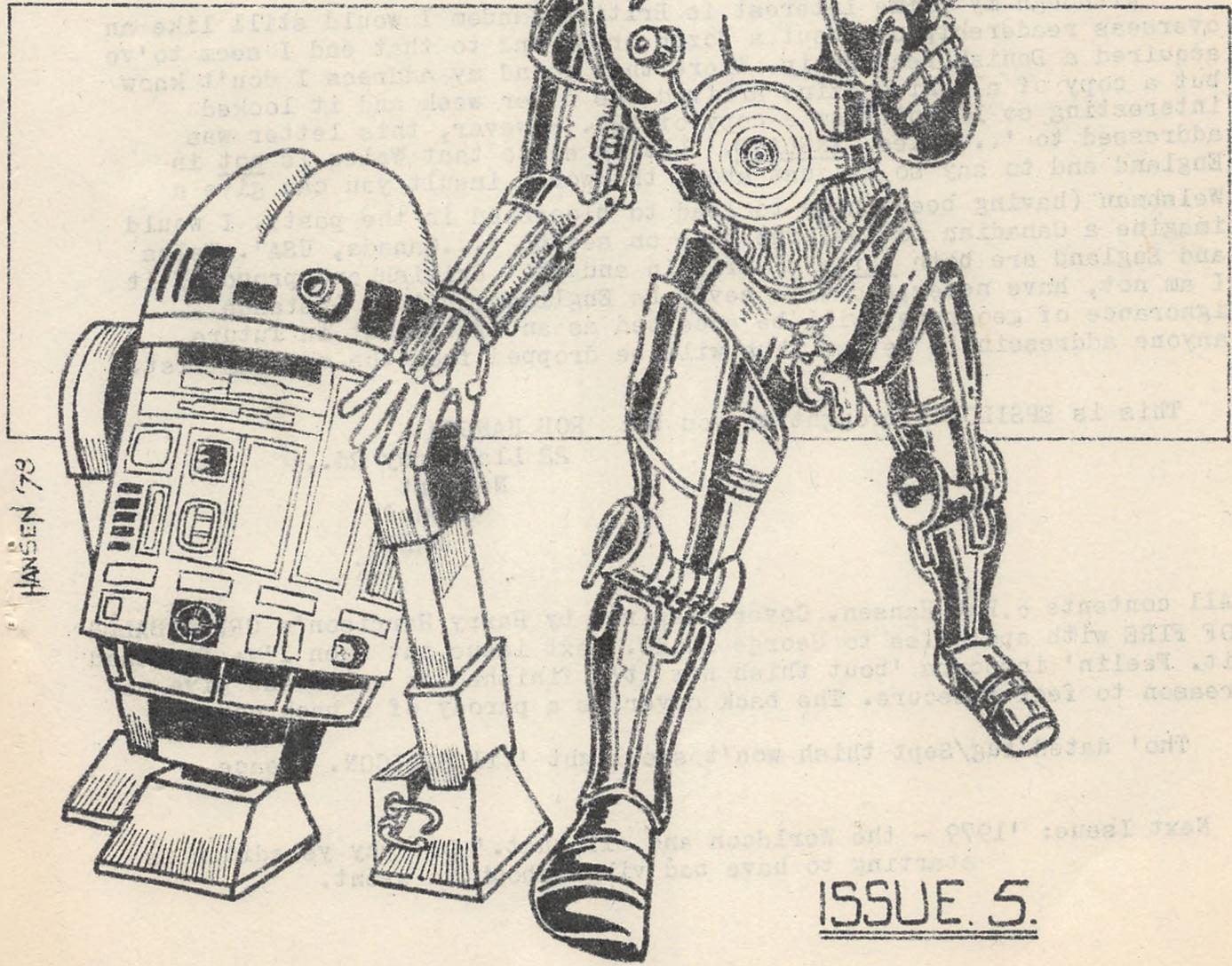


THIS ISSUE:

PARTYCON: A NEW CONCEPT?
FULL REPORT INSIDE.

FAN CRITICS:
DO WE NEED THEM?

AUG/SEPT '78...



ISSUE 5.

****THE NEED FOR EGGS.****CRITICS APPRAISED....****APATHY EXAMINED...IN..

NOTIONS

NOTIONS....this time out an article entitled.....

NOTIONS

OF MYSTERIES AND MALADIES.

