

SOME NOTES ON THE FLAGELLATION OF DECEASED SOLID HOOVED QUADRUPEDS

Well, another three months have gone by since I wrote the previous page, and I'm still waiting for the big three to come up with the goods. I think there is some perverse egotism here. Boy -

"Must get one out before Seacon" they said, "Give us a deadline, Andy" so I said end of May. Try again. "Must get one out before Novacon, give us a deadline Andy." so I said end of October. Try again. "Must get one out before the New Year....

Ian coughed up his article last night but only after I promised to take the tourniquet off his neck. Kev said he's doing the stencils tonight, but only because I threatened him with a barbed wire enema - courtesy Shanghai Lil's Human Derelict Reclamation Parlour and Harry? well that noise you can hear that sounds like a cat having its gonads removed with a wire brush, that's Harry doing the Front Cover.

The whole is being duplicated in stages on Harry's magic Gannetpress Collated by Annie Sue Pam Ian Harry Kev Andy & X the gargling Yak And for those of you with strong stomachs here are

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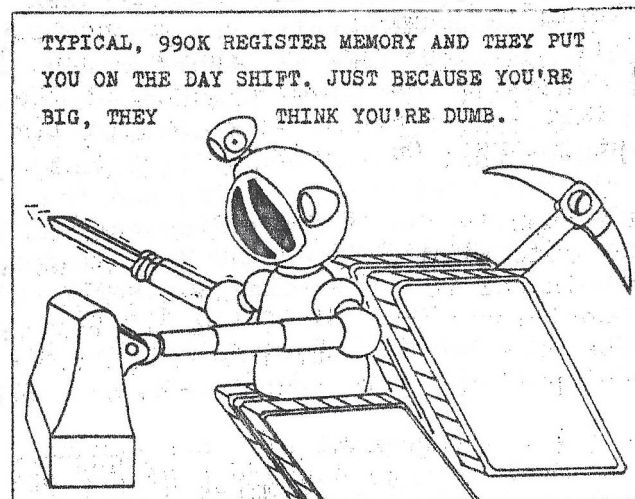
ANNIE MULLINS

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YORCON '79 --THE MOTION PICTURE

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HAVE YOU THE COURAGE TO CATCH IT?

Yorcon was held in Leeds over Easter 1979, that being the time Eastercons are usually held. It was organised by the Leeds group with Sunderland-dwelling me tagging on the end. So how come I got involved? Unstil Skycon 78, the previous Easter, I knew virtually nothing about the Leeds crowd. I'd met Mike Dickinson at a couple of cons and liked him. The last time I remembered talking to Dave Fringle, the co-chair man, was at Tynecon 74 when we were both pissed. I'd had a reasonable fanzine from Alan Dorey and was on ambiguous terms with the greasy eminence (censored in case his feelings are hurt)

of Don West who was believed to have a finger in the Yorcon pie. But other than that was blissfully ignorant of the group and full of misconceptions about them.

At Skycon I appeared on a couple of panels in Ian Maule's fan room. Then on the Saturday evening just as I was about to go for a curry I was approached by Fringle, Dickinson, Dorey and the voluptuous Kate Jeary who said they'd been impressed by what I'd had to say on the panels and thought I'd been the right person to organise their fan room and would I like to do it. I was quite stunned and said I'd like to think it over. By the time I came back from the curry I'd talked myself into it and agreed to do it.

For several months after that I planned and thought things over, finally getting down to serious work on it in January and getting in touch with the rest of the committee who were worried in case I'd forgotten all about it.

It was rather strange. In effect what I was doing was almost organising a separate minicon within a larger convention. I tried to develop a philosophy or attitude towards the fan room, albeit an inconsistent one. I was trying to do several things and hoping I wouldn't fall flat on my face. A primary aim was as a hospitality room for neos where anyone could just come and talk if they were feeling confused or had problems or just wanted to find out what fandom was about. First cons can be very confusing affairs and I hoped the Fan Room could help. The second thing I wanted to do was to give the Fan Room a theme. Previously they'd been somewhat haphazard affairs, collections of photographs with no real linking theme. So I decided I'd like to try and present a visual history of British fandom in 70s. Despite what certain oldtimers said later, it wasn't because I came into fandom in 1970, but because I believe the 70s have marked a great change and development in British fandom which begun in 1970. My views on how to present this visual history varied during the year and I finally settled for the easy way out. Each year had its own sheet of card. On it was a list of conventions. The Eastercon had its name, number, place, organisers, guests of honour, winner of the Doc Weir, and a brief comment on its success or lack of it. The Novacon entry was briefer and include the Nova Award winners for best fanzine. Then there was a list of notable fanzines of the year. On the visual side were the covers of each Easter and Novacon programme books, covers from fanzines or photographs of fan editors and maybe a selection of photographs of the cons. That was the main display. Other things I put up included: a section on Pat and Graham Charnock, Yorcon's FanGoHs including photos (brought by the Charnox with much else) and text; a selection of artwork by Harry Bell, Seacon's Fan GoH; a photo display of notable fans, a display of fans doing strange things with an invitation to add your own caption; Jim Barker brought along some cartoons which illustrated book titles for attendees to guess the title. There were plenty of fanzines for sale and for free

on the tables in the room. I was disappointed that virtually no local groups seemed to want to publicise their existence, especially as I plugged this in the progress reports. But I get ahead of myself.

During the preceding three months I gradually got things sorted out and arranged by writing, phoning, talking to and arguing with a variety of people. In fact I got the programme more or less finalised a month before the con, though I was still compiling the ingredients of the display until the last week. Kevin Williams valiantly and kindly photocopying copious quantities of artwork, fanzine and programme book covers for me.

And then it was Easter.

Spring wasn't exactly in the air because it had been (and still was) a long cold winter. Hell, we'd even been cut off by snow blizzards. Several times I'd tramped to work through almost knee deep snow --and this was in Sunderland where, by being on the coast, the winters are comparatively milder. Despite the foul weather I hadn't, remarkably for me, had a single cold or sniffle in well over a year.

