in the change of attitude.

Writers are in the same position as faneds -- nobody is unduly worried about hurting their feelings. The same applies to convention organisers, artists, society officers, you name it... It's all part of the new game, and in many ways the new game is faster, more dangerous and more exciting than the old one.

Fandom used to be a village.

Now it's a city, with all the attendant advantages and disadvantages.

I reckon it's still a good place to live.



## The Quiz That Has No Name

Yes, yes, I know that only Terry Jeeves and the brashest neos put SF cross-words and quizzes in their fanzines. I don't care. Convention cannot shackle me, I have a Cosmic Mind. Any fan may flaunt his proclivities, before consenting adults, in the privacy of his own fanzine. The fact is that quizzes can be fun, even simple ones -- and, in deference to my readers, this one is as simple as they come, consisting of ten quotes from SF novels. The first quote is from the book I happened to be reading when I first got the idea. Unfortunately Cas had a headache, so I decided to set this quiz instead. The other novels were all grabbed almost at random from the various piles in my bedroom, although I tried to select ones where either the author or the book should be familiar to most of you. The passages quoted were also random given the constraint that I had to reject passages in which the names of characters and places featured. I didn't want to make things too easy.

Simply put, I want to see if you can recognize the authors by their style or subject matter. Thus, ten points for each correct author. As a bonus there are a further four points if you can correctly identify the novel, which gives a total of 150 points available (clue there, folks). I really would appreciate as many answers as possible. You get the fun of doing it and I get my fun from analysing your answers. There are no penalty points for incorrect responses so ~~perhaps~~ gut-feelings are better than no answers at all. The correct answers will be revealed only to those who attempt the quiz. There is no prize (other than the glory) but the winner and runners-up will be named so we can all see what clever-dicks they are. Underlinings in the quoted passages indicate that the original words were italicized (and also that I can't afford an IBM Selectric). Onward to Glory!

- 1 : Occasionally the interlacing alleys would open up into small terra-cotta squares, overhung by limegreen ghostfinger trees or ruddy golden wella, and here someone would have set up a brazier shaped like the open mouth of a fish and would be cooking redfins and sandcrawlers, someone else would have a stand selling snow nectar and blue wine and essences, and the long dusk would be filled with the smells of frying meat and wood smoke and strange spices, and with the tinkling crystalline sound of a tikan being played somewhere out of sight in a roof garden or a hidden patio.
- 2 : "I'm a bit vague on this business, star mythology was never my best subject." Which meant, of course, that she knew a great deal about it and was pretending ignorance in order to draw him out. "You say that this thirteenth colony, or parent world, is named Earth, and it may be somewhere out there in the universe, still populated and still amenable to receiving returning colonial inhabitants."
- 3 : "Murder," he said, "will be done this moment if anybody moves. I will commit it. I will, people. Move, and try me. And if I do commit murder, I will arrest myself, hold a trial, and acquit myself. I have strange powers, people. Don't make me use them. Don't ~~even~~ make me show them."



- 4 : Four beefy characters stationed themselves within watching and shooting distance of the back a little before midnight. Two carloads of similar specimens drew up at the front, bashed open the door, charged upstairs. They were there three hours and half-killed the landlord before they became convinced of his ignorance.
- 5 : In the foyer a single chandelier exuded the light of a hundred sullen jewels, which lost itself in the shadows, with only a colored gleam here and there on the dark wood. The refectory was also dim, occupied by a few murmuring groups. From an urn they drew bowls of pepper-tea and settled themselves in a booth.
- 6 : There were tiny rustlings and his new body told his mind that it was mice, mice scurrying in the tunnels they had fashioned in the grass. And for a moment he caught the little happiness that went with the running, playful the little, unformed, uncoagulated thoughts of happy mice.
- 7 : The missile smashed against the dome with a crack almost as forceful as a blaster bolt. One of the raiders, complete with vorp, burst from the door, took refuge behind the sled, awaiting action.
- 8 : "He was always unpopular. You must understand that he was ever a questioning sort, given to uncomfortable inquiries and unorthodox opinions, a lover of history but openly contemptuous of religion, with much too much unhealthy interest in the offworlders who moved among us. As such, he was challenged again and again that first year he attained dueling age. He always won."
- 9 : He released his grip but the pressure of his fingers remained on her arm to stir her senses with ghostly dominance. An unconscious display of his strength and she felt the reaction of her body in a flood of raw and primitive demand, which she resisted with the aid of banal conversation.
- 10 : The resentment they felt for the world at large, their sense of having been marked, almost literally, for the slaughter, was too great to be contained. It could lead even the mildest of them at times to betray this theoretical sodality for the sake of a hamburger or a laugh or the rush that accompanied the smash of your own fist into any available face. But the bad moments were like firecrackers - they exploded and a smell lingered for a few hours and then even that was gone - while the good moments were like sunlight, a fact so basic you almost never considered it was there.

There you have it. Some perhaps not as difficult as others, and not a "Vorga, I kill you deadly!" in the lot.

THE TRANSATLANTIC HEARING AID : Sixth Bit

Is There Life After Worldcon? .....

Dave Langford .....

The Story So Far: Once upon a time a fan called Langford won TAFF, travelled to Boston's 1980 Worldcon and was bombed back to the neofannish age by the impact of six thousand other Noreascon members... one of those great culminations, like getting married or having a wisdom tooth extracted, which leave you vaguely surprised when life carries on as before. Nearly two years later, a similar but more decrepit Langford has had the last traces of TAFF glory sucked from his bones by the newest winner, Kev Smith. He faces the catastrophe of moving house and is altogether uncertain of whether life will carry on. He sits alone with his dreams, his memories, his typewriter, his whopping new mortgage, his treasured collection of increasingly rude reminders from P. Skelton. Suddenly, inspiration comes. But alas, the pubs are not yet open, and instead he grudgingly sets down a cobwebbed and forgotten date...



Tuesday 2 September 1980

Perhaps realizing that my TAFF instalments would later tend to start at breakfast time with the inevitability of Ivy Compton-Burnett novels, I didn't eat anything that Tuesday morning: so the notebook insists. Perhaps it was because the Copley Plaza Hotel threatened hearty eaters like myself with a MASS MEALS TAX sign; perhaps Hazel stood between me and the menu's inviting breakfast choice of Bloody Mary, Tequila Sunrise or Screwdriver. Quite possibly we had no appetite after staggering from the hotel lift, whose array of 21 blazing spot-



lights left us with no aim in life than to rush out and plunge into a snowdrift. Outside the Boston thermometers read 95°, and we toyed with the notion of rushing back to plunge into the lift.

Hazel and I returned briefly to the Sheraton-Boston: from a hundred yards away you could feel it was no longer a con hotel, and no fans were in evidence. As with a visit to one's old school, college or maximum security research establishment, the closed doors were all the more oppressive because yesterday we'd had the run of the rooms beyond. What exciting things might not be happening today, in those hidden halls and Gormenghastly passages? I almost suffered a pang of remorse at not having visited the computer gaming or filksinging rooms while I had the chance: the pang, however, was swallowed in a healthy surge of gratitude for the narrow escape.

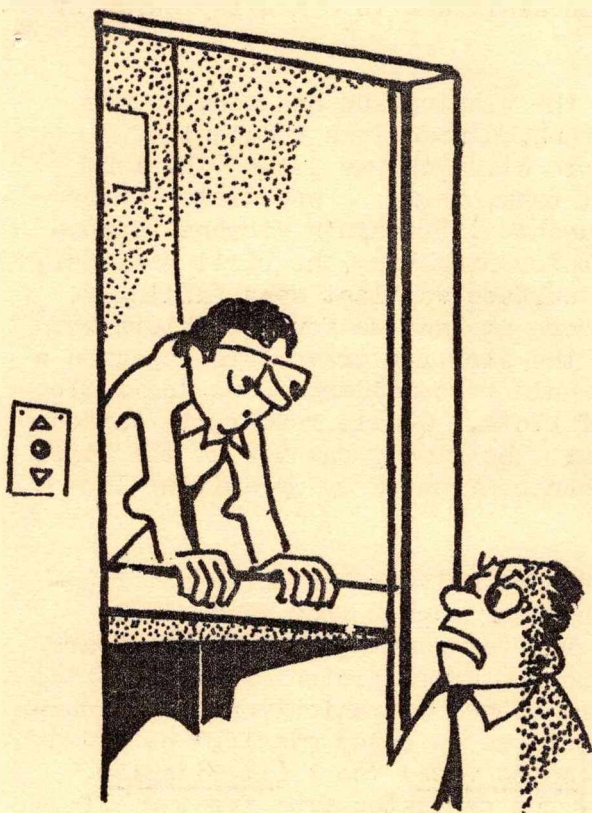
Indefatigable tourists, we bore up under the blazing sun and went to see the sights of the Working-Men's Co-operative Bank, a name less redolent of Boston than of Bingley. Moving from strength to strength, we joined the long queue of sightseers in the nearby State Street bank, there to speculate on the enigmatic sign FOOD STAMPS SOLD HERE. Still unsated, Britain's vibrant representatives toured several more historic banks before reaching the First National, in the gigantic Hancock building whose mirror surface was last seen failing to reflect the Langford features in chapter 2. Here at last we found cashiers who didn't swoon with horror when confronted with the sterling travellers' cheques a falsely smiling Barclays Bank had assured us would be considered more desirable than cash itself, anywhere within the orbit of Pluto. Gentle reader, be warned. America is different. But then, so is Britain: the kindly cashier at the First National suffered near-terminal sensawonder when confronted by my driving licence and its expiry date of 2023.

Back in the Copley Plaza foyer, the now almost solvent Langfords met fragments of fandom. Harry Bell and Jim Barker, smiling hugely from their last night's loathsome dissipations, were about to run for Washington. Martin Hoare was smiling even more hugely and telling anyone who would listen about the total and ruthless efficiency which had engulfed Noreascon's communications and security once he joined up on Monday. "And Katie told me to enjoy myself," he added embarrassingly in whatever is the opposite of sotto voce, "so I (itemization deleted--Ed)." Rochelle Reynolds looked happy but exhausted from fending off the attentions of Jim and Paul Kincaid--not yet having revealed her occult longings for (absent) future spouse Alan Dorey. Even Greg Pickersgill was smiling as he muttered things about "futility" and "shabby travesty of a con" and "bloody Americans", fondly watched by his bloody American wife-to-be. Greg and Linda were enchanted by a cab-driver they'd ridden with... "He asked us, what's the SF con... He'd heard some guy on the radio called Harl something, Harlan. God, he said, he'd never heard anything like it. The guy must think the whole world's his. Is he short, maybe?" Collapse of all present.