The malaise that seems to have settled over fandom in the last year or so has been commented on by many, myself included, but no-one as yet seems to have identified the problem let alone solved it. When such as West and Pickersgill cannot define what's wrong or offer any pointers then perhaps the problem goes deeper than anyone imagines, is in fact fundamental and not just one of those periodic lapses into apathy that strike the fannish scene with annoying regularity. It's a shame that while the SF field has been given a shot in the arm by the success of such as STAR WARS and CLOSE ENCOUNTERS fandom has received no such revitalisation.

So what are my thoughts on the subject? Probably as half-baked as ever but I think the problem is that we've come to the end of the road....
...at least the end of the road we've been travelling down for many a year. Basically it's all been done before and there seem to be no new directions to take from here except, perhaps, backwards. The keen young fan of today looks around him in desperation for an area where he can bloom and develop genuine originality but all appears to be still and stagnating. I mean, fanzines still range from the excellent to the truly atrocious but they all share an almost total lack of movement at present, a lack of any significant development.

Part of the problem could lie in the insularity of British fandom, in the low level of communication with the rest of the fannish world and the loss of the cross-fertilisation that could result therefrom. Even the fannish ambassadors we send to America, the TAFF winners, have shown little inclination of late to let us in on any insights and observations they may have made (though I note with pleasure that Peter Roberts has resurrected the long-extinct TAFF report in EGG). I dunno, maybe I'm just pissin' in the wind on this point but I personally feel that increased communication with the larger fannish world could help us put some of our own problems in perspective.

In a sense increased internal communication in fandom over here could be one of the causes of the problem because when you see each other more often there's less need to communicate in a meaningful manner in fanzines. When fans only used to gather once a year at the annual Easter-con 'zines were a vital link in helping people to keep in touch during the intervening months and as such they fulfilled a basic need that no longer exists to the same extent. Part of the problem, I'm sure.

So what of the future? Well during the early seventies, as we all know, Pickersgill and Kettle headed the writing revolution that gave the whole fannish seat a much-needed kick but there appears to have been no comparable revolution on the artistic side and there should have been. If anything the overall quality of fanart is better these days than it's been for a long time but in technique and subject matter there's been very little change in twenty years or more. I'm as much to blame as

anyone else, I suppose, and while I lack the necessary knowledge of techniques and basic skill to pull off any radical innovations in that sense I can, however, give a little more thought to the subject matter and perhaps test any taboos that might still exist as regards fanart. After all, with such excellent publications as METAL HURLANT about to offer a few guidelines we should be giving some thought to the matter.

Given that fanzines are an artform of sorts, a proposition I don't intend to argue at this point, critics seem to serve a more important function in relation to fandom than they do in relation to other forms of artistic endeavour. The position of critic seems to carry more respect and ensure a higher position in the pecking order than would be the case outside fandom and to some extent the current malaise could be attributed to the lack of any significant criticism in the past year. It could of course be argued that there has been nothing significant to criticise in the past year but no matter how bad things get there's always something.

So how is the critic important? Well, consider his role outside of fandom, for instance the book critic. While he can make an intellectual assessment of a novel, which usually being of the same peer group as the writer he is quite able to do, he is still little more than a literary tipster since an author's success and influence are governed largely by the popular taste and not approval of an ingrown intellectual elite. Hence the writer can tell the critic where to put his critique but in fandom the same situation does not apply. In this case the intellectual elite and the masses are one and the same so the influence of the critic is thus magnified. You get shat on by one of the big boys and everyone knows about it so you go away, lick your wounds, and next time try to produce something that won't attract the same flak. In this way the top fannish critics are able to steer fandom in the direction they want it to go to quite an extent. Have we been led in the wrong direction? I don't know, but perhaps ten years from now a better man than I could start to answer that question, but whatever, they still provided leadership in a very real sense, leadership which is now sorely lacking.

With the apparent abdication of Pickersgill and West fandom has become like a chicken that's just had it's head chopped off - lots of motion but little direction. It's not so much that no one else is able to take up the reins more that no one appears to want to. Taking a good look at other critics doesn't give us much scope either. Linwood has ability but his idiosyncracies destroy a lot of his credibility and even if Fortey were not so disaffected with fandom of late his criticism, though on the nail, always seems curiously lacking in weight. Tact prevents me from saying too much about Malcolm Edwards' pieces.

The New Wave of fans, as defined last issue, have thrown up no critics at all, let alone any of note, which bodes ill for the future. It's the total lack of killer instinct that does it and the sad conclusion is that if any of us did try we'd be incapable of going for the jugular and inevitably give rise to a hideous pseudo-Crabapple fandom where everything in the garden is rosy.

