



HANSEN '88---

EPSTILON

****THE AMERICAN CONNECTION.....****NOTIONS ON NOTIONS.....****READ....

EDITORIAL

EDITORIAL.....THE REASON FOR IT ALL.

EDITORIAL

For various reasons and against current trends in British fandom, or rather in that part of it that interests me, I've decided to expand my American readership. That's the fact of it but the why is little harder to explain.

For some time now there's been a feeling among the top British fanwriters that apart from such 'zines as MOTA and SPICY RAT TAILS there was little of any interest on the American scene. This may well be true and I would be very surprised if there were any fanwriters over there to compare with Roy Kettle, D. West, and Dave Langford, but there might be, I don't actually know since I've only seen a handful (hopefully untypical) of American 'zines, a situation I'd like to remedy. It's a little sad that ace fanwriters such as Greg Pickersgill only send a handful of their 'zines across the pond and so Americans are denied top quality fanwriting from someone who has been the prime mover in British fandom for most of the seventies and who, aided and abetted by Roy Kettle, put out FOULER, the seminal fanzine of it's generation (in more ways than one).

There are other reasons, of course, more nebulous and harder to define but real nonetheless. For instance next year Britain hosts the Worldcon for the first time in a decade-and-a-half and since so many American fans will be descending on us it seems like a good idea to get to know a bit more about them and for them to learn a little about those of us they've only heard mentioned before. Hopefully ODZUNSODZ may supply some small insights in this direction, being a (fairly) true diary of recent goings on in fannish circles over here and NOTIONS may give an insight into not only my own concerns but those of British fandom as a whole.

I had announced my intention of seeking an expanded American readership in EP. 2 but inertia got the better of me and nothing came of it so this time I wrote down the names of a few folk notably visible on the American scene and sent to that man Peter Roberts for their addresses. Only a half dozen or so this time out but if response is good (not necessarily favourable but good) then we might see about increasing that number. By the way (And this applies to British fans as well as Americans) if there's anyone out there mad enough to want them issues 1,2,&3 are available on request.

As to that mention of the NOTIONS column above some of you may be wondering where it came from and why. If so see my reply to Joseph Nicholas' letter in the loccol. Actually NOTIONS is a totally new departure for me and I'm half expecting to get shat upon from a great height as a result. We shall see.

All references to fandom from hereon in will be to British fandom.

ROB HANSEN.....

****THOUGHTS ON EASTERCONS.....**FAN HISTORY PRESERVED.....**CON
ON CAMPUS REVISITED.....**FANNISH DYNASTIES AND A NEW BSFA.....IN..

NOTIONS

NOTIONS.....IN WHICH THE EDITOR TRIES PUNDITRY.

NOTIONS

How long is a fannish generation and how long is it before that generation makes it's mark on fandom as a whole? This question occurred to me the other day when I was re-reading my sole copy of FOULER, undoubtedly the fanzine that had the greatest impact on the generation of it's day and I began casting about me for visible evidence of any impact made by my generation on the larger body of fandom, evidence that exists, I'm happy to say.

Taking a fannish year as the time between two Eastercons I belong to the new wave of fans that had their first con in '74 or '75 at Tynecon or Seacon. That wave included people such as Dave Langford, Merf Adamson, Paul Kincaid, Joseph Nicholas, David Bridges, Kev Smith, John and Eve Harvey, Paul Ryan, and others. Of this new wave Dave Langford is undoubtedly the fan who has been most successful, receiving the best across the board critical acclaim for his scandal sheet TWLL DDU (Winner of the 1977 Nova Award for Best Fanzine) and others such as Paul Ryan and Merf Adamson have burned brightly only to apparently fade from the fannish scene without trace. So what about the rest of us? All the people mentioned are active in fandom, most of us producing fanzines, but have we achieved all that might reasonably be expected of us? Are we still growing or has stagnation already set in? Probably only an in-depth D.West survey could answer such a question and only time will supply the perspective necessary to compare our efforts with those of earlier generations.