Collapse, too, of the Copley lifts. None were operating, and the word was that someone was trapped inside raising future generations in a sealed environment or some such skiffy situation. With no more effort than required to saunter up Snowden, we visited the top floor for our voluminous (and now stuffed with volumes) luggage; with no more effort than required to cripple two once

adequate bodies, we descended one storey and fell over. What happened then was like Ian Watson novels where the power of imagination evokes a new reality: before our desperate eyes an unsuspected lift door came into being and opened. Out stepped a phantasm whose proud bearing marked him as a secret master of vertical people movement. "This is the only one working," he intoned. "You go down in it quick." All unsuspecting, we went.

It was small, without the spotlights and plush amenities (up to though not including nine-hole golf courses) of the real lifts; you worked it with a handle. Bringing my Space Invaders experience to bear, I mastered the joystick and zeroed in within mere feet of the ground-floor level; we opened the door and with difficulty climbed down, into the eye of a teacup-sized storm.



"You got a licence?" shrieked somebody in overalls who appeared to think the whole world was his. (Yes. He was short.) "You got a licence? You know what you did? You broke the law, you got to have a licence for that elevator."

"The chap upstairs told us..."

"He never. You stole that guy's lift!"

The tirade went on, our short friend explaining at great length how people could break legs climbing into the inexpertly docked lift, how you got to have a licence, and how the other guy was stranded upstairs now forever. Suggestions that he (a) remedy the hideous danger of the foot-high step into the lift, or (b) go and rescue his marooned pal, were brushed aside: here, it became plain, was someone who'd been attracted to his job

by the opportunities for shouting. Little did I know that this misanthrope would take on a shimmering significance as the only person to be rude to us in all our trip. At least, the only American. Greg we have always with us.

The little knot of Britfandom in the Plaza foyer unravelled as we made our final escape and were taken firmly in hand by chunky Selina Lovett, an old-time fan. This description will undoubtedly annoy her, but on her UK visit in the early 70s she gained the unfortunate distinction of being about the first American fan Martin and I had ever met. Now NESFA, New England's answer to the BSFA, seems fonder of serious constructiveness, rules debates, committee elections, convention-running and universal domination than of traditional arts like the fanzine: as a result Selina was one of only two Langford contacts in the area. The other was Alyson Abramowitz, and a strange chill seemed to descend on the



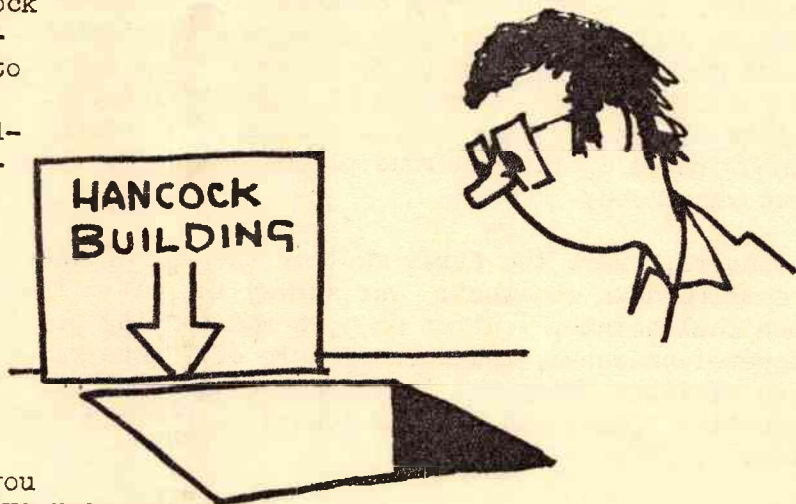
gathering when I mentioned alyson's invitation to visit, as though one had spoken of layout or correction fluid in the home of Keith Walker...

Into a vast car with Selina and her father, chiefly distinguished at first glance by his truncheon-sized cigar. Time to abandon the fan's-eye view of Boston (schematic diagram of hotels, restaurants, liquor stores, vague and empirical drunkard's-walk routes between) and play tourist at last. I learnt with delight that the Hancock building was sinking imper-

ceptibly yet inexorably into the filled land beneath: "Formerly the tallest building in New England." Something the size of a medium writing-desk in repellent pink granite, still being cemented to the street, proved to be a monument to the lore-and-profits chap Kahlil Gibran. Public buildings loomed over wide streets, thick with fake-Roman inscriptions until you expected signs reading HAMBURGERS.

Martin convulsed over a delicatessen

named Lox, Stock and Bagel; he recited British prices of everything to an appalled Mr. Lovett, whose cries of amazement and loathing were terrible to behold. Hazel's alarm grew as she noticed that every third building appeared to be a fallout shelter. There were kaleidoscope flashes of traffic, bridges, traffic, a glimpse of the sea, more traffic, about fifty incredibly famous tourist sights which I forget; then we were crawling down what looked to be the prestigious warehouse district, a long drab row on either side, and was in fact the utterly famous Fish Pier.



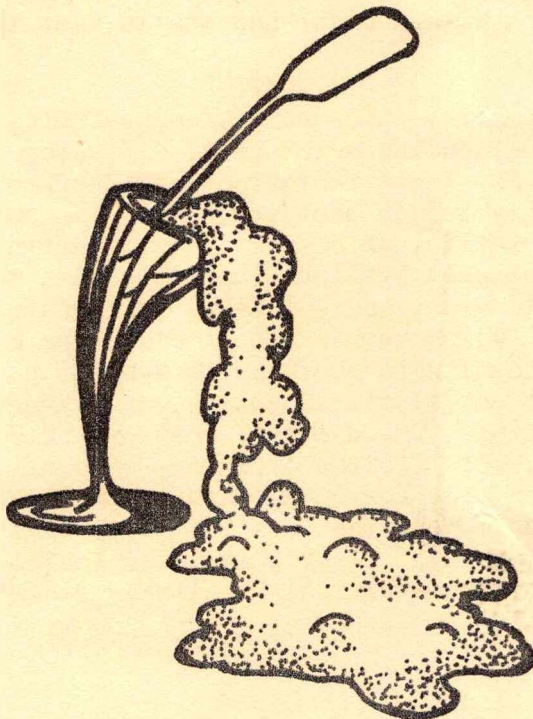
Lovecraft-like it waited for us there: unnameable, unspeakable, unsigned, indistinguishable from the surrounding warehouses, diffusing a miasma of eldritch horror and seafood...the 'No Name' restaurant, self-effacing in the manner of our Barbican Centre (the only London building to lack an outside) and unattainable without native guides. Inside, an awesome sight, Martin was observed to drink Coke. This was the closest available approximation to beer; I fancied a nice bottle of chilled white wine, and got 7-Up. The restaurant was plain and looked like the inside of a warehouse, which it doubtless had been. Mr. Lovett, who had already charmed Hazel with what she thought to be an East Coast American/Jewish accent of great and classical purity, cast a practised eye over the menu and recommended everything. The colossal portions of seafood were said to be the best in many a parsec, but lifetime avoidance of small rubbery sea creatures had left me with no standards for comparison. Strongest memory is of the clam roll, another Lovecraftian touch, innocuous to the eye but strangely evocative in scent and taste. One thought of fishy ports like Innismouth at low tide, of far-off dying things in stagnant estuaries, of wierdly distorted spaces separating one from the nearest toilet.

I still don't know whether I really like seafood.

There followed some confusing transitions during which I noted that the town of Quincy was pronounced quinsy as in dog-strangling (see your local dictionary), that the NO SOLICITING sign outside the Lovett's apartment block in Randolph did not mean either of the things which first came to me horrid mind, and that Martin had travelled 3000 miles to photograph the Concord branch of Woolworths. Mr Lovett having retired to bask in the family air-conditioning, it was Selina alone who introduced us to the teeming historical joys of New England. At first glance this seems to be an area which like Crete in the Saki story produces far more history than can be consumed locally. Closer inspection reveals that it's always the same bit of history, the rising against the cursed British, as commemorated in the numerous places where the first shot of the war of independance was fired.

Concord, where the first shot of the war of independance was fired, had by 1980 settled down somewhat: our survey indicated that local industry was divided between real estate, tourist shoppes and burying people. The town was toylike and hyper-landscaped, and some miracle of Yankee know-how kept its grass though not its visitors crisp and fresh in the baking heat. "Ice cream," said Selina in seductive tones, and I moved towards a further confrontation with stark reality.

For years your historian has been fascinated by one aspect of Larry Niven's work. An artist of great restraint and subtlety (I was told after daring to say 'Ringworld Engineers' was pretty dull), he hoards his powers of sensual description for certain paragraphs of shattering intensity. Not sex scenes, not epic battles, not the universe-wrecking collision of black holes: the moment where Larry Niven pulls out all the stops is in his description of a hot fudge sundae.





In the last seconds before the end of civilization as we know it, Niven characters nip out for one final hot fudge sundae. When the 'Lucifer's Hammer' comet is falling to smash the world, the only metaphor Niven feels will do justice to its awe-inspiring might is that of a hot fudge sundae.