And then, of course, along comes a cocky young punk to make that last

statement seem redundant. Alan Dorey, the new kid in town, struts his stuff in his own fanzine, GROSS ENCOUNTERS, and in issue 2 puts out a scathing review column that accurately sums up the present fanzine scene causing quite a few casualties along the way. His style is reminiscent of what Pickersgill's used to be, biting deep where these days Greg seems content to nibble, and yet though imitation is the sincerest form of flattery there's an uneasy little voice in my mind telling me that perhaps, after all, evolution might be preferable to imitation.

Communication is the theme that's been running through this article since when you come down to it that's what it's all about, and as communication is a two-way process an examination of the letters section and the purpose of LoCs would seem in order. For my own part I often find the lettercolumn the most interesting part of a fanzine, particularly one which has built up continuing themes over a number of issues to the point where the letters page is almost self-sustaining.

So just what should a LoC be? As someone who hasn't received or written many I may not be the best person to discuss this but when I was considering including some thoughts on the subject a number of points I think valid arose.

I mean, why do fans write LoCs in the first place? 'To continue receiving the fanzine' is probably the most common answer but even so a letter that just boils down to 'liked your ish look forward to the next' demeans the efforts of the fanned and, indeed, of the loccer himself. No, any letters written should ideally be a genuine response inspired by, or in reply to, something said in the 'zine and above all they should be honest! No pussyfooting or kid-gloves because a loccer who praises blatant crud not only helps to perpetuate it but devalues any kudos he gives to a 'zine which has genuinely impressed him. Not to say that criticism should be anything but constructive, of course.

A lot of fans just aren't capable of writing interesting LoCs and permanent WAHF status can get you down after a while so rather than write LoCs they put out their own 'zine and trade, thus allowing their letter writing to die away to a mere trickle. This is the course most take eventually but there are, however, those who increase their letter writing to the point where their status in fandom is built solely on LoCs and all 'zines they receive result therefrom. Joseph Nicholas is a case in point having never put out a 'zine in his life, but there are dangers. When you LoC everything you receive it's possible to reach the stage where loccing becomes a mere knee-jerk reflex involving little thought or effort and producing mediocre and boring letters which help pad out an issue but do little to enrich the art. Most of our noted letterhacks have passed through such a period; all have got over it but ennui and sheer disenchantment with fandom could permanise the condition.

So what's the point of all this? Well getting back to communication again I believe that every letter should be given the same care and attention given to an article because after all it's as much an expression of the writers beliefs as an article and with LoCs forming the only dialogue in 'zines it's better that reasoned conversation should ensue rather than muddled babble.

YES, GENTLE READER (HAH!), ONCE AGAIN IT'S THE DIARY KNOWN AS.....**

ODZUNSODZ

ODZUNSODZ...by the man who, thinking it a brand-name, once

ODZUNSODZ entered a shop and asked for Corflu.....

DRUNK THEY WERE AND BLEARY EYED.

Due to the dire financial position of the section of GKN I work for (losses of £8,000,000 last year - not my fault, honest!) I was forced to take a week of my annual leave over the Whitsun period. Not knowing what to do with the week I suggested to Greg and Simone that they hold some sort of party over the weekend. To my surprise they agreed and so was born a three-day event that while being less than a con was more than a party - Partycon seems a good term to describe the concept. It was an invitation only affair, complete with printed programme, with numbers attending limited by availability of sleeping space, a factor I suspect left out some fans Greg and Simone might have liked to see there. Anyway, on with the report.....

On Friday I boarded the 0733 coach to London with all the necessary clothing and aids to ablutement I'd require over the following four days and also with three flagons of Brains Dark Mild Ale, which was this time quite seriously for medicinal purposes as the over-gassy gnat's piss passed off as beer in the capital plays havoc with my digestion. The journey was extremely pleasant, probably because I slept through most of it, unlike my shoes which were rubbing my ankles unmercifully. On alighting at Victoria I made my way to "Dark They Were and Golden-Eyed" where, as usual the rows of books contained nothing I was looking for and I ended up buying some imported magazines instead. There followed a pizza in the heart of sleazy Soho and it was off to Lawrence Road.

Simone answered the door, looked at me and said:

"You should be John Piggot!"

I was about to reply that nobody should be John Piggot when she explained that she and Greg had been playing their usual guessing game as to the order in which people would turn up. Once upstairs I paid my £1 attending membership (a purely nominal fee towards tea, sugar, milk, bog paper, etc.) and opened my first flagon of ale. Harry Bell was there already and in the next hour a stream of people turned up. When enough had arrived we we loaded into cars and made for the Acton Fair.