So on the Thursday morning I got up at 6.15 determined to make an early start and get to Leeds as soon as possible. I noticed a tickly throat had turned decidedly worse and was now quite sore. I packed paracetamol and some throat easers and hopped on the 7.45 train from Sunderland to York. It was a bright sunny day. The best weather in months. Waited half an hour for a connection and walked into the Dragonara at 10.45 fully expecting to see the place thronged with Leeds Group members and committee tearing round getting things ready. Instead I saw Alan Dorey sitting languidly (Christopher) Priest-like reading a paper. He greeted me cordially, showed me a copy of the programme book and explained most of them were still at the printers and were expected shortly.

Well, when can I start getting the displays up?

Sorry, the fan room is being used for a function all day.

The assistant manager joined us and had coffee brought. Dave Fringle arrived. And very little happened. Mostly just sat around talking whilst a few people started arriving.

By mid afternoon I felt I had to start doing something, so I got the display materials (large sheets of card, pens, blue tack, etc), photographs and photocopies (the former having been sent to me by Ian Maule, Graham Poole, Graham England, and Mike Meara) took them to the empty convention hall and started laying them out from the notes I'd made. The litho programme sheet arrived without the fan programme on it. They'd lost the copy I'd given them when I'd been in Leeds a few weeks earlier. So I wrote out another copy which was taken out to be photocopied. One of the Leeds mob who was a graphic designer (and whose name I embarrassingly forgot) came and helped write the text on the displays, my printing not being brilliant. By about 8.30

we'd just about completed it. I went to the restaurant downstairs for a pizza; it was to be the last cooked meal I'd have for forty eight hours.

I had a few drinks, chatted to people, and then, feeling decidedly unwell, went to bed just before midnight.

Woke early feeling even worse, had a couple of paracetamol, breakfast, got the keys to the committee and fan room and went upstairs to them to get things set up.

In fact it was fan rooms. I'd been allocated two small rooms along a corridor on the floor above the main function area.

Not far off was a large room for the dealers which turned out to be not large enough for their liking. I got busy with a little help setting up the displays and arranging tables in the nearer room. The farther one next door was to be solely for the fan programme. This arrangement worked in fact quite well, though it would have been better if the rooms had been larger. Most of the fan programme played to capacity crowds and many couldn't get in.

People kept turning up with fanzines and photos. The Charnox were especially helpful with the latter, embellishing the display had I had for them and several of the fan history. I laid out the fanzines later in the day and entered those for sale in a book. Brian Hampton brought numerous photos which were of great use. Jim Barker, jovial as ever, turned up with his cartoons and a nice little self-deprecatory strip to embellish the display of Harry's artwork. John Collick was very willing and helpful too. Lunch was a quick sandwich in the bar/lounge. I was beginning to feel very unwell but had so much to do I was able to ignore it.

My evening meal was one large sandwich eaten on the run whilst trying to locate the participants for the first fan programme item. This was the chat show chaired very ably by Rob Hansen with his guests Rog Peyton, Rob Holdstock, and Roy Kettle. Despite it starting half an hour late, it went down a storm, all three speakers performing marvellously sending the packed audience into fits. Definitely a good start.

But I was far from finished. There was the fan room party that evening. And there was a cock-up due to a misunderstanding between me and the rest of the committee over the punch. We couldn't even get a punch bowl out of the hotel and it was only due to Carol Gregory's efforts that we did get something vaguely suitable, ice buckets. The party was late and there was a crowd outside waiting to get in led by Gregory F. Pickersgill. I made the punch which was strong but not very tasty. Music blasted out from Greg's cassette deck via Eve and John Harvey's speakers. By midnight I was sober, shattered and had a temperature, so I left instructions with several people to make sure the doors were shut (they locked automatically) when the party finished, left the keys at reception and went to bed.

It was a good thing I'd been given a single room as I slept restlessly, alternately shivering and sweating profusely. I got up at 3.00 and took some paracetamol then back to bed to sweat some more.

The first panel was scheduled for 11.00 and I almost made a giant cockup on that. It was about getting into fandom. I hoped it would be a witty and also informative little item. The first mistake I made was not mentioning the time of the panel to Bob Shaw when he arrived on the Friday. I finished frantically and very embarrassedly phoning his room at the last minute. There'd also been a misunderstanding with Joe Nicholas who couldn't appear so I roped in John Collick. Alun Harries, who'd created a stir at Novacon by calling fannish fandom a bunch of antisocial elitist pricks, was the other member. The panel went down fairly well though it didn't do exactly what I'd hoped. Bob of course performed well, as did Alun, though poor John was a bit out of it despite me trying to bring him in. There was a lot of audience participation. But really it just became yet another discussion about fannish fandom being elitist and should we do anything about it. I came in for censure from a number of old time fen who sat prominently in the front row for not putting up any display of fandom before 1970. Valid enough. Si it was okay and lively but didn't really say anything new.

By this time my nose was in full flood and quite frequently I had to go to the loo to flush handfulls of soggy paper hankies away. When I went for a pee it was a toss up as to which organ was voiding the most fluid. The only positive thing I found out was that my heavy cold didn't affect my contact lens covered eyes and I never came close to losing one when I sneezed violently.

I closed the fan room for three quarters of an hour just after one and grabbed a sandwich for lunch. Then back to the fan room. Treckon it would have been far more successful if the small bar adjacent to the bookroom had been opened, but it wasn't.

In the afternoon was my experiment, a game of sorts I'd thought up called Impromptues. The idea was to have well known fans speak of the cuff on a variety of fannish topics I'd set them. It was a bit of a cheat because I'd sent a list of topics to the participants telling them one of the topics they'd have to speak on but leaving the second round to any of seven. Well, it didn't go too badly in the first round, but in the second I gave the wrong topics to the wrong people. Still it wasn't the disaster I half expected. Though I'm not sure it's an idea worth repeating. Cockfield liked it, mind. Helen Eling was a marvellous help looking after the display room for me whilst I was busy with the programme. Collick helped that way too. Most of the time though I was only able to get away for ten/ fifteen minutes now and again.