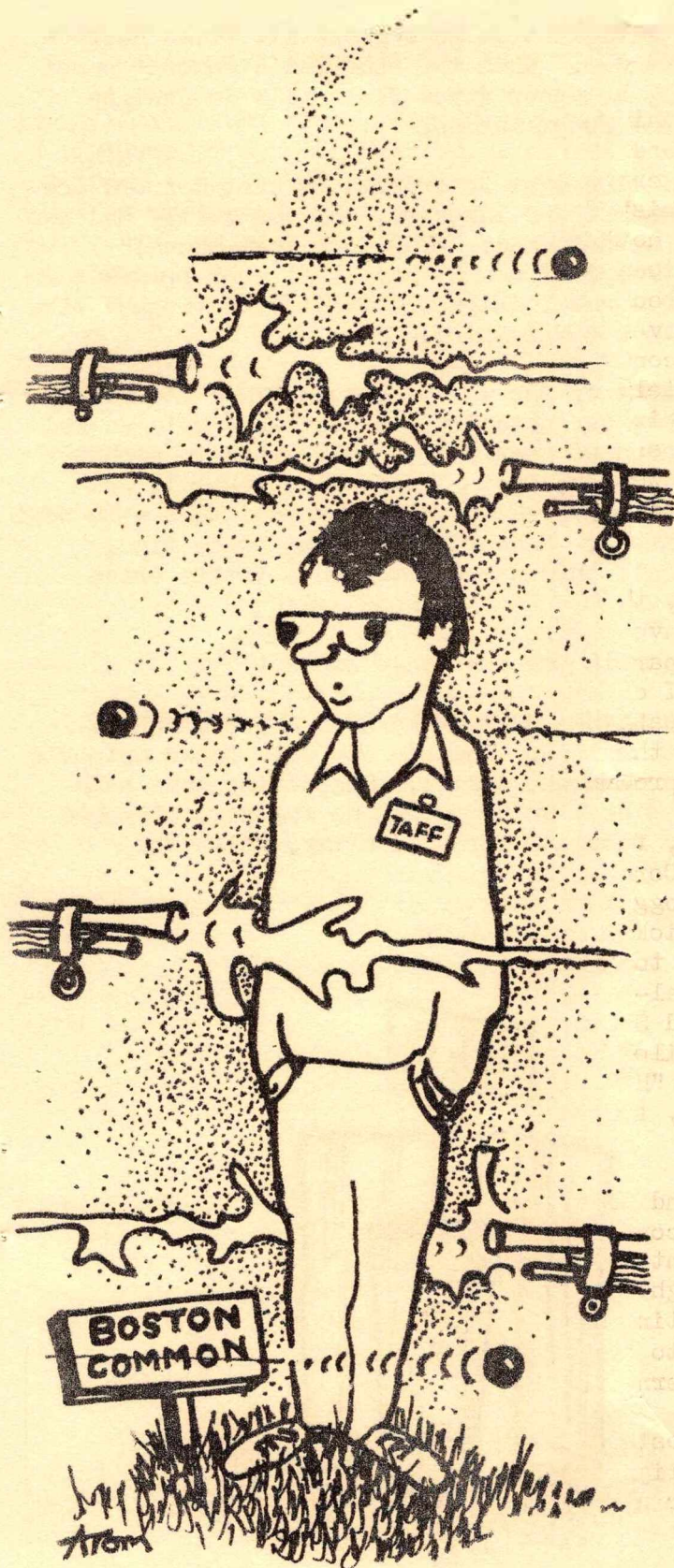
For fear of repetition I won't mention what we ordered in that Concord ice-cream parlour. The result was sticky-sweet and lukewarm, and apparently had not been made right. Another fond illusion shattered. "You took them there?" spluttered Mr Lovett later. "You're crazy! You must have left your brains back at the hotel!" Selina apologised; Hazel and I staggered about with tongues like flypaper; Martin thought the concoction was very nice.

Concord Bridge, where the first shot of the war of independence was fired, is a particularly wondrous tourist spot, as instantly revealed when we'd walked up the long leafy path to get there. Had we really come 3000 miles to exchange words like Hello with Marsha and Eddie Jones, Colin and Joan Langeveldt, and Peter Mabey? "They came three thousand miles and died." I warned them with some fervour, "To keep the past upon its throne. Unheard beyond the ocean tide, Their English mother made her moan." All this was written on a little brass plate dated 1775 but looking newer.

"Tacky," said Selina, not referring to the hot fudge sundae.

A sign pointed the way to THE OLD MANSE: HOME OF EMERSON AND HAWTHORNE. What a fascinating household it must have been. The man who said Isaac Asimov's mind has a foolish consistency, and the man who didn't. Suspecting that both Emerson and Hawthorne would be out that day, we proceeded no further. I poked about hopefully in the brilliant-green woodland for poison ivy, while the Joneses and entourage fled the scene.





Lexington, where the first shot of the war of independence was fired, left no impression on the memory except as a singularly inappropriate setting for Selina's query, "Do you find everything here more spacious?" ("Yes," said Martin. "Agarophobia is the word," said Hazel. "Your pizzas wouldn't go through our doorways," I clarified.) We marvelled at the spacious land whose houses were all white and made of wood, defying such forces of British nature as wet rot, dry rot, death-watch, lyctus powder-post beetle, weevils and our favourite little friend Anobium punctatum or common furniture beetle, with all of which the British contingent had had intimate and embarrassing acquaintance.

Boston itself, where the first shot of the war of independence was by some oversight not fired, was overrun by our party that evening. Unerringly Martin's sixth sense led us through the Harvard Square district to something called the Oxford Ale House. In its old-world cellar they served Bass at liquid nitrogen temperature in fiddly eight-ounce glasses which once again didn't fit the image of a wider and more spacious land. "What you mean is, everything here is more specious," I suggested to Selina as the merest sip of this beer converted my mouth to a cryonics chamber. We had to warm the glasses in our hands for long minutes, as though they contained a rare old frozen brandy. Perspiring Hazel found this soothing, while Selina's giggles couldn't be controlled.

"The difference between British and American fandom is



mostly that you two British fans are sots," Hazel deduced inexcusably and correctly. Martin and I made our excuses and promised to do more sightseeing.

It was pleasant soaking up the university ambience of Harvard Square, parts of which were nostalgically like Oxford if you could imagine dank Oxford with a heatwave and a plague of 120-decibel crickets. More than once I had a perfect and eerie illusion of standing in Christ Church meadow, or of threading my way through Trinity or Magdalen college: no doubt by daylight it wouldn't be so easy to ignore the buildings' strong American accent. The illusion of Oxford was shattered when we found a series of bookshops still open and thriving late in the evening: I draw a discrete veil over the scenes of pillage which ensued. Several vast parcels were furtively conveyed to Selina's car, which may have been a mistake, since a tyre immediately exploded. Martin and I had many exciting adventures amid the strange and bizarre places where foreigners choose to hide their car jacks and free air taps: consoled only by quantities of Fosters from another miraculously open shop, we rode home in fear and trembling on a spare tyre whose condition would instantly have caused a British magistrate to assume the black cap.

In Randolph, Mr Lovett admitted, the first shot of the war of independence was not fired although it ought to have been. He went on to reveal local scandal about the Boston Tea Party, the participants in which were (he said) all as tired and over-emotional as newts. I choked back the reflection that after Hazel's experience with a moribund teabag's death throes in lukewarm milk-and-water, one could see why they hurled the rotten tea into the harbour: this cannot be a new observation and was probably first made by Paul Revere.

The Lovetts senior, good people, forced quantities of food into us, reeling at Martin's cultural comparisons. "Corn costs a dollar a cob back home," he would say casually, and watch them boggle as they contemplated the pantechnicon load of corn-on-the-cob Selina had picked up for \$1.75. Still eager to sample new foods, new drinks, and generally to boldly go, we tried another item of US exotica: root beer. It tasted medical---specifically, like that transparent red brand of toothpaste. "Noooo..." said Selina disbelievingly as in turn the Brits delivered this judgement; then, assailed by doubt, she took a sip herself. A wondering light came into her eyes. "Hey... it does." If this truly is a constituent of the famous Spayed Gerbil, that drink's cult status is even less explicable.

With a day of recuperation behind us and our minds partly de-blown, it was possible to think again about Noreascon. "Whoever did the lighting for the Hugo ceremony and the masquerade ought to be shot," said Martin omnisciently. "Never in twenty years as a stage lighting expert have I seen anyone use primary green, red and blue for illuminating spots." Mr Hoare, who at the time was 28, went on to explain how he'd had to teach the professional lighting man at Seacon '79 how to focus his own lanterns...

"A touch of amateurism," I suggested, "Humanizes the whole thing. I couldn't care less about the bloody lighting, anyway. It was some of the fans that worried me, the loons with their ultra-realistic simulated machine guns and suchlike."

"Dave," said Martin. "Some of those weren't simulated."

"Argh," the Langfords profoundly commented, in unison.

Selina, a jackbooted Noreascon committee member, said "Don't quote me, but ..." and launched into a monologue about unbelievable atrocities committed by 'fans' over the past few days. We listened, fascinated and horrified at the tale of mayhem, only occasionally interjecting "Bloody hell!" or "Never!" or "With a melon?"

Another convention viewpoint was waiting for us on the table. "'Pardon me,' said the Hobbit as he stopped the well-dressed matron on her way down the stairs, 'but is this the way to Middle Earth?' Whereupon the woman calmly looked about her and replied, 'I don't know, but this is the Sheraton-Boston Hotel.'" So began the Boston Evening Globe's carefully balanced coverage of this literary event. Quotations came as usual from hand-picked cretins: "a woman who would only identify herself as 'Pixie, as in Dungeons and Dragons'." Reporters had worked long and hard to locate the wrong end of every stick (and thank god they never learnt of the Astral Pole): Bruce Pelz's rather jolly fannish Tarot pack, variously painted by 85 different SF/fan artists, was ingeniously covered in the line "Battlestar Galactica playing cards were selling for a mere \$15 a deck." Suspicions that the Boston Evening Globe was pulling fandom's leg began to grow when we reached a bit concerning the archetypal fan who "described the convention in a word: 'Wow!'" If only it had been "Goshwowohboyohboyohboy!"

Once upon a time we fans would complain that newspaper coverage of the exhibitionistic few at conventions was Unfair. We knew that. We were the silent majority, the comfortably dressed element, the ones with sensitive fannish faces. Some day our cause would prevail, as at Yorcon 1979, where the first shot of the war of independence was fired and the committee wangled trufandom's case into the local press. ("The Trekkies... they're our Irish joke.") But the balance has shifted in America and is shifting here, by a process of positive feedback: each time a reporter focuses on the gaudy, eye-catching minority, protofans out there are reinforced in their view that the essence of cons is waving lasers and dressing funny. They start coming themselves, equipped with pointed ears and four-foot broadswords to help them blend in. The costumed minority becomes that much less of a minority, and leaps that much more obviously to the reporter's sensation-seeking eye...

(Angela Carter professed disappointment in fannish garb at Channelcon 1982. She'd read the papers. She sincerely expected a hotel full of fans with pointed ears.)