At the fair were all manner of things, and we tried most of them. A round on the waltzer left Joseph Nicholas even paler than usual and made jovial Harry Bell look distinctly queasy. Simone Walsh, meanwhile, was trying her hand at the archery stall, the object being to score a bull. I watched in dismay as all three of Simone's arrows missed the target and then decided to show her how it was done. I didn't win a prize but all three arrows stuck in and Simone, having watched how I held the bow and arrow, decided to have another go. All three arrows missed the target. With her third and final arrow I advised her to aim for the bottom right-hand corner of the target to compensate for her tendency to overshoot and watched in amazement as the arrow sailed over the top left

hand edge.

The dodgems were the amusement that attracted most of us at one time of course, and so six cars were manned by fans during a spell when Greg's homicidal tendencies came to the surface. With Greg at the wheel passenger David Bridges was seen to adopt a pose not unlike a condemned man praying for divine intervention, while wincing at every bone-jarring collision.

The natural point of gravitation was the beer tent run by CAMRA and which had a fine selection of Real Ales there, the majority of them from Yorkshire, I gathered. I sampled quite a few of these and knowing that the Yorcon crowd intend to lay on Real Ale at the next Eastercon it keened my anticipation all the more.

After a pleasant afternoon we returned to the PickersWalsh residence to watch the Rutles, a show Greg and Simone arranged for the BBC to put on as most of us had missed it when last it was shown, which was a superb spoof on the Beatles story. Later on, as Greg and Simone had planned, the twenty or so people present split into smaller groups. Greg himself challenged D.WEST to a game of Dominoes and in no time at all had lost £3 to the master. On seeing this ace gambler John Piggott challenged the man and dropped £12 to West. While all this was going on Mike Collins was teaching me how to play Cribbage, a game I've since developed quite a liking for.

Sunday arrived and sharp shafts of piercing sunlight roused me from a pleasantly erotic dream. I stepped out of bed and onto Dai Price whom I'd forgotten was sleeping on the floor. Dai moaned but didn't wake. When all were up Greg, Simone, and Roy Kettle announced that they were going into the second hand book business and handed out copies of their first list. I saw nothing I personally wanted but others did and business was brisk. Though intended as a strict business venture the enterprise was without a title.

"I like Uranus Books myself but no-one else does" moaned Greg.

In the afternoon was the fannish soccer match, the goals marked out by cardigans in the old schoolboy tradition, and the boundaries mutable. Since it was rather hot I volunteered to go in goal reasoning that this was the coolest place on the pitch, a point proved when others, on their last legs in the blistering heat, had to have a spell in goal to recuperate. Surprise discovery of the match was Alan Dorey who showed remarkable speed and flair managing to sidestep the bone-breaking lunges of Greg, who is not exactly the most graceful of footballers. At half-time we stopped for a swig of ale and recommenced a fair time later. Not long after an unheard of tradition was initiated when we stopped for a threequarter-time break to eat the ice-cream the various femmefans present had trudged off to get for us. Somehow that final quarter never did get played and we ended up throwing a frisbee around.

Malcolm and Chris Atkinson slipped off early and on noting their absence someone remembered that Chris would be appearing on a TV prog within the hour, so we dutifully made our way back to Lawrence Road via the cemetery and arrived back just in time to catch her on the box.

(continued after LETTERS)

JUST FOR A CHANGE NO HEADLINES ABOVE THIS SECTION....**'.....!***...

LETTERS
LETTERS.....take it away Joseph.....
LETTERS

JOSEPH NICHOLAS, 2 Wilmot Way, Camberley, Surrey GU15 1JA..

If you'd got this issue out before Easter, or used the cover on issue 3, then it would easily have won the Checkpoint Fan Poll for best cover of the year (not that we know what the results are yet, anyway). But I'll be bearing it in mind for next time....Your Marvel origins show in the musculature of the bird-woman and in the way the shadows play across her skin and Greg's helmet; and if it wasn't for the fact that it did actually have Greg in it, it would be fairly undistinguished. But then this is really neither here nor there; what counts is the over-all impression of the finished product, which is good, believe me.

I shouldn't bother apologising to the Brothers Hildebrandt; they should be apologising to everyone else for the lousy quality of their artwork. Their poster for Star Wars is collossaly unrepresentative, since the faces and costumes of the characters, and the design of the robots, are nothing like those portrayed in the film. It is also flat, untextured, and not at all eye-catching...just like all their other artwork, when it comes down to it. If you ever come across a copy of Terry Brooks' The Sword of Shannara, take a look at the interior illustrations they did for that. Not only do they fail to follow the text, but they are as equally lifeless as the book itself. I called them "twee" but Dewi Williams remarked that the appellation "Victorian chocolate-box" was probably more descriptive of their true nature.