Another question, of course, is when does a fannish generation end? Is it when the angry young fan of today becomes the established BNF of tomorrow, complacent in his place at the top of the fannish heap and content to issue sophorisms designed to maintain the status quo he helped to create instead of issuing the fiery tirades that gave the fandom of his day a well deserved kick in the pants? I think it is, change and progress coming when the top dogs are toppled from their positions of eminence and a new group takes their place to impose their own ideas on fandom. More to the point is whether there's much further that fandom can go without backsliding. We've travelled so far down the fannish path in recent years that a kind of sercon backlash seems almost inevitable. Christ, I have been mulling over the possibility of including a sercon section in EPSILON for sometime now and that's a notion that not so very long ago would have been expelled from my mind in double quick time. Perhaps the Harveys have got it right after all in GHAS with it's mixture of sercon and fannish pieces, a 'zine where I've been sublimating some of my own sercon urges of late in an effort to hold back the entropy. Seems to me that my fannish generation needs a fan to lead us into the light...but where might that man be?

Finally, and possibly most ominously, is the lack of any visible wave of new fans following the one I rode in on. Granted new fans take

a while to become visible in 'zines but three years for godssakes?!!
Myself I think it quite likely that all the potential fannish fans of
the past three years have been siphoned off into the BSFA (exhumed
three years ago, as it happens) and in view of the bad press we got
from the BSFA in that time they're probably lost to us for ever. Even
now I'm dubious as to whether our apparent reconciliation with the BSFA
in recent months will improve the situation. We can but hope.

At Skycon Leroy Kettle was interviewed and in my humble opinion
this occasion was Roy at his finest, the wit and the quips, the sheer
genius of the man as he had us hanging on his every word and move
being the stuff of legend. Fortunately that session was recorded and
by all accounts the recorded version is just as funny as the original
version was. Fannish history captured here and it set me to wondering
just what had been recorded, filmed, or photographed in the past that
should be preserved and made accessible to the fans of today.

I've been thinking along these lines for some time now and have
come to the conclusion that some sort of fannish foundation should be
set up to ensure that such things are preserved. Obviously too formal
and rigid a structure would not work for something as loose as fandom
(although the BSFA seems to work, just about) so I envisage a structure
split into quite definite areas.

Firstly there's the tape library. Basically this involves some-
one borrowing tapes from those who have them and then taping copies
until gradually a reasonable collection is built up under one roof.
Now, either these tapes could be lent out or, as I prefer, it should
be possible for fans to make their own copies of these tapes from the
master collection since the more copies there are in existence the
greater are their chances of future survival. Such tapes should include
stuff like the Kettle interview, the Bob Shaw Eastercon speeches, etc.

Secondly there is a lot of stuff in old fanzines that would be
of interest to today's fan and it might not be a bad idea to establish
a 'zine that reprints the best from previous eras. Obviously the
editor of such a 'zine would need access to a large collection of
fanzines, good editing ability and an interest in fannish history.
Curiously enough when I think about this the name that keeps to mind
is Peter Roberts. The 'zine should be quarterly or somesuch with
thematic issues (best of Hyphen, for instance) and with a condition
that material printed is at least five years old. Also it might be
an idea if such a 'zine carried a photo page showing fans and events
of yesteryear. Analytical articles on the significance of the people
and events in a given issue is also an idea.

Thinking about it an organisation such as envisaged above might
not be possible without a BSFA-type structure and subscriptions but
I for one would be only too pleased to subscribe to such an organis-
ation (or even just pay for the 'zine) because it would offer me
more of what I'm interested in than the BSFA ever could.

As a corollary to all this it struck me as a good idea, if Bob
agreed, to gather tapes of his Eastercon speeches together, package

them in the manner of 'The Astral League's Golden Greats' and sell them to the larger body of convention attendees, profits going to TAFF or other worthy charity, even an as yet unformed fannish foundation, for instance.