Saturday evening I didn't do much except manage to get a decent meal in the restaurant, then went to watch the fancy dress with Dave Cockfield. Which was the worst fancy dress I've ever seen at a convention. The reason, presumably, was that most people were saving themselves for the worldcon. I stayed up till midnight then went to bed with more paracetemols.

After coffee and biscuits in my room next morning, I went and opened up the fan room. Helen Eling came in to take registrations for Novacon. I had to cancel the one item that morning (a discussion about Seacon), because Malcolm Edwards had to go to a Seaconconcom meeting and Greg didn't want to do it. Helen looked after the fan room whilst I went down to the bidding session. It was going to be Don West versus the Glasgow FOKTs. Except Don was violently ill and Dave Bridges had to stand in for him. Poor sod, it was a massacre much to the disappointment of the fannish fans.

I got a plowman's lunch and took it upstairs to the Fan Room. In the afternoon was the Pat and Graham Charnock show where the Fan GoHs did their bit. The place was packed out and overflowed into the corridor. I nervously, bumblingly, and briefly introduced them (really should have written something beforehand) and let them get on with it. They did and were great. Very funny and entertaining speech/dialogues, they finished up singing some of the Astral League's Golden Greats, getting the audience (even me) to sing along loudly. Lovely stuff, Charnox.

Half an hour later it was time for the Mastermind quiz. Ian Maule had kindly set the first round fannish questions and he acted as timekeeper and scorer for me. Poor Mike Meara was thrown off when I shoved in: Who won the F.A. cup (soccer) in 1973. He thought it was a joke. Not so; the answer was Leeds 0: Sunderland 1. Cockfield didn't know which year Maya was started in! I foolishly said, "What the hell did I bother to put up that bloody display next door, for?" To which somebody replied, "That's what we'd all like to know too." The second round was SF which I'd set. Part of it included titles of movies to which I gave cryptic clues. Too cryptic because most weren't guessed. There were appropriate groans and laughter when I gave the answer. Mike Meara (the favourite) won. It was a good quiz I thought with plenty of banter. I certainly handled it better than the last one I did back at Tynecon. And that, apart from another fan room party later, was the end of the fan programme. It was a bit uneven perhaps, but all of it was well attended and (I hope) enjoyed. My sincerest thanks to all who participated.

Some time after six I shut the fan room, got the recipe for punch from Simone, money from committee funds and was driven round Leeds to find an off license by Graham James who'd kindly offered his services. It was my first sight of natural daylight in four days.

Shortly after I got back was the banquet. Places had hurriedly to be found for the Charnox because someone had assumed they wouldn't want to go. There'd also been a cockup in the total attending and four people couldn't get seats. The meal itself was pretty good, not only edible but actually tasty. Then came the speeches and awards. There'd only been three entries for Jim Barker's cartoon competition (three correct ones, sorry). Chris Priest, an excellent toastmaster, couldn't believe the winner's name --one J. Cornelius. I got him to show the cartoons and read out the captions as well as the answers for those who hadn't been to the fan room, which got laughs. The Doc Weir Award went very deservedly and to great applause to Rog Peyton who was totally surprised and completely overwhelmed. After the banquet I got the fan room ready for the party. This time I did it properly. I got a soup tureen for a punch bowl and did a decent job on the punch, got the room tidied and everything ready before letting anyone in. It filled up very quickly and the punch disappeared equally rapidly. However, there was plenty of booze under the table so I made more... and more. The party was going well and I was feeling, if not on top of the world, bright enough to keep on drinking and talking. I wandered down to the bar for more lager. (I kept away from the punch because I didn't want to mix my drinks, not because I had any doubts about its quality.) Chatted to a few people and went off looking for a room party. From the noise and happy pissed faces I saw around, everyone was having a good time. I found one party which was packed and had generous supplies of vodka and rum (which might have had something to do with it.). I squeezed into a corner with Jim Barker who was in a great mood and swapped insults with him in between telling Andrew Stephenson what a good writer I thought he was and (accidentally, honest) almost setting him on fire with his own cigar. A bit later I wandered down into the bar and settled onto the floor with a group comprising Maules, Fardees, Mearae, Cockfield and some others. And got into a lively argument with Maule and Cockfield over their plan of holding a variation of Silicon at the same time as the Glasgow Eastercon. (I'll probably have more to say about this later.) Then, cheerfully pissed for the first time all weekend, I went to bed just before three. Next morning was spent pleasantly, lazily chatting in the bar, before a hectic three hours of dismantling the fan room and returning photos and sundries to their owners. When it came to leave I didn't particularly want to go, especially I'd stopped feeling ill. But I caught the 3.50 train to York and, marvellously, got onto a connection immediately. And that was it. And that was my view of it. Being stuck up in my crow's nest of the fan room I saw little of the con itself, but to judge from the reactions of others it fulfilled my expectations of being the best Eastercon since 75. I think I did a reasonably

competent job, though I did make several mistakes and my organisation wasn't as tight as it should have been. I wasn't as sharp or on the ball as I'd have liked to have been, but that I can honestly put down to the rotten cold I had. And, yes I do think fan rooms are a good idea, but they can still work better. The hospitality angle I'd tried to push didn't really work simply because people didn't make any demands that way. I do feel I was on the right track but that it needs handling in a different way. I hope whoever does the fan room next year has some fresh ideas on those lines. And my sincerest thanks to all those who helped me out, and my apologies if I've neglected to mention you.

One final note: last week I received a letter from the Bob Shaw who's chairing next year's Eastercon in which he asked me if I'd like to do run the fan room at his con. It was very flattering. But don't worry, I'm not going to.

FOOTNOTE:

All the previous stencils were typed several months ago, shortly after Yorcon and were intended to go in the now probably never to appear Siddhartha:10. (Stop cheering damn you!) I've changed my opinion about several things I've written in the previous pages since then and was tempted to alter them. But, the hell with it, that was how I felt shortly after Yorcon and is just as valid as how I feel about things now.