I went to bed wondering if the ever-increasing wave of costumed silliness mightn't have some positive aspect. Once upon a time, when SF was despised, fans had more sense of community: the chosen few who could see past the garish pulp covers to whatever shreds of literary worth lay within. Now SF is all too respectable, and anyone can play; perhaps this very popularity has erected a new ring of defence about 'true' fans. Perhaps only the chosen few see past the garish tinsel g-strings to achieve cosmic oneness with others unkeen on the pointy-eared and beweaponed idiocy which screens 'our' fandom from the public eye.



There's an elitist viewpoint for you, eh? everyone ought to be in some elite or other. You too can be insufferable. Try new spray-on Hubris<sup>TM</sup>. It's fun. For example:---

The Langfords had taken over Selina's bedroom in the vast reshuffle which shoehorned three extra bodies into the not overly huge Lovett apartment. Hazel kept nudging me in a definitely elitist way, pointing to the vast fan which patiently shoved hot air across the room and back again. "Look at the trade-mark," she said. I looked blearily. "KelAire?"

"Isn't that remarkable!"

"It is?"

"The name of my favourite Tuareg tribe," she said smugly.

"I can't take you anywhere," I muttered, and went to sleep.

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25 June 1982: Every time I reach this point in a TAFF instalment, the gulf between the tatty scraps of truth in the 1980 notebook and the elaborate lies of the actual report seems greater still. Previous divergences from actuality may be unearthed in TWLL-DDU 19 (Langford), BOONFARK 5 (Steffan), NABU 11 (Maule), WARHOON 30 (Bergeron, if he ever produces the thing) and TAPPEN 3 (Edwards). The next one? I've no idea. I have to abandon all this for a while to go and move house to where the first shot of the war of independence will be fired. Ultimately a collected TAFF report not as thick as WARHOON 28 will be issued from---let me sneak it in---94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU.

Eric Bentcliffe (may his tribe increase) awoke one night from a deep dream of peace.....and decided to produce a 50's Fanthology. What's more, flying in the face of fannish tradition, he actually did it. Now Eric doesn't drink much but as everything Beryl cooks for him is at least 70<sup>C</sup> proof then you'll realise that his credentials for producing WHEN YNGVI WAS A LOUSE are beyond question. Contributors featured are:- Mal & Hazel Ashworth, Eric Bentcliffe, John Berry, Jim Cawthorn, Viné Clarke, 'Hurstmonceaux & Faversham', Terry Jeeves, Eric Needham, Bob Shaw, Arthur Thomson, Ted Tubb, and Harry Turner.

WHEN YNGVI WAS A LOUSE is available from Eric at 17 Riverside Crescent, Holmes Chapel, Cheshire, CW4 7NR, England. Be warned! It is not sufficient to address it to:- Eric Bentcliffe, Within cycling distance of the Skelhouse, even though we have (just about) proved same. The fanthology will set you back £1.00 or \$3.00, which has got to be easier than a 40 mile cycling round-trip. The things I do to maintain my credibility.....

WHERE IT IS - MAYBE .....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
..... Ted White

"What's this?" E. Knowles Elkhart asked. As usual, he was poking around in the letters, fanzines, and miscellaneous kipple that litters my diningroom table. (It litters my diningroom table because this table has been since 1975 my "desk" as well as my diningroom table: my battered Underwood sits at one end. In 1975 I had this fire, see, in the course of which my "office", wherein resides my actual desk, upon which my venerable Underwood used to sit, was thoroughly drenched with water. The kipple which filled the room -- almost all paper -- was pulped by the water, while the ceiling collapsed, icing the lot with fragments of plaster. I fully intend, one of these years, to overcome my total dismay and clean the room out. In the meantime.....but I digress.)

Elkhart, incurably curious, had picked up a letter I had received from Paul Skelton. This was by no means unlikely, given the Elkhart Character, since I had the letter sitting on top of the pile of letters to be answered and fanzines to be LoCced, next to my typer. This was to remind me that I owed -- and had owed for a while now -- an article to Skel. Naturally, Elkhart, being The Man He Is, read the letter. Out loud.

"...the cutting edge? A critical view of the contemporary fanzine scene, package and contents, with just enough recent past to show where we're coming from, if required. Good and bad examples, names named.' ...Blah blah blah... 'Your problem is that by the time they get to you (always assuming they read it in order) they've read all the others so you gotta be good, and heavy, meaty...' He paused at that point and glanced back at the list of other contributors given earlier in Skel's letter. "Hmmm," he said. "Mayer, Ortlieb, Shaw and Langford, in that order...." E. Knowles shook his head knowingly. "You'll never make it, Ted, not coming after Langford. He's a lot more clever than you. Shaw and Langford, that's the ol' one-two."

"I needed you to tell me that," I grumped. I rarely bother concealing any ill-temper when E. Knowles is around, and he usually brings it out in me.

"Besides," Elkhart added almost smugly, "what can you say, now that PONG is gone? Your era is over now, the torch has been passed on, and nobody hurries to send you their fanzines by the fastest mail anymore. What can you say about the current fanzine scene that anyone else can't? You've lost your unique perspective."

"Bullshit," I told him. "PONG is irrelevant. And anyway it reflected me --



along with Dan -- and not the other way around. I've got plenty to say!"

And suddenly I realized -- after weeks of wondering almost exactly the kind of things Elkhart had been mentioning, pondering what the fuck I could or would say in this good, heavy, meaty piece -- that by ghod I did have a lot I wanted to say. Whether it deserves to follow the Heavy Guns of Shaw and Langford is another matter entirely, of course.

-O-O-O-

Although the signs are mixed, I feel moderately good about presentday fanzine fandom. It appears, despite the absence of any Absolutely Dynamite regular fanzines, to be thriving and healthier than it has been for a while.

But right away I have to start qualifying what I'm saying. Fandom these days -- even fanzine fandom, maybe even most of all fanzine fandom -- is fragmented into an indeterminable number of somewhat overlapping circles. When I talk about fanzine fandom here I'm talking about the circles I'm a part of and am aware of. I know there are other circles of which I am ignorant. If you inhabit one of them -- as is not unlikely -- I'd appreciate it if you didn't cite me chapter and verse on how completely different things are in your part of fandom and thus what a jackass I am.

I've been brought up short several times recently by this kind of reaction from someone who feels that because I'm not a participant in his particular version of fanzine fandom I must be The Enemy.

Chris Estey (names named, you betcha), for instance, wrote me a remarkable letter recently in which he actually said "People like you make me feel embarrassed to be an American," a line I imagine he must have really enjoyed getting a chance to use. Chris, you see, put out a fanzine for a "fandom" which must exist on a plane roughly perpendicular to the one this fanzine exists in. But let's let him describe it: "At the time I started NOT MELLOW there were very few publications of its nature tying together sci-fi and punk rock and such into one common Sensory Overload instinct.....The people who bought copies in record stores, boosting the circulation to 10,000 by its final issue, the politicos who supported it, the extremely busy authors who contributed interviews and such, all of them couldn't have thought I was doing something as unoriginal as you obviously thought I did."

Chris didn't like a review I wrote of his fanzine (for Avedon Carol's BLATANT). He seemed to think half a dozen xeroxed pages of messy typing mostly consisying of two-sentence record reviews and interviews with Robert Bloch about Psycho, presented with more energy than literacy, was something to be proud of, and by ghod a circulation of 10,000 can't be wrong, eh?.

"Five years from now what you love about fandom will be buried, and I for one will dance upon this grave," Estey said in his letter.

It's too bad people like Estey can't separate out criticism based on the quality of what they do from simple criticism of what they do. But Chris Estey is hardly new, and his reaction is typical.

If Estey is out in left field (an American baseball term which has become

part of the language; does it mean anything to Brits?), Brian Earl Brown is solidly in the midst of things, fanzine-wise. But even despite the fact that he publishes a WHOLE FANZINE CATALOG of listings which proves that he inhabits perhaps the central circle of fanzine fandom, Brian does not inhabit my circle, and maybe not even one directly adjacent to mine.

I deduce this from several factoids available to me.

One is that it never occurred to us to send Brian PONG when we first set up its mailing list. Both Dan Steffan and I had seen odd issues of WoFaN (or however Brian weirdly abbreviates his WHOLE FANZINE CATALOG) and MAD SCIENTISTS DIGEST, and neither of us were much impressed. The former is in my opinion only a bare step up from FANZINE FANATIQUE, consisting as it does simply of listings of fanzines accompanied by semi-literate descriptions, its superiority lying mostly in its apparent inclusiveness. MSD is a crudzine. Both are characterized by Brown's incredible sloppiness as a thinker, writer, typist, and mimeographer. It seems that Brown has carried the old dictum about the sacredness of a cut stencil several steps further: since his zines are all electrostencilled and his typing is done only on sheets of paper, it appears that Brown has made himself a resolution never to reread anything he has typed, but simply to throw it on his electrostencil machine, cut a stencil, and then run ~~that~~ stencil off. Lately he's been using paper for his fanzines which is slick and does not absorb mimeo ink, creating a wonderfully grey, smeared look that exactly complements his spelling, grammar and prose.

Brian does "do things that are right", though. He reads old fanzines, catches the references made to them by old farts like me in nostalgia fanzines like PONG, and he thinks seriously about What's Right and What's Wrong in fanzine fandom.

Lately it occurred to him that What's Wrong just might be "a group of fans whose interests in fandom are highly constrained by their admiration of 6th fandom." This might not be in itself remarkable, but he gave voice to this thought in his newest fanzine, STICKY QUARTERS, and there were those who agreed with him.

Marty Cantor called me up one Sunday evening from Los Angeles to talk to me for what must have been at least an hour, on this very same subject. "I've written an editorial for the next HOLIER THAN THOU," he told me. "I named names," he said. "I mentioned you and Dan." The context was, apparently, what Brian Earl Brown called "Sixth Fandom Fandom." According to this thesis Dan and I and no doubt others of our ilk (our circle of fandom) had no use for contemporary fanzine fandom. We were hopelessly hung up on the golden days of the 1950's when All Was Perfect. According to this thesis (first propounded by Fanhistorian Martin Morse Wooster) the pages of PONG were heavily freighted with Tales of The Good Old Days and laments over the passing of those days.

"But Marty," I protested. "That's not true."

And, in the course of the hour of our conversation, I planted the Seed of Doubt in Marty's mind. When I met him a week later at Chicon he told me that he had conflated Dan's and my names from his editorial. "But you still have the Right of Reply in the next issue," he assured me.