So somebody get rid of the hildebrants - soon, please!

You're right about the need for some sort of permanent (or even semi-permanent) site for the annual Eastercon. I don't see why it should have to move around every year; I daresay someone, way back in the mists of history, advanced the idea that it would give people a chance to see a different part of the country. Which might have been valid back then, but certainly isn't now - the fans of today roll up to the hotel and stay there for the entire weekend, venturing from it only to visit a nearby restaurant.

But then, of course, you've got problems with the concom. The Novacon never has any problem getting a committee together because the fans who run it are all Birmingham-based. With Eastercons however the fans are drawn from different parts of the country and if you restrict the Eastercon to the same hotel every year then you're going to have virtually the same concom year after year as well. And after several years of unstintingly giving of themselves to the greater good of fandom they'll feel pretty worn out, with all their ideas used up; each con re-run of it's predecessor. After all, Novacons have a certain bland sameness these days, each one virtually indistinguishable from the one before it.

Thus the stunning Joseph Nicholas solution - have a number of permanent sites for the Eastercon, and rotate it between them over a number of years. This would give each bunch of fans in any one city the chance to rest and regroup before putting themselves back on the line once again; thus their interest and enthusiasm would remain undulled, and each con would be different from it's predecessor.

I thrust all this stuff forwards just to see what'll happen, and whether some new wave fannish genius will bite. Maybe, if you get a number of letters on this subject (and let's for Christ's sake hope you get a number of letters no matter what topics they cover - I mean not even Glicksohn wrote this last time, did he?), you can run some sort of forum.

((Actually Mike did write but the burst of speed that got EP4 out within two months of EP3 meant that it arrived too late.

Surely you can't be serious about a number of permanent con hotels rather than just one; I mean that creates exactly the same situation we have now and achieves nothing.))

Fandom is due for a slump in numbers any time now. The fandom we know and love, that is; and when it does slump, we'll find ourselves with cheaper con hotels once again. Why? Because then we won't have to give space to all these fringe fans who clutter up the scene enough as it is. There are now so many people that they cannot be contained under one roof; attempts to do so simply mean higher prices all round.

Fandom is thus, I think, due to undergo a fissioning process in the very near future because I think you're bloody right about the impending sercon backlash. We have gone too far down the road towards fannishness and this is why there have been no new recruits to fandom of late. The neo knows of nothing but Science Fiction, the pure quill that has dragged him into the whole mess in the first place; but if he flees to the BSFA, a haven of comparative sanity, he is there told that fandom is incestuous and disgusting and insulting to Chris Fowler (revere, revere), The Great Dead Toad Himself, he thus remains firmly restrained within the walls of serconism. It's our own bloody fault.....although we can also level some of the blame at the aforementioned Fowler, who was a paranoid little shit in the extreme, and was extreme most of the time and who is coming in for a thrashing from BSFA officers and members for his intransigence, obduracy, insolence, and (apparently) blatant misuse of funds to massage his ego with "his" Vector. If that last is true then he should be nail-able under the Companies Acts 1948/1967/1976....after all, the AGM this year was a mess. Kev Smith, as the newly-elected Company Secretary, declared the whole thing null and void until the accounts were ready - and it cannot be an AGM unless the accounts are presented to the members. So the BSFA is not out of the woods yet, by any means.....

((For those interested in such things, and aren't we all, more on the BSFA's current fiscal cock-up can be found in D.West's DAISNAID 6 and in Alan Dorey's article in PROCYON 5. Speaking of whom let's have a big hand for the kid himself....))

ALAN DOREY

20 Hermitage Woods Cres., St. John's, WOKING, Surrey, GU21 1UE.

Your views on fandom and the BSFA are not new, but they are a welcome - and overdue - revival. Hell, it's about time the BSFA actually did something. Considering that to any foreigners it appears as our premier SF institution, you and most fannish persons have the right to feel despondant. It is time that the BSFA was made to realise that their purpose is more than issuing a journal, the reputation of which has nose-dived in recent issues, and without David Wingrove, would have continued to have done. All their window-dressing about SF libraries is tosh...they ought to get out and do things ...try and promote SF, lend their names to projects, take in advertising, influence publishers to increase print runs and above all, be positive in their actions. It is no good holding election meetings during poorly-attended AGMs at Easter conventions. It smells very much of the council members going around patting each other on the back and saying what a good job they're doing; bloody hell...new blood needs to be injected.

The lack of new fans is something I have already lamented about, and indeed, it is a sorry state of affairs. I can think of no-one who has really come to prominence in the past two years....perhaps Mike Dickinson and (ego permitting) myself can be regarded as examples, but aside from that...well...you clearly aren't satisfied, and neither am I.