As you will no doubt know we had our share of hassles with the hotel at Skycon this easter, an aggravation that seems almost to have acquired a horrible inevitability of late. It was the same old story with the hotel trying to shut the bar at only one o'clock in the morning, locking the fan room etc., only this time we had the added novelty of having the toilets locked in the night by staff obviously convinced we were gonna tear out the fittings or steal the paper. Now this kind of jive we can do without and certain fans, who shall remain nameless, got more than somewhat pissed off with this and reacted accordingly. Their actions, while far from laudable, were understandable. Do we really need all this? I mean most every year it's the same story, the beer runs out because the hotel doesn't believe what the concom tells them, the bar shuts early and there are hassles over the noise from room parties. Time, I think, to call a halt.

I was one among quite a few people at the con kicking around the idea of having a permanent Eastercon venue. You may lose the pleasure in exploring a new and exiting hotel but this soon passes anyway and you have more important things to worry about. A hotel that has hosted an Eastercon before will know what to expect and we will be accomodated accordingly thus ensuring a damn sight less friction all around. Such a hotel would have to be central and the perfect choice would thus appear to be the De Vere in Coventry. The main difficulty I can see in this situation is putting together a concom every year, but then the Novacon seems to run smoothly enough.

While on the subject of con hotels something which I would like to see is hotel prices quoted that don't include breakfast but do include VAT. Why, you ask? Quite simply because I and others like me, such as Harry Bell, usually get up too late to have breakfast anyway and would prefer not to pay for something we don't get. Give us our own choice. Having VAT included in quoted prices seems a fairly obvious thing to me because then you know the real cost and can budget accordingly.

While still on the subject of hotels and although room rates at the Heathrow were remarkably good (in fact having seen the usual rates I think the committee pulled off a considerable coup) it's becoming increasingly apparent that with rising prices a number of fans can no longer afford to attend conventions these days (Bryn Forsey springs to mind of course; down boy). Now I know that the campus con has been tried before and it was a godawful mess but surely it's not beyond the bounds of reasonable expectation that there is a campus somewhere in the country where a good con could be held? If so then it must be worth trying again, assuming of course that Mancon hasn't closed too many minds against such a possibility.

****EDITOR KIDNAPPED AS HE MOVES HOUSE.....*****WHY GREG PICKERSGILL
NO LONGER FINDS ANAL HUMOUR A PILE OF LAFFS.....**IT'S ALL IN.....

ODZUNSODZ

ODZUNSODZ.....the way we were.....honest!

ODZUNSODZ

EPSILON WAY TO TIPPERARY (and to bloody Newport as well.)

As might be expected the biggest single event in my life in the last few months was the traumatic experience of having to come to terms with washing my own socks. In other words I left home.....

Since I was moving into Mike Collins' flat and he was moving to London Greg Pickersgill and Simone Walsh were hiring a van in London to move my stuff to Newport and then transport Collins to the big city. They duly arrived and box after box of my stuff was loaded up.

"Bet you've forgotten yer can-opener!" joked Greg. I had. Collapse of hirsute party.

At the flat Mike awaited us with Dai Price and almost as many boxes as I had brought. Mike's stuff was loaded, mine was unceremoniously dumped in a corner of the flat and we trolled on down to the pub, soon to be joined by Bryn Fortey. At some stage during the proceedings Simone asked me what I was doing that evening.

"No! a great deal", I replied, as I allowed the medicinal fluid to bathe my tonsils.

"Then why not come back to London with us?"
A fair quantity of medicinal fluid sloshed onto the table as I jerked upright with shock/horror/surprise.

"There's no way I'm gonna go up to London on the day I move to Newport. Christ, I haven't even unpacked! No, no way."

On the way to London Dai Price bemoaned his fate.

"It's alright for you but I told my sister to keep my dinner warm in the oven as I'd only be gone for an hour or so."