There's a sort of self-reinforcing thread which runs through these accusations against those of us who have been called "Sixth Fandom Fans". Marty, in our conversation, referred both to Brian Earl Brown's piece in STICKY QUARTERS and Avedon Carol's comment in her latest BLATANT that "I'm not going to make that boring old speech about how everyone should write like Willis and none of you will ever hold a candle to him" -- a typically loose-with-the-facts tossoff for Avedon, who I bet would be hard put to find even one "boring old speech" that fits her description -- while in a recent letter Joseph Nicholas informed me that "I think you have devoted too much space in PONG to analyses of the past, I think you have been too ready to uphold the past as an utopia from which fandom has fallen, I think you have set out to impugn the standards and achievements of the present generation of editors and writers because they're not as good as Willis when he was at his peak. As Avedon Carol pointed out in BLATANT 11, there's plenty of good fanwriting around, and just because it isn't devoted to the subjects you prefer or have the same tone as the writing you got off on when you were but a lad or whatever is no reason to claim that it doesn't measure up, that it isn't worth reading, that it was all done much better a long time ago. The times have changed, the world has moved on since the fifties, and Sixth Fandom is now dead as the dodo. 'Timebinding' has nothing to do with it: the past cannot be resurrected, and for all that it may have been a pretty traffic period of your life you should start learning to live in the present."

I love being lectured by Joseph Nicholas. Doesn't everyone?

I told Marty I had a theory about this "Sixth Fandom Fandom" nonsense. "It strikes me as sour grapes," I said. "I mean, look: Here we have fandom here in the good ol' US of A undergoing a doldrums that lasts for much of the seventies, and gets worse at the end. ENERGIUM folds. MOTA peters out. What other fanzines of some quality remain, like BOONFARK, MAINSTREAM, TELOS and like that, come out annually or less often. There is this vacuum, fannishly speaking. Brian Earl Brown rushes in to fill it with his WHOLE FANZINE CATALOG. He's in a bunch of slap-ass apas, he gets lots of fanzines even though they're mostly crudzines, and by giving every one of them a listing, he gives them importance and that gives him importance, and soon he is, at least in his own mind, the Big Frog (or one of them) in the Small Pond. British readers should try to imagine Keith Walker occupying this role for an added comprehension of this image. Then things begin to change. Bergeron wakes up from his ten-year siesta. Dan and I start PONG. Things start picking up a little. But -- what's this? -- Brian doesn't even get the early PONGs; he doesn't hear about it until it's nearly a year old. Shock, horror! He's been bypassed. Fandom is waking up and all around him are people putting out fanzines which are better than his. The level of writing is a bit higher than apa-blather. Their fanzines are neatly produced and even look good. What's happening? Suddenly either it's a much bigger pond or he's a much smaller frog -- he isn't sure which. But he senses the cause of it all -- it's those Sixth Fandom Fans, with their talk about the Good Old Days of Good Fanzines.

"Now he likes these newer, better zines. Brian has genuine fannish instincts, and he enjoys good fanzines. But he resents them, because they've eclipsed him. He doesn't really have a handle on his resentment, but -- typically -- that doesn't stop him from banging out a page or so for his latest fanzine about how these guys 'do things that are right', but are wrong anyway, for reasons he's only half glimpsed and can't articulate.

"Well, that's my theory, anyway," I told Marty.

"Oh," Marty said, probably wondering if I was including him in that assessment, but afraid to ask. "Well, I don't know, but I don't think that's quite it."

Probably not. Like most snap-judgments (pace, Brown) and generalizations, it's probably got a germ of truth that is obscured by exaggeration and oversimplification.

And it probably betrays my own resentment at being so casually misread by several of fandom's loudmouths like (names named) Wooster, Brown, and Nicholas. It does me no good at all to point out to these louts that they cannot support their arguments with proof, since in fact PONG never printed much fanhistory, and rarely anything about Sixth Fandom. By far the largest chunk of fanhistory published in PONG, Nicholas to the contrary notwithstanding -- and by gosh don't you wish he would? -- concerned Ratfandom and British fanhistory of the seventies. And anyone who takes the time to sit down with a file of PONG and actually read it -- something which Nicholas, on the evidence, has never done -- will find that while I never once compared anyone else with Walt Willis, I did find a number of approving, complimentary, even kind things to say about a large number of the "present generation of editors and writers" of fanzines from time to time. This seems so obvious to me that I wonder why these cretins have missed it.

And that brings me at long last back to my opening thought: Although the signs are mixed, I feel moderately good about presentday fanzine fandom. It appears, despite the absence of any Absolutely Dynamite regular fanzines, to be thriving and healthier than it has been for a while.

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Look, when I talk about fandom or fanzines, it is going to be from the perspective of someone who has been an active fan for thirty-one years -- a span which is greater than the entire life-spans of some of the aforementioned cretins -- and that perspective is based on an accumulation of experience which covers all thirty-one years. But that does not mean that I think I have Seen It All (although it certainly feels that way sometimes, on bad days), nor does it mean that my experience suddenly stopped at some fixed point beyond which I have seen, heard, read, and experienced nothing. Life goes on, tra-la, and fandom goes on. I conduct my fanac in the present -- always have. People who think otherwise are simply displaying their ignorance.

When I became a fan, fandom was already well established, having had several peaks. I never got a single issue of Lee Hoffman's famous Sixth Fandom fanzine, QUANDRY, while she was putting it out. Like a lot of other post-Q fans I read borrowed and bought back issues, after the fact.

It never occurred to me that there was anything odd about that. I borrowed lots of old fanzines from older fans I knew, and sometimes when the chance presented itself I bought copies to keep and reread.



Most of the fans I know -- those in my circle of fandom -- did the same thing. Some of them borrowed my fanzines to read. I don't think it ever occurred to any of us -- from John D. Berry to Dan Steffan to Moshe Feder to Patrick Nielsen Hayden to Avedon Carol (to put a few randomly chosen names in a rough chronological order) -- that there was anything unusual about this. Part of it might be called a Roots-like curiosity about the history of one's 'family'. Another part is based on the awareness that a lot of good material has appeared in fanzines over the past fifty-odd years and the desire to check it out and enjoy it. Why, just recently I borrowed the "Al Ashley Issue" of Bill Rotsler's MASQUE ("The Gaudy Fanzine"), a Fifth Fandom fanzine, from Terry Carr because I wanted to refresh my memory of the Burbee and Laney material therein. I had last read the issue around 1955.

Standards change...but not really. The fifty years that encompasses almost all of the history of fanzine fandom is really a very short time when you think of, say, Twentieth Century writing. Fans who decry Willis as a writer of a long-dead era in the distant past are usually also among those still touting J. G. Ballard or Brian Aldiss as fresh modern sf writers or any one of a number of mainstream writers of the thirties or forties as pinacles of literary achievement yet to be matched by any sf writer. Fifty years is really a very short time in the history of letters, during which, despite the occasional literary fad, standards have hardly changed at all.

Dare I suggest that fandom's literary standards have not changed that much either?

Each era of fandom since fanzines ceased to be clumsy amateur journals at some point in the mid-thirties has had its share of good writers -- every damned one of whom, if his work is searched out, is still as readable today. It's bloody absurd to claim that the writers of any specific era were, because of their era, superior to those of all other eras. Yet, at the same time, you can't lump all good writers into any single box and say that they were all good for identical reasons. Talent is a very individual thing, and each and every fanwriter from Jack Speer to Eric Mayer has his individual qualities which distinguish him. Some are best appreciated in their original contexts; some stand out in almost any context.

Now it happens that Willis is one of these people who stand out, and as WARHOON 28 makes abundantly clear, he still stands out. But that doesn't mean that he stands alone, or that by appreciating him one is made incapable of appreciating anyone else. (Actually, of those within his own circle of peers, I always thought Bob Shaw, Jim White and Chuck Harris were Willis's equal in most ways -- which is what made that particular circle of fanwriters so important and influential.) And it might be born in mind that Willis was influenced to some extent by Charles Burbee (to whom he paid homage with WILDE HARE).

Nor does it mean that once one acknowledges Willis's evident excellences one must write "paid" to fandom, like the fabled patent-office clerk of the last century who thought there must surely be nothing left to invent.

In my mind I tend to divide fandom into two types ("The world is divided into two types," rich brown once told me; "the kind of people who think you can

divide people into two types and the kind of people who don't") -- those who "timebind" with an awareness of fandom that is historically comprehensive, and those who come into fandom briefly and never bother to inform themselves, treating their fanac essentially as a fad to be experienced and then left behind. I call these latter types "mayflies" when I call them anything. They are never around long, these mayfly types, but their brief tenure is often loud and stormy, their fanac often characterised by a lot of bravado about how they're gonna shake things up with something new (which only they in their naive ignorance think is new). I suppose Chris Estey is onesuch mayfly.

Mayflies don't want to hear about last year's good fanwriters. Anybody who is not absolutely of the present moment (preferably by virtue of a similar ignorance of previous moments) is passe.

Timebinders, on the other hand, simply cannot understand the mayfly's insistence on being, above all else, contemporary. To the timebinder good fanwriting is where you find it, and how old it may be is almost irrelevant.

Thus: Either the standards established by fanwriters like Willis et al always applied, still apply, and will continue to apply -- simply because they are the standards of good writing, irrespective of fandom -- whether in fact they are applied by Walt Willis or, say, Chris Priest (to grab the name of one contemporary fanwriter who in my opinion upholds such standards well); or we have no standards at all, only changeable whim, dictated by the fad or fashion of the moment.

I'm a timebinder. You knew that.

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In 1977 (in the letter column of STOP BREAKING DOWN 5) Mike Glicksohn pointed out that a Worldcon "is a whole series of small 'cosy intimate worlds', many of which never overlap or intersect with any of the others! ... Certainly many people belong to a variety of different subgroups and drift from one 'mini-con' to another, but some people stick with the same small group of friends and are literally never seen by the rest of the convention. This splintering into subgroups [is] I think a natural consequence of human nature and most people's inability to relate seriously to more than a few people at a time."

In 1982 (in the letter column of PONG 40) Noreen Shaw said "Ed Cox and others out here figure that even with the incredible growth of cons today ... there are still only about 200 Trufen on the planet."