IAN MAULE

18 Hillside, 163 Carshalton Rd., SUTTON, Surrey, SM1 4NG.

You bemoan the lack of new the lack of new fans coming along, yet I can't help feeling that there are new fans just as active in their own way as I was in the early seventies and you are in the late seventies; because we're older, more established fans, set in our ways to a certain extent, we can't or don't see these new fans around us. A look at say One-Off reveals whole sections written by people I've never come across before, but they write like fans, they are fans. Indeed I would go so far as to say that those names you read in fanzines and ask yourself 'who's he' are the next generation of fans - not just up-and-coming - already here.

Some people have criticised the whole idea of fannish generations but I can't help feeling the concept is a valid one. Ignoring the question of how long an individual dimension may last (the beginning and ending is shrouded in mist) only a certain percentage of fans from one generation make the journey into the next, the remainder either wither away and die or else stay in the same generation. I think we've all witnessed this last phenomenon - the new generation is upon us and we're still in the last!

((We could have a difference of opinion here since, even with the fans who've arrived since, I think the generation heralded by the advent of FOULER is still with us. Pete Weston's ZENITH was the start of the previous generation, FOULER it's end. Any differing views on this? Send them letters in, kiddies.))

PAUL KINCAID

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

Fame! Fame! Fame! I love it. Keep it up, boyo. There I am up with some of the fannish greats or nearogreats. To tell you the truth it surprised me, Langford and Nicholas and Bridges and Smith and the Harveys have always seemed to me so much more established in fandom than I am. Are we all, really, of that same so-recent fannish generation? It must lie in the fact that I don't publish a fanzine, and I'm neither as prolific nor as good a writer as, say, Langford and Nicholas. Also, despite attending my first con in 1975, I was still slow in getting into fandom. After that first con at Easter I didn't have any real contact with fandom until the following September when I started attending the Manchester group. Even then, the Manchester group being the rather introverted group it is, I was getting no more than half a dozen fanzines. I suppose, then, that you could say my active involvement with fandom really began only at the 1977 Eastercon when I wrote a conrep for you. Before that I had written only a few desultory book reviews for Pete Presford's zines, and I had given up even that some months before.

Another point worth noting, perhaps, is that a considerable proportion of the biggest name fans are connected with one or other of the big three fan groups, London, Newcastle, and Birmingham. Even you Welsh lot seem to have remarkably close relations with the Rats. Understandable enough, these are the biggest and most active groups. But there is an awful lot of Britain for which these places are not readily accessible. Perhaps your new generation of fans is languishing in one of these backwaters like Manchester, with a fan group that has only limited outside contact. They could even be in places that don't have fan groups ...worse, they could be in Norwich.

Quite frankly, contact with active fans is important in stimulating one's own activity. I think I can lay claim to friendships within each of the big three groups. My time as an active fan dates from the establishment of those friendships.

So where is the next generation of active fans? The Manchester group, as I've said, is a low-key, introverted set-up. We don't advertise, organise any sort of event, or do anything to attract outside attention to ourselves. I am always surprised that people hear about us, yet, somehow, they do, and we have a steady and youngish membership. I would be surprised, therefore, if other groups don't have a steady influx of new members; two or three a year is all it takes. That's your new wave, or it should be.

((Maybe. Apart from the occasional orgy the Rats rarely meet as a club so new young blood there seems unlikely. In fact they don't consider themselves a group as such. More a shower really, I suppose.....))

MIKE GLICKSOHN

141 High Park Ave., Toronto, Ont., M6P 2S3.

It seems to me I just got your last issue and looded it a very few weeks ago and here another of the silly buggers shows up to disturb the veil of lethargy and gafiation I'd been drawing around myself of late. I was strongly tempted to do with it what I've done with all the other fanzines that have arrived here this past month. That is, skim it, yawn, and file it away for future fan historians to marvel over. But how could even the most disinterested fan ignore a 'zine with such a truly revolting, disgusting and distasteful cover? I just had to write and congratulate you on what must surely be the absolute nadir of fanzine covers in terms of subject matter. That infamous fannish character Girth Feeder, isn't it? With his notorious motto "May the fierce be with you."

North America may not have anyone like Kettle or Langford but that's a matter of cultural upbringing, I think. There's a difference in style between English fanwriters and their trans-atlantic counterparts...

((Langford is WELSH not English. Of course both he and Kettle are BRITISH.))