Nubile Mike Collins just sat there looking smug - but then he had been kissed goodbye by Bryn (Malcolm Edwards eat yer heart out!). Still, it was a good night spent in the company of such as the Charnocks, Edwards, Chris Atkinson, Mike Collins' girlfriend.....Mike Collins' girlfriend, you gasp! Yeah, the smooth little sod said goodbye to his lady in Newport on Friday night and next night he's in the arms of another. Perhaps he's not small all over after all.

Next day was pleasant enough with a walk along the canal spent admiring the ducks and dead cats floating on the surface but since Skycon has come between the event and my writing this many a brain cell has been destroyed and my memory is blurred. However, I do remember a snatch of conversation where, for some reason, Simone was asking us what method we used to determine who was 'it' when we were kids.

"We used to use dip." she said.

"Don't know that one," I replied, "we used 'dip, dib, dib, my blue ship'"

"That's what I meant. You can't say dib anyway or it'd be 'dib dib dib"

my blue shib!"

"Yes, but as kids back in Wales we were all heavily adenoidal."

Soon it was time to go. I arrived back in my flat at nine on Sunday evening, pretty beat, and began to unpack.

IF YOU GO TO SKYCON DISCO...(..you're sure to meet some drunken people there)

For me the Eastercon was a five day event, Thursday to Monday, as usual. I arose at the ungodly time of a quarter to seven, finished off all the food likely to go bad, abluted, and headed for the bus station. Being the keen young fan that I am I'd been looking forward to the con for weeks but as the bus pulled out it somehow didn't feel as if the time had come.

Be there before noon, Greg had said, so I was. Through the frosted glass of the 7A front door I could see a small and hairy figure bounding down the stair. It opened, I looked down, he looked up.

"Christ you're fuckin' early ain'tcha?" I had the distinct feeling we'd played this scene somewhere before.

"Got yer beans for the con, then?"

"Yeah, some cans of rice pudding as well."

"Rice pudding?"

"That's right, the food of the gods. It's Ambrosia after all."

Harry Bell, Rob Holdstock, Mike Collins, Brian Parker and friend Terri, Peter Roberts, and the Harveys were all staying the night so as most of these had arrived we set off for the hotel. On arriving the first shock was the bar prices. 60p a pint!!! It looked like being a dry, dry weekend. However we discovered a pleasant pub down the road called 'The Air Hostess' and a good time was had by all. Somehow drinking in a pub didn't seem to be the right type of thing to do at a con but suffused by inner glows we decided it was gonna be a good one.

Friday arrived and those staying at 7A were given a breakfast equal to the task of keeping them full all day. Someone, of course, had to go back for a second helping of beans.

"I intend to be jet-propelled at this con." I said, in explanation.

A short journey and we were there. I was sharing a room with Mike Collins, hence the large cork I'd packed with my effects, but I didn't let that worry me as as I hurried on down to the hucksters' room only to find very little I actually wanted to buy.

Anyway the day wore on and the night wore out and I'd use that line if D.West hadn'ta got there first. So on to the evening when strange things happened, things like all the toilets being locked - but before that was the punch. Ian Maule, it was reported, had gone out to buy cider for a punch to be served in the fan room, so down to the fan room trooped a fair slice of active British fandom to partake of this free lubricant. However, after sitting outside said room for an hour or so some doubts were aired.

"Christ, where the fuck is Maule?" said Greg

Rumbles of discontent, and of stomachs, grew louder and offers were made to separate Mauler from various parts of his anatomy. Two hours had passed and the cleaners came down to clean the fan room whereupon Greg leapt to his feet (he didn't have far to go) and followed the hapless women into the room. Soon an argument was in full flow and one of the cleaners was sent for reinforcements and soon a fearsome apparition, not unlike the Hulk in drag, arrived. She too disappeared into the room, a room locked from the inside. What was going on in that room? Soon more reinforcements arrived in the form of the under-manager and a flunky who also went in. After a short time these left and after a hell of a time Greg emerged with the Hulk almost eating out of his hand.