What happened to Worldcons has happened to fanzine fandom: under the general umbrella of "fanzine fandom" there actually exists a number of smaller discrete fanzine fandoms. Some are geographical in nature (Australian, British, the US south); others are based on special interest apas, or simply the connective thread of friendships. And it's so easy for the friends of any given era to keep up fanac among themselves while disengaging from contemporary fandom. How many of you know who Ed Cox is? How many of you are acquainted with his long, four-decade history of fanac? Old fans have found themselves a Home in FAPA since the fifties; a later generation of old and almost-ex fans has re-



treated into two or three private apas, the oldest having been around for almost twenty years. Every so often these active fen of earlier eras poke their heads out, look around, and announce to their friends, "There's nothing out there but kids running around in pointy ears." Nervously fingering their propellor bean-ies they retreat once more to their private enclaves.

There are lots more than 200 "trufen" on the planet today. Most informed estimates run between 500 and 1,000. Clearly most fanzines can't reach that many people -- for reasons of both money and energy -- and thus every fanzine editor is immediately faced with a basic series of decisions as he or she assembles a mailing list.

In IZZARD 1 Jerry Kaufman responds to the "complaint that there aren't as many fanzines now as there used to be." He agrees, "There do seem to be less generally available titles, and genzines and personalzines do seem to come out less often." But, he adds, "It's evident that fanzine publishing is actually in a boom, with enthusiastic oldfen and youngfen alike cranking away, and even signs of a new generation of neos about to appear." It's Jerry's theory that although the number of fanzines has dropped, the quality of what remains is higher: "People assumed that a healthy fanpublishing scene required about 85 of these undistinguished zines to provide a backdrop to the ten or fifteen good zines that might appear at any one time." ... "Would anybody care to venture a guess at the number of fanzines coming out now? I won't, but I will guess that there are not 100 generally-available titles now, and that of those coming out a higher proportion are good."

It's all guesswork, and has been for a long time now. It's been at least twenty-five years since anyone has tried to keep track of all the currently available fanzines; it's been twenty years since anyone has tried to compile a directory of active fans. I suspect Jerry's wrong and about as many fanzines (outside of apas) are being published now as were in the past. (Add in all the many apa contributions and the number is vastly higher.) But I'm including a lot of fanzines Jerry may not get or may not think of as fanzines, like NOT MELLOW and its hybrid ilk. (Luke McGuff actually reviewed Jim Short's SHORT NEWS, a NYC punkrock newsletter, as a fanzine in RUNE; by the same token the earliest issues of Paul Williams' CRAWDADDY were fanzines.)

In my opinion what has been needed for the last few years has been a centralizing force in fanzine fandom: a focal point (if you will) with which all these various fanzine fandoms can maintain contact, and through which maintain contact with each other. The alternative seems to be a diffusion of talent and energy which creates at least the illusion that not much is happening in fanzines.

PONG was intended to serve such a function, and I think it was largely successful as far as it went -- but, with an ultimate circulation of about 150, it didn't go that far.

FILE 770 attacks the same problem with both a larger circulation and less force. Too much of its space is occupied with convention-bidding news and scandal and too little with fanzines themselves. (FILE 770 would be an ideal vehicle for a regular column of fanzine reviews which comprehensively listed and

commented upon currently published zines of every hue, but unfortunately that feature is absent.)

IZZARD is too new to assess yet, but as a 10-page monthly strikes me as neither fish nor fowl -- I think it should come out at least every three weeks if it is to be no larger, or go to 20 pages if it is to remain a monthly.

My feeling is that what fandom needs -- what it always needs -- is a sense, a shared perception, that things are going on. A sense of pace and excitement: "Oh boy! Here's the new BLANK-BLANK and the next issue of SOMETHING is supposed to be out soon, and gosh!" One monthly fanzine is nice, but at least three would be a lot better. And nothing beats a weekly or bi-weekly newssheet for pumping up the energy level.

I think that during its existence PONG's largest contribution to fandom, beyond of course its intrinsic excellence, was the sense of energy and momentum it generated. Every two -- or three weeks here was yet another issue of a fanzine which was at the least lively and never mechanically dull.

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I do agree with Jerry Kaufman, though, about the improvement in quality in current-day fanzines, as must have been obvious from my earlier comments on the subject. But if I am to get any more specific it will have to be within a more limited focus.

I have only recently started getting any of the current crop of Australian fanzines, in part as a result of Irwin Hirsh's kindness in lending me some of his own copies. (His motives are not purely altruistic; he expects me to review them for his fanzine as part of a series of "outside" guest-columnist reviews.) As I have yet to completely read and thoroughly digest them all, anything I say here must be preceded by that caveat. But I am struck by the similarity of appearance of so many Australian zines, from Q36 to PETER PRINCIPLE to WAHF-FUL to WEBERWOMAN'S WREVENGE. The "art" is, with rare exceptions (which only serve to underscore by contrast) mediocre to awful. It's a rare "fandom" which totally lacks cartooning or drawing talent, but Australian fandom seems to be having a thin time of it. (Come to think of it, I can't recall a good "down under" fan-artist since Mike Hinge left New Zealand in 1958.....)

The best of the sixties and seventies Australian fanzines were so neatly produced (and so ser-critical in tone) that the lack of art was hardly felt -- but the current crop of zines does use art, mostly as filler-art, and it has a horrible amateur look to it not far removed from grade-school "Kilroy was here" blackboard art. That most of it is electrostencilled is not a mitigating factor.

The A4 sheet size (8 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ ") is also awkward, as others have noted; THE MENTOR is by far the most attractive of this current crop at least half because it uses the smaller and better-proportioned quarto size.

My preliminary reading of these zines suggests to me that few of the Older Crowd (Bangsund, Gillespie, Edmonds, Foyster, et al) are active in current-day Australian fanzines. The Newer Crowd seems the usual Mixed Lot, with no obvious



standouts among them but a number of intelligent people capable of writing competently and perhaps better than that. The discussions of Real World topics -- from nuclear power to politics to rock music -- has an earnestness that I associate with apa-discussions and indeed a number of these zines strike me as transplanted apazines. There is little "fannishness" (whatever that word may mean to you; to me it implies at least a modicum of wit and wordplay) to be found in these zines although it's not entirely absent (THYME occasionally manages a modest amount). The overall feeling I get is that of a rather new fandom coping with geographical diffusion similar to that experienced by US fandom in the forties and fifties; most of these fanzines remind me of US fanzines of thirty years ago (but the run-of-the-mill US fanzines of that era rather than those recalled in legend).

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Canadian fandom perhaps does not deserve to be considered separately from US fandom; despite the fierce and feisty independence of Canadian fans most of them take part in a common NorthAm fandom. But I was amazed when I checked my mailing list for GAMBIT to discover that less than ten of the 260-plus people on my mailing list were Canadians. Relatively few of Canada's club-going, con-going fans appear to be into fanzines. Take away Mike Glicksohn, Taral Wayne MacDonald and Bill Gibson and who's left?

Well, there's Robert Runte, whose NEW CANADIAN FANDOM has to be one of the least interesting fanzines I've received in months. Typed on a word-processor and electrostencilled, it is impeccably ugly. Taral's "Same As It Ever Was" is the only even vaguely fannish item in an otherwise boringly serious clubzine -- and Taral's look at Canadian fanartists, while nicely illustrated with reproductions of their works, is almost totally lacking in insight -- consisting as it does of "After X we had Y" recitations of numbing tedium. Brad Foster's surreal cover (depicting among other things a lovingly detailed steam locomotive fired up and ready to go but lacking rails to follow) is the standout of the issue and indeed the only memorable item in the issue.

Makes me glad I completely missed THE MONTHLY MONTHLY.

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On the other hand I really regret having nodded off during most of Britain's seventies fanzines. As the quote from SBD earlier might have indicated, I've been digging up and borrowing back issues. PONG put me in contact with a number of current-day Britfen and as soon as I started reading their fanzines I quickly discovered where most of the talent in contemporary fanzine fandom was. Like the fannish fans of Sixth and Seventh Fandoms, many contemporary British fans are simultaneously involved in the professional side of sf, mostly as writers and editors. And in them I found the interest in and concern for actual quality in writing -- prose craftsmanship -- which seems absent from so much of the rest of fanzine fandom.

British fanzine fans (the better ones, anyway) actually think about their fanzines as fanzines. Rather than just typing up a batch of stencils full of

whatever contributions they've received, irrespective of the pieces' merit -- a common practice elsewhere in fandom -- these editors actually approach their fanzines as whole, integrated creations. They consider things like editorial balance and, given a batch of suitable contributions, the way these contributions should be ordered in presentation and paced to best effect. Malcolm Edwards does this outstandingly well in TAPPEN but he is far from unique.

Rob Hansen's EPSILON is for all intents and purposes a rigidly defined grouping of set-pieces, yet it is so unpretentiously and appropriately done that the end-effect is one of thoughtful balances. And Hansen keeps improving as an editor.

Kevin Smith told me that he likes to "play" with DOT, doing different things each issue with even the basic concept of his fanzine. He sees it as a living artform: something to do something fresh with each time out.

The fanzine in which you are reading this is equally a specifically-conceived editorial challenge for Paul Skelton, whose SFD does a different balancing act, half personalzine/journal, half fannish conversation with his readers.

Although British fandom does have its Keith Walkers, it seems to me to also have the highest percentage of talented writers and editors, making it a kind of fannish Mecca from my point of view. I wonder if geography plays a decisive role here; surely it interreacts with the general culture in unique ways. Then again, maybe it's just been luck which has brought so many talented fans together in Britain in the last dozen years. Brits swept the 1982 PONG Poll and I suspect they'll make a similar showing in 1983.

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And that leaves us with lumpy ol' US fandom. Large, sprawling, loosely connected, full of anomalous pockets, it's like a vast elephant around which we are all blind men, touching and describing and explaining only local portions.

I thought it was in terrible shape a couple of years ago, although here and there were always a few bright moments struggling through. While we put out PONG we created to some extent a coherence -- we at least described a circle -- and whether that will survive without PONG I can't as yet be sure, although I hope it does.

What bothers me about contemporary US fandom, though, is that the best zines are being done by the veterans. Arguably the best fanzine presently coming out is WARHOON. WARHOON has been through a number of incarnations since its first issue around thirty years ago, but the current incarnation is without question the most fannish. (Earlier incarnations concerned themselves more with politics or intellectual preoccupations like the meaning in the latest Fellini movie, for example.) WARHOON reflects its editor's preoccupations and, since finishing the epochal WARHOON 28, Bergeron has been significantly concerned with fandom itself.