I've been in fandom for ten years this year. In a Scottish some months after Yorcon Ethel Lindsay mentioned that the person in charge of the Fan Room, Ian Watson, was obviously getting more tired as the con went on.

Ten years?

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT:

Is a Gannetfanzine revival imminent?

The multi-talent Gannetfandom, which celebrates 10 years of successful fan activity at Silicon this year, looks all set for a fanzine revival. Recently fandom was stunned by the appearance of CUT OF THE BLUE, a literate, witty, polished fanzine from Harry Bell and Kevin Williams.

NOW! The man himself, IAN WILLIAMS, has published CHIMERA: 1. CHIMERA:1 contains facts about Seacon, best & worst sf of the seventies, a fan critic expose, & humour from Ian Maule. Available from Ian Williams, 6 Greta Tce., Chester Rd., Sunderland, SR4 7RD, Tyne & Wear, for trade, loc. or 10p stamp.

Putting pun to paper Mary Long examines...

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+MELON-CAULI PROSPECTS+
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THE ENDIVE STRIKES
BACK

I was pondering the other day upon the salad days of s.f., and it occurred to me that it might not have been mere coincidence that much s.f. was set on the likes of Vega, and more often than not, the villains of the piece were giant this or thats, or rampant vegetables. I thought about it a little longer. Breathes there a fan who knows not that James Arness made his film debut as the giant carrot in The Thing, which being set in the Arctic made him one of the first frozen vegetables. On the other root, it may not be so well known that George, of the brothers Savalas, first trod the boards as a carrot in a school play. It's tempting to speculate what brother Telly appeared as but do not suggest an eggplant, it's already been said. We are all familiar with one version or another of Invasion of the Body Snatchers, in which Senator McCarthy remains as sweet as the moment as the pod went pop. - a friend just returned from California reports a freeway sign south of San Francisco which reads 'Pod Distribution Center Ahead.' (eat your heart out Donald Southerland) Ten years later there was The Navy versus The Night Monsters, in which the foes were trees, which ate anything. No doubt about it, it was a time when every housewife took her life in her hands each time she entered the greengrocers: at any moment the unwary shopper might be lynched by string beans, trampled by stampeding horse radish, drowned by leeks, artichoked, or something unthinkable by cucumbers. My thoughts having meandered to this point, I was eyeing the fridge door, and wondering if it was safe to get out the makings of a salad, when it occurred to me that it wasn't just our chloroplastic friends who were depicted in an evil light. Bad press also went to plant eaters. Are not gorillas, monstrous or otherwise, vegetarian? And what of the giant rabbits in Night of the Lepus? and the humble bee in Deadly Bees, and the Swarm. And it may be happening again: a couple of weeks ago I saw a production advertisement for Tusks, which apparently is about a rampaging elephant. Likewise, the gloriously titled, Attack of the Killer Tomatoes has not been released (or should it be, begun) here yet. All of which suggests a pasting for the Tomatoes and an encore for the Carrots (or should that be apples). In a word, it is time that plant lovers rose up and demanded a lupinto this phenomenon. Dahlia no longer. Lettuce not rest upon our laurels until the pore-ing of (s)corn upon the humble weed has been soundly beeten, peas restored and the prospects less melon-cauli for us all. Pine not for the lost innocence of photosynthesis, act now! Picket your onion, support privet enterprise, for undoubtedly something evil has sprouted in Brussels, which will berry the freedom of the cress. The thyme is ripe, act now. Else I fear we may all wake up one day to find Triffids tapping tendrils on our windows and chorussing 'Earth People! That's shallott!'

A TURNIP FOR THE BOOKS BY MARY LONG MARCH 1979

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LIFE WITHOUT RITCHIE SMITH?

The house is very quiet these days. The blue tinge has almost gone from the air, and when Christmas carollers come round, they don't get sent off with a flea in their ear. The reason?

Ritchie is staying in London for a while. He disappeared into the smoky depths (well, alright it's not that smoky in Surrey) about a month ago and I've had the cat for company ever since. I've had the lodger for company as well, but, unlike the cat, the lodger doesn't sleep in my bed - honest!

Since the big man has been gone I've overslept every morning and missed breakfast. I don't know if you've ever tried getting out of bed when there's no-one to actually shove you over the edge of the mattress and leave you sprawling on the floor, but believe me, it's not easy. - - - t

Last week the lodger decided that it really was time I experienced breakfast again, and took steps to see that I did. We have two phones in our house; both with different numbers (this is because the house is really two flats with a hole knocked through between them), so at 7 o'clock one dark dismal morning, he sneakily went to the downstairs 'phone and dialled the number of the telephone which is upstairs right outside my bedroom door. The bell rang. I had a coronary, leapt out of bed, had another coronary, picked up the receiver and coronaried all over it.

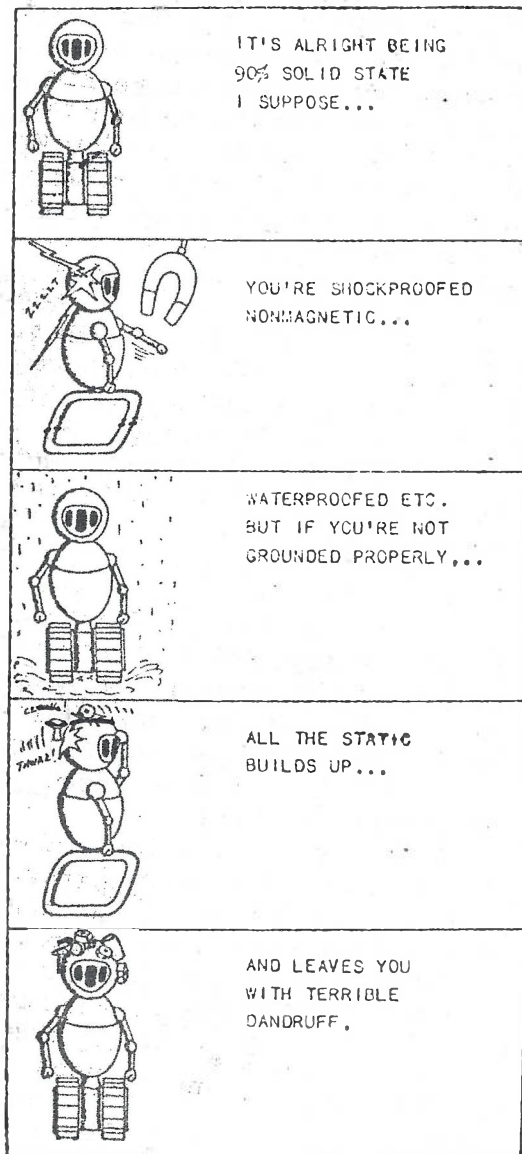
I WILL FIND A WAY TO REPAY HIM FOR THAT!