"They won't let us use the fan room without Maule and the little fucker's gone to bed!"

Not long after, to everyone's disgust, the toilets were locked but there was a reaction to this. Sometime later a hairy London-based Ratfan was seen leaving the vicinity of a large wet stain on the stairs whilst doing his fly up. Who says the art of protest is dead?

Saturday saw me staggering down to the con-hall wide-eyed and legless (more wide-legged and eyeless if the truth be known) to see a panel entitled 'Organisations in SF' which featured Leroy Kettle as chairman, Kieth Freeman as Keith Freeman, Dave Cobbledick as token BSFA spokesman, Greg Pickersgill as token inanimate object and Malcolm Edwards as token token. It was boring so I left. In no time hardly at all I was back to see th Bob Shaw speech along with most of the con attendees. Not as good as Bob usually is but still good. (see NOTIONS).

Dinner meant a trip to the Air Hostess with Gra Poole, Paul Kincaid, and Joseph Nicholas where I ordered a large pizza.

"No large 'uns left will two small 'uns do?"

"Fine by me" I replied.

After a godawful long time they arrived and I discovered that I had the last two in the place so, not unnaturally, I garnered some hostile looks from the others. Obviously, you realise, I cut each pizza in half and shared them out. No chance. I scoffed the lot without a pang of guilt and thoroughly enjoyed it. Still, there were always toasties on hand for the lads. Later I called in at the PickersWalsh hotel room where about ten people were eating smuggled-in food and where, in time, a number of crude jokes about plastic inflatable sex-dolls and Come dancing were squeezed out of me.

Five o'clock saw the Kettle interview in the fan room officially conducted by Simone Walsh but, for reasons unknown, assisted by John Piggott. Though only attended by twenty or so fans this was undoubtedly the best item of the whole convention because not only is Roy Kettle probably the worlds best fanwriter but he's also the best raconteur in British fandom. Suffice it to say that he had those twenty people falling about as he recalled various tales from his fannish past in his own highly individualistic style. (More on this in NOTIONS.)

Saturday evening brought the inevitable Fancy Dress parade, this time of a high standard with a very good Vampirella (still don't know how that costume stayed on) and a young lady in black stockings and suspenders, garters, black underwear and carrying a whip, much appreciated by the male contingent in the audience even though we didn't know what she was supposed to be. And then, of course, there was Brian Burgess, looking like an ad for a Chivers jelly with the rolls of fat on his overweight frame fully exposed save for a minute G-string and a pair of shoes. Arrgghh!! I was heard to bemoan the fact that no fannish fans indulge in these idiot antics, too high and mighty they, and have somehow talked myself into appearing in the Novacon fancy dress as Boyle's Law, a visual joke in appalling taste. Double Arrgghh!! (Edwards, you bum, if you're reading this get off your ass and get hold of a chemical bog and some castors 'cos I fully intend to see you in that fancy dress with or without your consent.....on which ominous note.....)

Following the Fancy Dress was the disco where I got hot, having a vest on under my T-shirt. For some reason me stripping to my waist to remove the offending garment caused some people to fall about laughing. Puny I may be but there's no need to hurt a guy's feelings y'know.

At some time during the proceedings Peter Weston told Greg of a discussion he'd been having earlier as to who would come out on top in an altercation between Greg and Harlan Ellison.

"We decided you'd win hands down" said Peter. Greg was not impressed saying he liked Harlan Ellison so the situation was unlikely to arise. Better not let Ellison tweak your nose next time he's over, Simone.