....and that style arises from the different influences we all grow up under. There are writers to compare with Kettle and others of his calibre. Writers like Dave Locke, Mike Glycer, Don Thompson to name three; but their approach is different, and it's almost impossible to say that any of them is "better" than any other or than any of the top English writers. There are good writers in every fandom, and a few great ones and most of the great writers have a very individualistic style which is probably one of the reasons they are great. I hope you encounter a few of the better American writers before dismissing fandom over here.

((Yeah. Interesting that the names you quote are just that and little else so far as the majority of British fans are concerned as, I would imagine are the names of most British fanwriters of note. Perhaps the answer might be a fanzine with two editors, one British and one American, each of whom assembles half the material for an issue with contributions from his countrymen and each of whom is then responsible for the printing and distribution in his own country. On a larger scale a sort of efficient transatlantic BSFA with members on both sides of the pond might be able to assemble a good organisation magazine. Hmmmam.))

There seems to be a built in assumption in your NOTIONS that in order to make an impact on fandom and achieve notoriety or fame a fan has to successfully challenge and topple the establishment, such as it may be, of fandom when he encounters it. I don't believe that for a moment. A great many fans who never indulge in any sort of Pickersgillian Angry-Young-Fan type activity build enormous reputations. Not that there's anything wrong with being a gadfly if one feels there's need for such but even as anarchail a society as fandom can't always be in a state of change and turmoil. Many fans find aspects of fandom they enjoy just as they are, so they engage in activity in that area, not as feisty

rebels but merely extending recognised regions of fanac. And there's nothing wrong with that....except it invalidates your method of determining the end of a fannish generation!

((Not necessarily. As mentioned earlier I see Pete Weston's ZENITH as starting the era previous to that heralded by the advent of FOULER and you could hardly call Weston a rebel. And I don't think that "in order to make an impact on fandom and achieve notoriety or fame a fan has to successfully topple the establishment" but I do think it helps to shake it out of it's complacency. At the moment British fandom strikes me as being very complacent and a good shake-up, not the toppling of the "establishment", would do it the world of good. Anyway there's no reason why I personally should wish to topple the fannish establishment since I consider many of them my friends.))

England is small enough that the difficulties trying to centralise a Worldcon over here would encounter probably shouldn't occur. That is, there shouldn't be large numbers of fans who felt cheated because the con was always too far away to get to. ((Wanna bet?)) However, I strongly expect you'd run into vehement opposition from those people who like to run them in their own back yards. Sensibly, though, your suggestion has a great deal of merit in terms of the relationships between the hotel and attendies, which has to be one of the main factors in determining the atmosphere of a con. SUNCON, last year's Worldcon in Florida, is the only con I can think of that was run by a committee that didn't live in the city the con was held in and while it wasn't all that well organised and while the hotel turned out to be an abysmal choice, the con was by and large a mellow one. And the people running it were over a thousand miles away from Miami and in England no-one would be a monstrous distance from Coventry. So it should be a workable idea. I wonder why it is, then, that I doubt you'll find any con committees eagerly endorsing it?

Having met Greg several times and knowing Harlan quite well I'd have to say that Harlan would win any verbal exchange that both entered into whole-heartedly. Greg is earthier and cruder (also filthier, more disgusting and positively obscene) but Harlan is sharper, faster and has a greater range of verbal attack. I'm glad Greg has the good sense not to want to bother with anything so childish just for it's own sake. There are many more enjoyable and productive ways of passing the time.

((Agreed. Indeed, one wonders at Mr. Weston's reasons for bringing the topic up.....))

The lettercolumn is decidedly thin but the one in your next issue should be better, thanks to all the argumentative ideas you've tossed out. If people want to change their names because they don't like the one they were born with that's fine by me but I must admit that I find some of the changes boring and pretentious. Not Nicholas, I hasten to add, but the sort of people who change their name to Merlin or Zargath or Taral and try to live in a fantasy world. Still, it's undoubtedly

their right and we all have our ways of avoiding reality, don't we?

MIKE COLLINS

21B St. Margaret's Rd., Hanwell, London W7.

Just thought I'd drop you a line to confirm what you must have heard by now, yes that I'm sharing a flat with two sixty-three year old Irish council dustmen. It really is a great partnership, I supply the cardboard boxes and they bring home as much rubbish as I need to fill them up. Gee, this London really is a smell...I mean swell place.

((Mr. Michael J. Collins, as reported last issue, is the guy who said goodbye to one girlfriend on his last night in Newport and hello to another on his first night in London. He spent some time living with Greg and Simone before moving into a flat with, contrary to the missive above, two girls. Just what his girlfriend thinks of all this I haven't yet ascertained.....