I was so shattered that I still didn't have time for breakfast. Difficulty in getting up, especially applies to mornings when you couldn't get to sleep the night before. Like when you had the luxury of a big double bed all to yourself to stretch out in - All To Yourself. It's not easy getting to sleep by yourself you know. Funnily enough you need help.

Ritchie has other uses too, like putting out the bins, letting in the cat and vice versa. Also nagging. I'm a very lazy person and need nagging to get things done, otherwise I will sit around, just finishing the next chapter of the book I'm reading. In order to completely ruin my pleasure in the book, I need someone to yell deafeningly in my ear words to the effect that it's most undesirable to be a very lazy person. I only got around to writing this because I thought wor Andy would bash me 'ead in if I didn't.

Mind you, being Smithless does have its advantages. For instance when I'm on a diet, now I don't open the bread bin and find for example a large irresistible cream cake in it. It's very difficult living with Smith and dieting at the same time. I must say that life takes a more natural pace when you only have yourself to consider. If I feel like going out, then I go; if I want to stay in, then I do so. I can eat all the things that I like and he doesn't, and I don't have to iron shirts.

We used to argue about whose turn it was to do the washing up, but now it's always my turn and I think this is totally unfair. It's always my turn to do the shopping now as well, and the cleaning, washing, putting out the rubbish etc etc. This is the kind of flagrant injustice that should be stamped out. Still, as I said I don't have to iron shirts.



Another jolly good thing about Ritchie being away is that I don't have to put up with the insect repellent. Smith has this pathological hatred of insects (the six legged as well as the biped-al kind), and so in warm weather he's always chasing them around with an aerosol can. Not to squash them but to spray them. In my view, DDT makes a home totally uninhabitable; in his view, insects make a home totally uninhabitable. The only solution is to spray the nasty beasties with the noxious chemical and then go out drinking so that the home is temporarily uninhabited. This of course is a terrible hardship. Another advantage to the boss loss is that I've never looked forward to Christmas as much as I do this year, because that's when I shall be seeing him again. Smith may be a bad tempered master but bless him, he's the nicest bad tempered master I know.

ANNIE MULLINS DECEMBER 1979

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WHO ONLY SIT AND READ...

STATEMENTS OF THE OBVIOUS

Reading is usually a very passive occupation. I know of one or two people who might be called aggressive readers. The one literally sits at the edge of his seat when excited, guffaws out loud when amused, sighs a lot through romantic parts, in short becomes thoroughly immersed in the story. No, I don't know how he reacted to *The Perfumed Garden*, but I do know he threw Delany's *Triton* at the wall and then stomped on it, and tore C. Anderson's *Magellan* into shreds and set fire to the pieces. Such people do exist, and it pays to get out of their way when they pick up boring badly written books. But I think it goes deeper than that. This friend of mine, his behaviour changes after each book he reads. Now you might say, look who's talking, the despair of Desmond Morris, but I seriously believe that my friend becomes so involved with the tales he reads that it alters his personality for days afterwards. Berserker stories cause him to be surly and destructive, *Stainless Steel Rat* stories make him jovial and hyperactive, the *Dune* stories made him secretive and suspicious. Yes I do have some weird friends, but this phenomenon is not restricted to just loonies and s.f. readers. Another friend of mine, a charming, non-s.f. reader, asian by descent and a gentleman by nature, read *Kafka's The Trial*, *Dostoyevsky's Crime and Punishment*, and *Solzhenitsyn's Cancer Ward* all in one week. We told him not to do it. Especially with just a fortnight to go before his final exams. We had all on to stop him from jumping off the Tyne Bridge, yet normally he's an incurable optimist. Now you might say that this was a severe and extreme case. But if Vance Packard is right we are all affected unconsciously to a greater or lesser extent by everything we read. I am not suggesting that we all leap out of the house full of derring do after a *Flandry* story, or bolt all the doors and hope the chairs won't bite after a *Philip Dick* story. But what about those moments when, as the saying goes, the book becomes unputdownable? When the watchmakers run riot, when Charlie goes back to school, when Cordle goes carrot, when Case learns the right words, when Adzel plays poker...o.k. enough, but something subtle happens then. Turning from unputdownability to the insidiously fascinating, I have to confess, to my chagrin, that somehow the books of Joe Haldeman and Albert Camus always manage to leave me with a lump in my throat (ok so I've only read three of each). This can be an acute embarrassment, especially where I work. What is worse is that I can neither resist these writers nor prevent them from getting through to me, even when some of the the recognised tear jerkers leave me cold. I know what to expect but go ahead anyway. It's war, but it's life and it evokes a strange sympathy. So how does all this tie together? Well, it occurs to me that aggressive readers like my friend are really the most passive of all, since the book has detached them from reality so completely that the act of reading effortless. Autonomic, like breathing. This event happens to everyone of us in those unputdownable moments and insidiously fascinating passages. This is what the author wants to happen, and he uses all his