Sunday came, the con and my mind were slipping away at an alarming rate. I was vegetating rapidly at some nameless panel in the fan room when the fire alarm went off. The proceedings stopped and we all looked at each other reasoning that some drunken cretin upstairs had tripped the switch and we could ignore it. However the clanging of the alarm then changed to the strident tones of the evacuation alert where upon it was women and Ratfans first as we leapt for the fire exit. We raced along the subterranean corridors of the hotel and I half expected to emerge and see a jumbo jet protruding from the side of the hotel but outside was nothing save a cuttingly cold wind. Back inside the those upstairs were carrying on as if nothing had happened. We never did find out if the alarm was set off by a drunken cretin.

In the evening came the awards session where Robert Sheckley was totally overshadowed by Roy Kettle and where Greg Pickersgill won the Doc Weir Award so becoming officially recognised as being over the hill.

At the end of the awards session Chairman Kev Smith announced that there would be no charge in the bar where on the hall miraculously emptied and your intrepid editor would have been killed in the stampede had he not been leading it. What a night! I can still see myself staggering from that bar laden with ale and spirits, all for me. Ah, bliss!

Monday was the parting of the ways and a group of people that consisted of Greg Pickersgill, Simone Walsh, John and Eve Harvey, Roy Kettle and Kath (whose surname I can never remember), Malcolm Edwards, Christine Atkinson, John Lowe and myself decided to have lunch at

Heathrow Airport's Terminal 3. During the course of the meal Chris Atkinson had her handbag stolen and it was recovered shortly after minus keys, cheque book, cheque card, and cash. No-one had seen the theft but Kath remembered seeing a couple come up to our table and leave rather quickly. A policeman was found and while giving a description of the couple Kath spotted them. They were apprehended but to no-one's great surprise were found to be clean. However they fitted the descriptions given by other people similarly ripped-off in the past and those given by people that very day.

"We know it's them so let's beat shit out of them when they come past." suggested Greg. Well, it's a long time since I last put anyone in hospital so I declined, putting it down to this strange complaint I have which manifests itself as a curious yellow stain down the length of my spine.

Greg and Simone gave me a lift to the station and I noticed that Greg seemed subdued.

"What's up, boss?" I asked.

"I'm ill," he said "I think it's those curries I had on Saturday."

"As soon as we've dropped you off we're going to the nearest hospital" said Simone. I laughed. It appeared that Simone had been taken in by Greg's hypochondriac ravings. However, when I phoned London, two days after the con, it appeared Greg was ill.

"Prolapsed piles, boss." he said. Collapse of party on the Newport end of the line as he fell about laughing.

Another Eastercon gone and time to look forward to next year when it will be held in Leeds. London is renowned countrywide as the home of lousy beer but Leeds is a real ale stronghold. It should be a good con.

WITHERING SLEIGHTS

A few weeks back I arranged to have a lunchtime drink with Bryn Fortey on a Saturday. I was there first and was supping a pint, more for something to occupy my hands than anything else, when in walks Bryn with a young lad in tow.

"He's finally turned" I thought, "Malcolm Edwards got a lot to answer for."

"If you haven't eaten yet let's go to the Princess Tearooms for an omelette" said Bryn. 'I hadn't so we did.

In a sense I suppose The Princess Tearooms is the local group's equivalent to Gannetfandom's Bangla Desh and it's a standing joke in Welshfandom that I never finish an omelette there. They are cheap and tasty but boy are they large and, once again, I was defeated.

Bryn introduced the lad as his son, Jim (formerly known as Jamie)

"This is Rob" said Bryn, to Jim.

"Oh yeah, Rob Holdstock."

Flattery indeed. It ain't everyday you get mistaken for an author who's been up-and-coming for so long. I wonder if it was anything to do with the length of hosepipe I was carrying in my pocket?

PAUL KINCAID GETS PARANOID ABOUT JOSEPH NICHOLAS.....*****JOSEPH
NICHOLAS GETS PARANOID ABOUT THE EDITOR.....*****THE EDITOR GETS PARA-
NOID ABOUT PARANOIA.....*****IT'S IN THE CLEVERLY TITLED.....