In contrast the present resident of Mr.Collins' old flat, yours truly,had been without hot water in said flat for seven weeks due to a knacked tank. When I got in the day after the tank was eventually fixed the oflat was flooded. Some cretin on the floor above had left a tap running. Contrast how the two people in this tale have fared since their move while I go into the corner and have a little cry.))

WAHF: John Stewart and Robert Day.

ODZUNSODZ (continued...)

Of Monday, oddly enough, the only thing I remember is Jack Marsh putting on a blue film show for us. There were the usual close-ups dwelling on the rhythmic, piston-like movements rather too long for my taste though not, obviously, for Greg's since he stood there, eyes glazed, brathing heavy for the whole showing. I won't dwell on the implausibility of five girls on a raft in the middle of nowhere finding a dildo that just happened to float on by.

Most everyone drifted off during Monday and I was the only one staying Tuesday. It was a gloriously hot day and at dinner time Greg, Simone, Mike Collins and myself found ourselves in the garden of the Fox, a pub on the Grand Union Canal. At the Fox they have to bull terriers, a truly repulsive creature with the head of a shark and the reactions of a block of wood. One of them decided it wanted us to throw a stick for it so it walked over to a trellis-work fence and with a loud crack tore a piece out of it which it then brought over for us to throw. Crazy animal!

Early that evening I returned to the mundane tedium of everyday life. A great weekend which I think lived up to everybodys expectations and an idea I'd like to see repeated.

MUFF BALLOT FORM

You've heard of TAFF, of DUFF and GUFF so now we present MUFF, the one-shot fan fund which has been created to send/bring a popular (?) Welsh fan to the British 1979 World SF Convention, SEACON.

MUFF has one big advantage over all of the aforementioned fan funds in that every vote counts. Yes, that's right this time you won't be wasting votes on someone who doesn't win because only one person is standing! This revolutionary new concept in fan funds was arrived at after many minutes of near-sober thought; who is standing, you ask? None other than.....

Bryn Fortey....

Bryn attended his first convention in 1967 and has attended few since due to lack of funds and a deep-rooted tight-fistedness. Bryn was editor of the fanzine RELATIVITY for many years until the removal of his office photocopier meant he would have to fork out cash for the 'zine whereupon it folded. Bryn explains the name of this fan fund thus.....

"It's not an acronym for anything.....it's just something I'm rather partial to."

Vote for Fortey, the man Leroy Kettle once said had the dirtiest laugh in fandom, and judge for yourself.

Nominators: Dai Price, Rob Hansen.

WHO MAY VOTE: Anyone who has money. Each vote carries a nominal fee of 50p but in actual fact any amount, no matter how big or large, will be gratefully received and should enough cash be received to send him Bryn will reward each voter with a kiss (you may waive this right if you wish and no, Malcolm Edwards, you only get one kiss per vote no matter how much you donate unless you have large breasts).

Bryn would like a large enough response to cover convention expenses but our initial target is a more modest one of enough to cover registration and travelling expenses

I VOTE FOR:

Bryn Fortey....
Bryn Fortey....
Bryn Fortey....

Signature.....
Name(the one born with).....
Address.....
.....

Enclosed is my contribution to MUFF of..... (50p,£100,more. Delete as appropriate.)

Votes and contributions to: BRYN FORTEY,
90 Caerleon Rd., Newport, Gwent, Wales.

(Address likely to change in the coming months. Watch fan press.)

INTERGALACTIC INTRIGUE IN THE FAR-FLUNG FUTURE

Rob Hansen was a minor cog in the global entity that was GKN, and then things started to happen to him, strange things....

On a trip back to Newport from the sprawling metropolis of Cardiff what strange force caused him to fall asleep and wake up in Bristol and why were there no trains back until two-and-a-half hours later at six in the morning?

When the evil minions of the corrupt GPO descended on our hero and discovered his TV was unlicensed by what arcane means did he get out of the statutory £50 fine?

Why, at half past eleven on the evening of a nondescript Tuesday did he have to queue to get off Newport station?

With the degenerate Bryn Fortey lusting after his youthful flesh Rob sought the answers to these awesome questions, questions on which the fate of the universe depended - AND TIME WAS RUNNING OUT!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Cover illustration by Chris Dross.

"Vastly improving....not yet one of the fanzines, but heading that way"
- Alan Dorey, GROSS ENCOUNTERS.

"Hansen...writes well with a good touch of dry humour....achieves great atmosphere and comfort...."
- Greg Pickersgill, STOP BREAKING DOWN.

Duplicated by Greg & Simone, to whom must go many thanx.