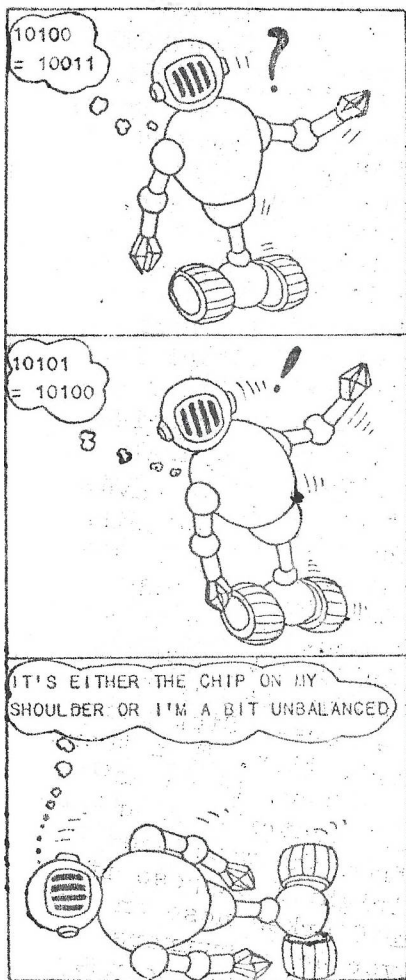
skills to try and make as much of his book as unputdownable as possible. His reasons may be altruistic or entirely mercenary, but no writer in his right mind would deliberately author a boring book would he? To press on, we read the book, we get involved and we like it or conversely the book is very putdownable and we don't like it. So how do we criticise a book objectively in these circumstances? The nature of reading and the way books are written encourages the reader to be subjective. If he isn't, ten to one, he won't like the

book. So how can you write an objective book review, when it looks as if everything you ever read will affect your judgement. The lowest common denominator of an opinion can't be 'I didn't like this work because it was a chore reading it,' can it? I'm not saying people stop reading books because they don't like them. Indeed it appears as if some authors depend upon a style that keeps you going in the hope it will get better. Some books are extremely difficult to read but the effort is rewarding. You might like this kind because you enjoy hard work, the learning experience or the fulfilment of understanding. But informative is not the same as unputdownable. So, you see the horns of my dilemma I hope. Someone tell me it isn't true, Someone show me that you can review objectively something that touched you, something you liked. Someone tell me that good reading doesn't have the same effect as watching t.v. or self hypnosis. Someone tell me that you don't alter something simply by looking at it. Someone tell me that you aren't altered simply by looking at something. Yes, you've guessed, I've been reading General Relativity again, and damn it, I'm not afraid to say I liked it, at least I think I liked it.

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But that's not what I wanted to talk about. I've never heard it said "life as a book", (of the movie?). Reading requires more effort

than watching t.v. But I have heard it said that too much sex and violence on television will encourage the weak minded to be promiscuous and bellicose. What I want to know is what these self appointed watch dogs define as enough sex and violence. Is it true that too little would leave the average viewer impotent and defenceless? (Can you



imagine a Mary Whitehouse programme schedule? - non stop choir practice) and what of open university biology? what of adverts for the Royal Army? what of the news? To stop showing it, doesn't stop it happening. Back to s.f., do too many trick endings make us any trickier? or do our palates for the inventive become jaded by the excess? or is our appreciation of the skill raised to such a level that we are heavily critical of anything but the highest practice of the art?

PENNY DREADFULS

But that's not what I wanted to talk about either. It's this problem of editing versus censoring. Where do you draw the blue line? Where do you deny a writer freedom of expression for the sake of economy? Is it morally defensible? Left to my own preferences this article would not be included in this zine (there's a logical fallacy there, something about shaving barbers) but since Scrapbook is financed by its contributors, they all have a right to their say, and that includes my alter ego. In this way, the editor is reduced to his dictionary definition, that is, preparer of an edition. Some folk like and expect diaristic stuff, others (myself included) prefer s.f. and so it goes. So how do you contrive a cohesive whole? without either scattering the shot too thin or concentrating it too narrow? How do you get Ian Williams to write serious analytical material? How do you get Harry Bell to stop drawing and write an article? (Is this morally defensible?) How do you get Kevin Williams to realise his full potential? (Is this morally defensible?). I see several schools of thought. The first one is called physical coercion. This approach has serious disadvantages if you are only five foot seven and nine stone wet through, and will require dictation once you have broken both the would-be contributors arms. Then there's the dripping tap technique, which requires great perseverance. I have tried this approach on Dr Jackson, Dave Cockfield and Ian Maule. You can judge its effectiveness from their contributions to this ish. It involves sending the would-be contributor requests for material with each posting of the Royal Mail. It is expensive and although it may win you a few friends at the GPO it may only illicit a terse "Stop pestering me" from the target, which is hardly a contribution. Then there is the Flatterer technique, which implies that Bob Shaw, Isaac Asimov, Philip Dick, John Varley and Bob Sheckley have all contributed and the ish wouldn't be complete without something from the would-be contributor. I see several faneds doing this, alright I suppose if you must know how many hairs there are up Arthur Clarke's nose on any given day, or have an indefatigable intrigue over John Branners nail pairings. A technique I favour but seldom get a chance to use is the frontal lobe assault method. This involves pouring vast quantities of alcohol down the gullet of the would-be contributor, thus opening he/she to suggestion. Flickering lights at the same frequency as the victims alpha rhythms, and sodium pentathol can assist here. But it is best to get the contribution down on paper before the subject passes out or throws up. Another method is black-

mail, although it occurs to me that if you can try this method, you probably have a better article than any which will be submitted. Yet another method is to write the material yourself and then credit it to someone else. This generally illicit a response from the injured party, although it is usually unprintable.

Another problem is how do you illicit material from some-one you don't know? "Dear Bob Shaw, you don't know me from Adam, please write an article for this obscure and small circulation fanzine. - love Adam" or "Dear Isaac Asimov I have been a life long fan of yours and wondered if you'd like to help out with this robot project I'm doing, - yours lifelong fan (retired)." These men are busy professionals for goodness sake, with real editors on their backs.