I can visualize the scene: Bergeron has been laboring, on and off, for ten years on the WASH. During that time his outside-fandom activities have included



being a major art director in New York, owning a men's clothing store, and ghod knows whatever business ventures from which he has profited. He owns an apartment in the Dakota, the same building in which the Lennons own several apartments. He keeps in vague touch with some of his older friends in fandom, and is sought out every so often by newer, younger fans like the Nielsen Haydens who have heard of him and his vast labor of love.

Finally the job is done. WARHOON 28 is finished and the mundane business has been sold. Bergeron has taken up the life of a well-off beach-comber in Puerto Rico. It's time to put out The Ish and see what fandom's up to these days. Ummm...where is fandom these days? He cranes his head, taking in the wind-swept desolate landscape that was once so familiar to him. Fanzines... where are the fanzines? He hears laughter and noise -- the fans are still around...somewhere -- but sees little.

Like me, I think Richard Bergeron was dismayed at what he beheld -- until he discovered British fandom. "Aha!" he might have exclaimed. "Here it is!" And, again like me, I think Bergeron decided that if the fandom he had once known was gone he'd have to recreate it, reassemble it, refashion it out of all the bits and pieces scattered about. He started encouraging younger fans like Alan Bostick, the Nielsen Haydens, and their friends, while at the same time he began writing to his older friends in an attempt to reanimate them and re-involve them.

WARHOON is, I think, part of Bergeron's strategy for rebuilding US fanzine fandom into a semi-coherent, moderately self-aware entity. (And I can assure you that when Dan and I started PONG no one was more helpful or encouraging than Bergeron, who obviously saw PONG as an ally.) Having "come back" to fandom, he needed to get fandom to come back to him and be once again what it used to be.

This is hardly nostalgia, nor is it a reactionary attempt to make things over into a recreation of the Good Old Days. No, what Bergeron wants is the Good New Days, a fresh flowering of fandom. He knows the potential is there -- there's still plenty of talent, new and old, scattered about -- but it has to be realized.

There is but one way to do this: An example must be created. You get good fanzines from fandom by giving it good fanzines. You do the kind of fanzine you want to see and other fans read it and say, "Hey, I like that. I'd like to do a fanzine like that!" And sooner or later, if you've trotted out a good model, you'll start getting the reward of receiving fanzines of the kind you want.

Bergeron likes good, meaty, solid fannish fanzines. WARHOON 29 was just such a fanzine. WARHOON 30 is reputed to be 86 pages and about a year in the making. Dick is a bit greedy to pack everything he can into each issue that is under preparation; I watched this issue grow by thirty pages in the course of the last half-year. Things just kept coming in. He has a sense of editorial balance, proportion and pacing -- but he also has a sense of event. WARHOON 30 ought by all reports to be an event, and one which will set in motion fresh topics of conversation for fandom's next six months or so. (Let us not forget that it was Bergeron who set in motion all the Brit fanhistory in PONG, creating a strong topic of conversation which lasted months there.)

If Bergeron holds a pole position in NorthAm fanzine fandom, one of the other primary foci is to be found in Seattle. Seattle was a fanpublishing centre in the fifties when it supported the monthly CRY and the 1961 Worldcon climaxed that era. Of the old crowd the Busbys remain but the attention is now on a wholly different generation. In this new generation a fan like John D. Berry is an elder statesman (I'll bet that makes him wince), having pubbed his ishes as long ago as the latter half of the sixties; his WING WINDOW is a more fannish updating of his personalzine, HITCHHIKE, of the mid-seventies. John has picked up the experience over the years, coediting fanzines with the likes of Calvin Demmon (HOT SHIT) and myself (E-GOBOO), to put out a really major fanzine. WING WINDOW isn't it. It comes too easily for him and it shows. I keep wishing John would roll up his sleeves and get to it, but he lacks any real drive or goad and you know he never will. It's easier to coast, and even coasting he looks good.

Alan Bostick has apparently Pubbed His Last Ish, a disappointment to all of us who saw in his FAST & LOOSE the budding of a real talent. I used to lump Alan in my mind with Gary Farber and Patrick Nielsen Hayden: they were three guys who read old fanzines the way a Baptist reads his Bible, and they were hip to all the old lines -- three guys...that's not too many; you know the riff -- but their fanzines had a certain recycled quality to them. They used the old vocabulary well enough, but without really making it theirs. I used to read through their fanzines with the feeling that what I was reading had no substance -- it was thin, almost transparent: all careful style and no real content. It was all our bad habits from twenty years ago, isolated, refined, synthesized, and recycled in perfect stylizations.

When the first FAST & LOOSE showed up in my mail I thought it was more of the same, but somewhere around issue 2 I realized that it wasn't, after all. Alan was starting to find his own voice amid the borrowed tricks and trappings. Given time, I think F&L might have turned Alan Bostick into a major new fannish writer. Too bad it didn't have that time; too bad Alan hasn't taken that time since.

Gary Farber used to put out these awfully scruffy fanzines which brimmed with misfocussed energy, back when he lived in Brooklyn. I used to live in Brooklyn, and I could identify with that, but I didn't think a lot of his fanzines. These days Gary puts out replica editions of THE ENCHANTED DUPLICATOR (a replica of the Ross Chamberlain-illustrated edition) and similar items for distribution at conventions. Now that he could do a good fanzine, now that he has all the tools at his disposal and the necessary skills, Gary puts in most of his fanac time on convention committees. Disgusting waste.

That leaves the Nielsen Haydens. At present they are turning out both the best and the most fanzines from Seattle. They have three active titles: IZZARD, the new monthly already mentioned; TELOS, which struggles to maintain a once-or-twice-a-year schedule (next issue due in December) and is a meaty, bouncy, etc. fanzine in the WARHOON mould; and ZED, their FAPazine which is also distributed to nearly 150 non-FAPans and sits in size and ambition roughly midway between IZZARD and TELOS. Other zines like the locally-distributed FLASH POINT, seem to have receded from their busy schedule -- which is probably just as well.

I wonder how long either Patrick or Teresa can maintain this juggling act,



but I wish them success because they seem to be getting better at it.

TELOS, despite its excellences, strikes me as their least successful fanzine. In part I think this is because it is their most obviously derivative fanzine, the one which least reflects their own perceptions of and solutions to the problems involved with a fanzine of this size. Taking on the two extra coeditors (Farber and Haskell) was a mistake because it underscored the lack of genuine personality TELOS had in its own right. (The idea of multiple coeditors has rarely worked for most fanzines; the only reason it worked for VOID was that the four of us had very similar views and something of a gestalt personality -- enough of one that some people claimed to be unable to tell us apart. The "Let's have multiple coeditors like VOID" idea has never struck me as a good one, principally because it has almost always been done in imitation and not because it made any kind of good sense in itself.)

TELOS has been something of an imitation of a good genzine of the type often seen during the last thirty years -- and if I was half as keen on The Good Old Days as some people think, I'd be crazy about TELOS for that reason alone. But since the extra coeditors were jettisoned TELOS has begun to find its own voice -- which is necessarily that of the Nielsen Haydens.

Patrick, as I said earlier, used to sound like he'd read too many Sixth and Seventh Fandom fanzines of the kind Terry Carr and I used to put out. This kind of thing always made me uncomfortable -- Arnie Katz used to drive me up the wall with the way he'd borrow from VOID -- and I wonder if my generation made Burbee equally uncomfortable with the way we stole from him. It's taken Patrick a bit longer than it did Alan, but he too is beginning at last to speak with his own voice. A piece in the last ZED on a convention nitrous oxide party struck me as the best thing I'd ever seen by him, not the least because it was wholly original and underivative, drawing its material from contemporary party conversation and not twenty- to forty-year-old recycled catchphrases.

Teresa, fortunately, has never been as hung up on The Old Ghods; her writing is personal and direct, and if still sometimes a bit earnest is developing a nice ironic tone at the appropriate spots. Her need is simply to continue to refine her style; her voice is clearly established.

It's never all that easy for a married (or unmarried) couple to coedit a fanzine. Balances have to be found in who does what. And, more important, either two very distinct and individual voices must be maintained or a common voice comfortable to both must be found. All too often in such cases the end-product is simply the work of one of the two who is clearly the dominant voice in the fanzine.

Patrick and Teresa seem to have split the chores more evenly than most; it helps that Teresa is the artist and calligrapher and that both can write well. It's a bit early yet to see whether or not they will opt for a common voice in their writing but it's already there in their editing.

TELOS, I suspect, will lumber along on its once-or-maybe-twice-a-year schedule, the gaps between issues causing each issue to exhibit its own personality, a reflection of changing editorial goals. It may publish what object-

ively will be the best material to be found in any of the Nielsen Hayden fanzines, but its evolution toward its own distinct and distinctive personality will be long and drawn out. I suspect it will be looked back upon more as a series of milestones along the road followed by the Nielsen Haydens with their more frequent fanzines.

The Nielsen Haydens -- especially in TELOS -- reflect WARHOON in a number of indirect ways. A fanzine which is a lot more upfront about being under WARHOON's influence but at the same time manages to be less derivative is Dan Steffan's BOONFARK.

I can't be too objective about BOONFARK since its editor has been a close friend for years and I ran all but the xeroxed issue (number 4) off on my mimeos. Still, I've watched BNF grow from its early origins with pleased surprise.

I first knew of Dan Steffan as one of a young crop of fan cartoonists who also put out a fanzine called LIZARD INN. LI was a modest zine but it had a good feel to it. Its essential problem was Dan's essential problem: he didn't write too good. His writing vocabulary was an extension of his normal conversational vocabulary: full of the sort of gramatical errors and misconstructions we all get away with in conversation. His writing was artless, styleless in fact. It didn't seem to matter as long as he was primarily a cartoonist. And even in a simple, unpretentious fanzine like LIZARD INN it didn't matter too much. He was young. Young fans made mistakes like that.

A decade has passed. The thin early issues of BOONFARK (which was pretty much a continuation of LIZARD INN) mutated into thick issues of a major genzine. Dan Steffan the faneditor snuck up on me while my back was turned.

Dan has been paying a lot more attention to his writing since we started doing PONG -- although the results have yet to show up in BNF; I don't think Dan has really figured out yet what he wants to do with his editorial -- but what surprised me was the attention he was paying to his editing.