LETTERS

LETTERS.....THE LETTER COLUMN,NOT SURPRISINGLY.

LETTERS

PAUL KINCAID

20 Sherbourne Rd., Middleton, Manchester M24 3EH...

(EPSILON is) a nice handy size; I can usually manage to read an issue on the bus going into work of a morning. Not like some of these Pickerswalsh-esque tomes that insist on taking up an hour or two of your time and then add insult to injury by almost demanding a long, weighty response.

Mind you, there are a few signs of pretension appearing; for instance in the letter of Joseph Nicholas, psychiatrist-manque. If ever I need my head shrinking, I certainly know who to come to. But did my conrep really rate so many polysyllabic words?

Okay, so it was a bit long winded, I do tend to be a bit wordy, it's a fault in my writing that I recognise and am trying to rectify. As for the formal style, that's just a matter of personal preference. But all the analysis that follows? I most certainly am not striving for self-effacement, I've enjoyed the few tastes of fame I've had for that. And then all this guff about the classic fan personality, 'introverted, insecure, cut off from the world'. The first and third maybe, but I've never felt particularly insecure, nor am I unsure of my place in the world. Within the artificial society of fandom, perhaps, but then the area between neo and BNF in which I believe myself to be is a pretty murky and undifferentiated one. Anyway, if he bothered to read the article he should have realised that it was in part intended as a personal history of fandom in the process of reducing alienation, to use his own inflated terminology.

But cutting through his analysis of my personality, his chief complaint seems to be that I forgot his name in reporting the non-existent attack on Helen McCarthy. Certainly he goes to quite remarkable lengths to excuse his failure of nerve. Why, one asks, does he consider it so in need of excuse?

((Why indeed?)) ---

JOSEPH NICHOLAS

2 Wilnot Way, Camberley, Surrey, GU15 1JA...

Not a hell of a lot I can say in response to this; as I'm sure you realise, it's difficult to respond in any meaningful fashion to any personalzine. And while EPSILON is not, strictly speaking, a personalzine, issue 3 has the flavour of one, if only because of the utter lack of outside contributions, bar the letter column. Which often doesn't count in any case. And I have a nasty feeling that you might have cooked your own goose, response-wise, with this particular

issue; what is there anyone can say about a series of party reports? Not a lot, kid, not a lot.

((Agreed. Issue 1 received 11 LoC's, issue 2 received 8, issue 3 received 4. At this rate, I realised, my letter column would soon be non-existent, hence the NOTIONS column this. I've thought about trying my hand in the role of pundit before but with heavies like Pickersgill and West about I decided I didn't really have anything to say that they couldn't say a whole lot better. However the response situation was getting desperate so somewhat against my better judgement Notions of mine are here. If that doesn't evoke a better response then there's not really anything I can say that ever will.))

On the other hand....I can say a lot about what you have to say about me. I mean, bloody hell; anyone can change their name if they want to. All it takes is money. But....having changed it, there is then no obligation whatsoever upon the person who has done so to trog around mentioning it in every conversation - particularly those conversations conducted with people he's never met before. Since it was altered before I entered fandom, why should I then bother to mention it to all the fans that I've met? D.West and Brian Parker somehow found out. Gosh-wow, how exciting (yawn). (Although I must admit I'd like to know how they found out. Doubtless it shall remain forever a mystery - and since the whole deal doesn't really interest me in the slightest, it can stay a mystery.) So the story breaks gaining banner footnotes in a few fanzines, provoking a great deal of interest amongst those who presumably hadn't anything better to occupy their attentions at the time. I make a few covert admissions, enjoy myself hugely by nodding acquiescence to the increasingly bizarre reasons dreamed up by everyone, and eventually find myself with the tag "X" after my name in a D.West scandal sheet. And the result of that is that all the people who asked me about my name now occupy themselves with asking me what the "X" suffix is supposed to mean. I sighed, impugned the name of West in my replies, and waited for the whole thing to die away once again; which it shortly did. And now here you are in EPSILON reviving the whole fucking thing as though it was actually news, for God's sake. can there possibly be anyone left in fandom who doesn't know that my name has been changed from it's original form?