So maybe I can learn something from the great editors of the past. John W. Campbell for instance is alleged to have ridden shotgun on his writers better than the other John W. did in Stagecoach. Can't see the Gannets standing for that. You can take this thing too seriously (there goes another golden age). How about Edward L. Ferman then? Is an editor really only as good as the material he receives? O.K. take Ben Bova, yes please take Ben Bova, his ends certainly don't justify his means. Bova my dead body. Does it help to have definite ideas about how writing should be, and what it should be about? Do rigid frameworks and restrictions of realism lead to formula writing? Times change and as we stagger from auric era to auric era, all I can help feeling is etting golder - sorry. It's a long way from Dickens who went a bomb on d&escription and short changed the dialogue to Barbara Cartland, who hardly writes anything outside inverted commas. And there's another problem you see. Who does the editor cater for? Does he aim his material at the reading public in general? a special interest minority? a peer group? a sponsor? At least GSB doesn't have the dreadful problem of being interrupted by adverts shoving their good taste down your throat like some compulsive seagulls feed their young.

We interrupt this waffle to bring you a newsflash direct from the authors subconscious...

"Those seekers of instant legend cloister progress with their traditions. Stability and repetition may be found in a dynamic equilibrium and yet they raise their hands in horror if the balance tilts a little with each swing. Without this movement how can they be certain which direction the centre of their hurricane selects? It is a search for heroes with whom to be involved, a wallowing in vanity, an open diary of the frivolous. Unbidden they bequeath this trash to dubious posterity, then rush to find themselves recorded in it. Ironically, the masters of this immaturity condemn those serious students of this childishness the loudest."



TRACE ELEMENTS IN THE STONY GROUND

I said that reading is a very passive occupation, so it is encouraging that s.f. should be the one branch of literature with such an active readership. I suppose it is inevitable in view of the subject matter. Imagine some of the other fandoms that could have been. I suppose Russian Author fandom would have suicided within a week if my Asian friend was anything to go by. The survivors would presumably have had to contend with purges from warring power factions, the Tolstoyan proletariat and the Dostoyevskian revisionists. Greek philosopher fandom actually exists but they call it the House of Commons. Where else can you make a living boring your fellows to tears with redundant logic based on inadequate observation and partisan rhetoric? Still, it's nice to relive those magic moments like when Stelio Egganchipolatas discovered that the square on the hypoteneuse displaces its own weight of water, or when Archie Gastroenteritis discovered the Lever Brothers and uttered the immortal line "Give me a laxative strong enough and I will move the bowels of the Earth." My favourite might have been fandom is Failed Intellectual Fandom. This comprises a Frenchman who despite having read everything from Balzac to Zola is convinced that Nausea is an allegorical work on mal de mer. There's an Irishman who understands Joyce but is more interested in the streams of unconsciousness produced by Arthur Guinness. Then there's a Dutchman taking inscrutability lessons from a Kamikaze pilot called Mishima. Ghandi is showing a Belgian how to charm his snake. There's an Italian who hates Machiavelli, but is doing too well in business to disagree with him. There's an Englishman striking for the right to work and an immigrant working for the right to strike. There's a refugee from South Africa who's seen Alan Patons vision first hand but thinks Tom Sharpe's is nearer the truth. And dominating the whole group is an immense German industrialist who thinks the sun shines out of a dwarf on Nietzsches shoulder and whose maxim is 'Absolute power Krupps absolutely'. Yes you've guessed it's not Failed Intellectual Fandom at all, it's the EEC (what is an intellectual anyway?) which explains I hope, why I prefer Bob Shaw to Bernard Shaw even though they're oceans apart - ouch AND YOU KNOW WHAT YOU CAN DO WITH YOUR FANZINE SONNY

But that's not what I wanted to talk about. Is an editor justified in dressing up a sow's ear as a silk purse if it succeeds in attracting the silk purses he is after? Is it right to tell little white lies in order to obtain access to a greater truth? I don't think so. There are purveyors of certain multicoloured factoid rags feeding their egos and their faces from the pennies they have conned from the hands of young kids. It's exploitation. The gold is in there alright but diluted with ninety nine percent dross so that its extraction is uneconomic. S.f. readers deserve better and can do better. We interrupt this waffle to bring you an ode to histrionic pros, direct from the authors mid id.

Its educated readership
Will spot each authors little slip
Thus every famous writer feels
An unknown host hot on his heels
'You're amateurs' complains the pro
Let's keep the bugger on his toes.

INFINITE SHADES OF WHITE

You can laugh. But does all this feedback that the pros get from the rank and file alter what they are going to do? Or does it merely encourage them to churn out another volume of the same cack. Readers of cack (this included?) my apologies. The editor has a role here. Is he right to call for a writers recognised style when he/she may be trying to do something different? Surely it is the name that initially stirs interest, the reader won't be aware of the change in style until the reading. Is the only spur to a successful writer, a drop in sales?

So what? It's nice to see folk writing their own Known Space stories at Larry Nivens invitation. It would be a sadder world without the works of Jim Barker or Harry Bell. You won't hear me vilify the filk singers either though I've a feeling this is the weakest area of s.f. amateur activity. So what? the enthusiasms there.

The thing is this. Most s.f. fans will look at your working model of starship enterprises sanitation system that took you six years and a second mortgage to build, and tell you that it isn't suitable for vulcans (because they have an asshole behind each kneecap - better for eradicating clingons). Non readers would only notice a monumental waste of time and money. So it saddens me to see some fans jumping on anothersfolly. I have a very low opinion of long winded destructive diatribe that offers nothing to replace or improve the item it is pulling down. It's very easy to condemn a mistake, not so easy to rectify it. Very often the critics who demerit a particular thing because it is not to their particular taste betray their emotional hysteria by failing to construct viable options. The result is usually an offensive statement of personal dissatisfaction lacking in reasoned arguments or alternatives but loaded with distorted premises. Which brings me back to subjective criticism, which isn't what I wanted to talk about.

WESTON HORIZONS

Now it is unlikely but not impossible that the crud you wrote for a fanarticle ten years ago, will end up as a receptacle for Bob Shaws chips (cold and soggy) and whilst consuming these he will idly scan your words and be inspired to write his greatest novel. Do all fans harbour secret hopes of being the catalyst of achievement to the more accomplished? But failing this many faneds will try and direct their readership to authors and literature that they have enjoyed. To me the elegance of good logic is as pleasurable as a good story, so to redress the balance.