Dan is not one of those fanzine editors who accepts willy nilly everything he's sent. He has been known to reject a piece, and even those he accepts are subject to editing. I watched him turn Bill Rotsler's article in BNF 7, for instance, from a casual tossoff into a sharper, better organized, and more anecdotal piece. He all but rewrote the piece, sent it back to Bill for approval, and received Bill's blessings on the improved version. Having read the original piece, I was impressed by how much Dan improved it. What I'm saying is that Dan is genuinely functioning as an editor here, in a fashion which may be commonplace in Britain but is almost unheard of in America.

Having said that, I must add that despite Dan's developing talents as an editor and his obvious talents as an artist and designer, BOONFARK still has a way to go. It has already proved itself as a vehicle for high-quality material, but has yet to achieve consistency of design within a single issue, and is still an adolescent in its development, sometimes gawky and awkward, occasionally blemished by sudden pimples, and brimming with unfocussed energy. Like TELOS, BOONFARK observes such long intervals between issues that evolution and growth is a slow-motion, long, drawn-out process. But, like TELOS, BOONFARK is already



one of the best fannish genzines in the country.

There are a variety of other decent, if yet unexceptional, fanzines around and I'm not going to start listing them here. But one thing I do want to observe about them all is that they are produced by people who have been fans for at least half a dozen years and more likely a dozen or more. A few are produced by ancient farts like Bergeron and me.

I don't think this was ever true before to the extent that it is now. Certainly before the seventies the rule was that the majority of decent fanzines were the work of fans who had been around only two or three, five at the most, years. Standout zines, like LIGHTHOUSE, WARHOON, or HABAKKUK, tended to be by older fans, but they coexisted with fanzines like the young John D. Berry's FOOLSCAP, Andy Porter's ALGOL (then a dittoed genzine), or Arnie Katz's QUIP, and a lot of others besides. And traditionally the best fanzines -- like QUANDRY, VEGA, and PSYCHOTIC -- had been put out by young new fans who had, in addition to their talent, lots of energy with which to put out a monthly fanzine. The last fan like that was probably Michael Gorra, who pubbed his last ish seven or eight years ago, after which he went off to college.

Why should this be?

I think it has something to do with the fragmentation of fandom I've already described. I suspect that the average talented new fan does not discover fandom the way we once did and does not enter it through the same door. He does not discover fanzines; she discovers clubs and conventions. The new fan goes directly into the social structure of local face-to-face fandom. When he or she discovers fanzines they are probably either club newsletters or apazines.

One such fan was Marty Cantor, who was additionally handicapped by the fact that he encountered first the LASFS, where membership is over a hundred, and if the many convolutions of local socializing is not enough there's also a weekly club apa. One can only be amazed that Marty persevered and eventually got a glimpse of sunlight reflecting off genzine fandom beyond.

Marty and I sat down one evening in my room at the Chicon for an hour's discussion of our differences, an extension of the phone call of the week before. We ironed out a few misconceptions and gradually I began to realize that this man, a tobacconist a few years older than I who affected a Prince Valiant haircut and a goattee, virtually a walking image of my stereotype of a LASFan, a faneditor noted for his partiality toward "putrid" humor, this man was in his own way every bit as "fannish" in his heart-of-hearts as I was or indeed anyone I knew. He just had this handicap: he'd entered fandom through one of the non-fannish doors.

I still don't think HOLIER THAN THOU is a very good fanzine, but I do see in it the hand of someone who is groping his way in the right direction and who can be expected to make steady improvements in HTT as his grip becomes surer.

But if Marty is the best the "current generation" of fans has to offer, we're in trouble. We're in trouble because we ought to have a dozen or more Marty Cantors, not just one. And how long has Marty been around? Can he be

considered to be really of the "current generation"?

Talent is such an individual thing. Every fan worthy of remembering has been uniquely distinctive in personality and ability. You can't go out and drag prospective talents in off the streets. You have to hope that even if you can't see them they're out there somewhere on the edges of fandom, and that some of them will catch a glimpse of reflected sunlight and make their way into our circles, attracted by the light.

To that end about all we can do is to go on Pubbing Our Ishes and radiating what light we can into the darkness.

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"That's it?" Elkhart said when he'd finished reading all that I'd written. "That's the Big Wrapup of your piece? Pub Your Ish and be a Bright Light?" The sarcasm dripped from his voice.

"Too inspirational for you?" I muttered. I was exhausted. I'd been up all night writing this piece. It had gone on a lot longer than I'd expected. I'd even thrown out four more pages which I'd reread after sunup. Sunup...was that the unconscious source of the "reflected sunlight" imagery? Hard to say; I was exhausted.

"Look, Ted," E. Knowles said, attempting a conciliatory tone. "Maybe you just bit off too much this time. Did Skelton really want something this; umm, encyclopaedic?"

"I dunno," I said. "There seemed to be a lot of ground to cover."

"And in places, weren't you a bit too defensive? I mean, why bother justifying yourself? The people who don't understand you, like Nicholas, aren't going to change their minds about you -- nothing you can say will change their minds and you know that. And those who do understand you don't need to be told again."

"Sure," I said, "but things are so fragmented in fandom these days, you think you're standing on solid ground when you say something and then you find out you're not. I just felt that before I started giving my opinions on fandom I had to create the context. I mean, after all, this piece is going to appear in a British fanzine -- it's hard to know who my audience will be or how familiar they are with, say, NorthAm fandom."

"I noticed you didn't give much space to British fandom in the piece."

"Of course not. Why should I tell them about something they presumably know more about than I do? So get off my back, Elkhart."

"You still need a Big Finish," E. Knowles Elkhart said. "Some kind of punchline."



"I could punch you -- that would make for a Big Finish," I said.

E. Knowles Elkhart, the man the Scientologists gave an Abnormal IQ, considered my words judiciously, observed my stance critically, and then made a hasty exit.

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END

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#### SMALL FRIENDLY BIT -- PART TWO

Ted says that he doesn't know who he's talking to. "How can this be?" I ask myself. "Don't I usually print my mailing list?" Of course I do. I figure that as you are all members of the 'I Think Skel's Fanzines Are Triffic' Club then you ought to know the names of your fellow ~~141414~~ members. Of course a long list of names isn't all that informative so this time I've broken it down by country. If your name is underlined then a hideous doom (and a future lack of skelzines) is about to befall you unless you do 'Certain Things'. Onward:-

AUSTRALIA (15 copies) -- The place where all the fanzines come from.

Ashby; AUSFA; Clarke; Dedman; Edmonds (& Brown); Faulder; Gillespie; Herman; Hirsh; Lindsay; Lockwood; Ortlieb; Smith; Toluzzi; Weber.

CANADA (8 copies) -- The cold bit at the top of America.

Cohen; George; Giguere; Glicksohn; Hall; Macdonald; Runte; Skene.

NETHERLANDS (1 copy) -- Somewhere across the Channel.

Goudriaan.

NEW ZEALAND (1 copy) -- Where the cheap butter used to come from (see 'E.E.C.').

Hills. Have you thought about moving to The Netherlands and keeping Rolf company?

UNITED KINGDOM (54 copies) -- Where the spies come from.

Akien; Ashworth; Ashley; Barker; Bentcliffe; Bell; Bennet; Boal; Byers; Campbell; Clarke; Dorey (& Reynolds); Edwards; Ferguson; Fine; Goodall; Hamilton; Hansen; Harris; Hibbert; Hill; Howard; Jackson; James; Jeeves; Kemp; Langford; Lawrence (special one-issue-only reprieve for slipsheeting above and beyond the call of duty); Lewis; Lindsay; Lyon; Marshall; Maules; Mearae; Nicholas (& Hanna); Ounsley; Owen; Pardoes (and before you ask, no, I haven't checked to see how many of these names belong to women -- I can safely leave that to you); Piper; Presford; Robertson; Rowe (& Doyle -- yech, I know Dave, but my file/address cards are colour-coded); Scantlebury (no way am I trading for that); Sharpes; Shaw; Skel; Smith; Stephenson-Payne; Thomson; Violent-and-screaming-wife-who-has-just-found-out-that-the-postage-for-this-issue-will-set-us-back-over-£40 (do not

look for any zippy little monthlies from this direction, Ted); Walker; Warminger; Williams; Willis.

U.S.A. (68 copies) -- Reagansville.

Andrushack; Arthurs; Bergeron; Berry; BSFC; Boston; Bowers; Brooks; Browns; Brown; Cantor; Carol; Carr; Chu; Cline; Coad; Danielson; Danner; Deindorfer; Denton; Dobson; Feder; Fletcher; Flynn; Gaier; Geis; Gilliland; Goldberg; Hanke-Woods; Hlavaty; Hoffman; Hollyn; Josenhans; Kaufman; Lieberman; Logan; Marion; Mayer; Meadows III; Miller; Neufeld; Nielsen-Haydens; Palmers; Palter; Patterson; Polack; Purcell; Rogers; Salomon; Schalles; Schweitzer; Scrivner; Seelig; Sellars; Schiffman; Smith; Steffan; Stopa; Thorne; Townley; Tutihasi; Wallace; Ward; Warner; White; Whitmore; Williams; Williams (aha, but which one of you is teetering on the brink? Only The Shadow knows.....)

So there you have it, and twenty-six of you in danger of joining the thirty dropped since SFD 21. Even Maggie Thatcher could not display a steelier will or greater inflexibility. That takes care of 147 copies and my hoped-for total for this issue (with 17 stencils yet to run/self-destruct) is 164. I have worked out roughly (and excluding inordinate typewriter-repair charges) that this fanzine has cost us about 40p (66¢) per copy to produce and mail and the postage represents about 60% of that. Gosh, all these exciting little statistics!

Speaking of statistics -- next issue (STATISTICAL FINDINGS DISCLOSED number 22) reveals some amazing facts about you. Yes, I took a close look at my mailing list and there have been STARTLING FACTS DISCOVERED. But before next issue I simply have to tell you some shocking news which affects us all and will horrify you...whoops, no room -- guess it'll have to wait until SFD 22 after all.



To:- Lee Hoffman.  
350 Northwest Harbor Boulevard,  
Port Charlotte,  
Florida 33952,  
U. S. A.

SURFACE MAIL  
PRINTED PAPER  
REDUCED RATE

Return address: Skel and "Cas" -- 25 Bowland Close; Offerton; Stockport; Cheshire; SK2 5NW.