((Actually when I typed that stencil it was news! At a rate of about an hour per stencil it takes me a l-o-n-g time to type a whole fnz.)))

And since I changed it for intensely personal reasons I have no intention of ever revealing to anyone, questions as to it's original form are completely wasted; I shall merely ignore them. You can shout all you like; I just won't hear you. Kettle's continuous pestering of me to reveal my "REAL" name is now just boring; hasn't he got anything better to do? Like another issue of TRUE RAT, for instance?

I make no secret of it; I changed my surname. So fucking what? Lots of people have changed their names; am I so unusual that you want

to know every little last detail as though every little last detail were actually important? I'm sure Victoria Wayne gets the same verbal bashing about her original name and why she changed it, and I'm just as sure that she must be as bored with it as I am.

Bloody hell, Nicholas is a grand old Scottish surname; I'm just getting back to the roots. If my great-great-granddaddy hadn't run away to sea at the age of fourteen and been cut out of the family inheritance I could have been the Laird of Ross & Cromarty by now. This is true! No fucking invention! Just because he ended up captaining clipper ships on the China tea run (but not the famous ones like the Cutty Sark or the Thermopylae, worse luck) and eventually married a CornishwomanThere. Does that little tidbit satisfy your curiosity for the nonce? I suppose it won't, and I guess it would be naive of me to expect that such revelations will serve to lay the whole thing to rest. So I'm not going to expect anything; I shall just have to brace myself once again for another round of asshole questions from people with nothing better to occupy their attentions. Poot.

((Cornishwoman, eh? My great-granduncle was a Scot twice removed from my great-grandaunt (with a crow-bar, I believe) and she was cornish(or was that corny?) All of which means you could be my long-lost sister. Geewillikins.

Actually I think you're protesting to loud, Joseph. I mean Christ, how can anyone say they're bored with a subject and then ramble on about it through many ever-increasingly paranoid paragraphs. I rather suspect that secretly you relish the whole damn thing.))

DAVID BRIDGES.

130 Valley Road., Meersbrook, Sheffield, S8 9GA

I'm glad (EPSILON) was a personalzine - I like personalzines, in general, more than other types of 'zine. I liked this issue more than the previous two, but perhaps that's because I've only just finished re-reading it.

It's a pity all the stuff is outdated - which is not to say I'd rather you left it out, just that I wish you'd learn to type faster. Or at least continue until you bring it up to date. Anyway, I thoroughly enjoyed reading it - it's nice to realise that someone else always manages to say the wrong things at the wrong time, so confusing people into thinking you're a great wit and the life and soul of the party. You seem to be doubly unfortunate in that people see great depths in your off-the-cuff comments, but fail utterly to realise what's intended when you deliberately say something deep and meaningful. I would wish your fate on no man.

ROBERT DAY

7 Alexandra Rd., Heaton, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE6 5QS.

The first line in EP 3 reminds me of the local HMV shop here in 'canny Newcassel'. Until very recently, said record had a brown paper cover over the 'offensive' word. After a while the inevitable stock clearance took place. Thus was unleashed the stunning new record...

'Never mind the 75p off, here's the Sex Pistols'

Cover this issue is an original illustration by me, with apologies to the brothers Hildebrandt and to Darth Vader.

((Only joking, Greg!))

Special Thanx go to Greg 'n Simone for duplicating this issue. I'm way ahead of schedule on this one and issue five should be out before Christmas. This may seem a long time but there are a couple of projects I'll be working on which I don't want to say too much about as yet but which you will hear about in the fullness of time. On which mysterious note I'll bid you farewell 'til next time.....

PRINTED PARERS

From: ROB HANSEN
22 Llanthwy Rd.
Newport
Gwent
WALES
Great Britain.