Journal of Geology V. 60 P. 26 (1952) Krumbein & Garrels
Colloids & Oxidation Potentials

The Dragons of Eden Carl Sagan Coronet

The New Apocrypha John Sladek Panther

I might not agree with Mr Weston or Mr Bovas policies but I think they are right in insisting on some science in their science fiction.

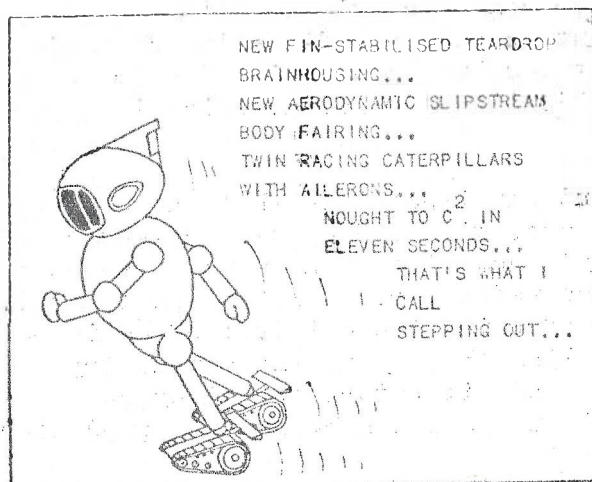
I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT

A fanzine affords so much scope to unscrupulous plagiarists like myself that it saddens me to see so many folk using them as a record of mundane personal events.

But that in itself is a personal taste. When one can manipulate other folks concepts into alternative patterns, juxtapose the characters & scenes of different authors; is not the method of the genre one of extrapolation & speculation? Muad 'Dib, submarine captain, Stoned Love by the Medusa, ok it's froth but 'what we did on our holidays' strikes me as just as adolescent and an easier option. Some folk laugh at a gag, others gag at a laugh. There are some commendable exponents of in-group humour. I wonder how much their popularity obscures their intrinsic merit.

Sp you see I'm back at square one. Does an editor stay true to his principles or his principals? Does he say, 'This article will be popular, I will include it, although I think it is crud.' Or does he say, 'I will include this article although very few will appreciate the qualities in it I can see.' Does he get the chance? Does he go bust or does the publisher say do this or else. I'm glad I'm an amateur. At least I won't have to die for the genre. I don't fancy starving in some garret room, or chopping my ear off or blowing my brains out for s.f. (who said got to find em first?), which is also why I'll never make it as a writer, but as an editor...

Well, look. If all fans are enthusiastic or frustrated amateurs trying to go pro what of Tiptree who reckons she's still an amateur? (never) What of Chris Priest & Bob Shaw who come across like frustrated pros trying to go amateur. Are they hot on our heels trying to improve our standards? Good luck to them. Roots innit mate? Well, I still haven't solved any of the problems as fanned for this ish. With luck the buck will have to pass at least a dozen others before I have to face these questions again. As for this ish you've probably guessed my course of action. I've adapted an old political standby, a favourite of Hari Seldon, 'When in doubt, do nothing.'



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Seeing as how calling this page the letter column could get us into trouble with the Trade Descriptions Act. Talk about timing, I had just finished the non editorial and was agonising upon whether it was sufficiently polished or interesting for inclusion when this missive from Jim Meadows plopped through the letterbox (yes I do work funny hours, so does the postman).

"I notice the continued comments, even from the perpetrators of GSB that 'oh, we lack focus, it is terrible, we are bereft of editorial direction...' and so on. After three issues I'm starting to appreciate it...it's a refreshing change from the standard editorial/article/humerous fluff/conrep/lettercol format that a lot of genzines get trapped in."

So now you know who to blame. But he didn't leave it there.

"Kevin Williams seems awfully curious as to who would ever buy the International Science Fiction Yearbook. Well, in a family like mine, where everybody reads science fiction, my sister bought it for me as a gift. I must confess, I haven't looked at it yet to see if the American Midwest fans are as well represented as the Gannets...but my copy's in softcover, so maybe it's cheaper than the one Kevin groaned over."

Practically everyone is represented in the Yearbook although not always well represented. For instance the Gannets meet on Tuesdays in the Duke of Wellington (the one in Carliol Square) not on thursdays as stated in the Yearbook. Kevins copy is softcover.

"I'm surprised Joe Nicholas can be so shortsighted. He seems to think s.f. is slipping back to the pulp days and that means it's in a bad period. Actually Joseph, the reason there's so much putrid s.f. around is that the genre is in a boom. Haven't you noticed? It's been sneaking up since the early 70's and Star Wars sort of pushed it to the crest. S.f. is a very marketable item right now. And of course in times like these, publishers do not say 'let's publish difficult, challenging and trailblazing works of quality fiction.' rather they say 'let's find something that sells like Star Wars.' It's pretty similar to earlier booms. Perhaps the s.f. prozine explosion of the early 50's was muted in the U.K. but there were dozens of them around at the time here. Ever try to read most of them? And yet when people think about s.f. of the 50's they're more likely to remember all the good stuff that was written, not the bilge that Silverberg wrote under different pen-names to pad out Amazing. One shouldn't let quantity overwhelm quality."

And so say all of us, although it is sometimes necessary to grind through five tons of rock to find one ounce of gold. - F.

JIM MEADOWS
606 JACKSON *2
PEORIA
IL 61603
USA

I used to be the mainstay of the public library until I discovered.....

++++++
+GANNETFANDOM+

++++++by Robert Day.

I was leaning over, taking off my wellington boots.

"Had a great time last night - the dustman had been, the coalman had been, I had made myself a beautiful bolognese, and there was a fanzine in the post with one of my letters in it!"

"Fanzine?" said Graham. "You a punk rock fan or something?"

"No!" I replied vehemently. "I'm a science fiction fan; and we invented fanzines a long time ago!"

The result of all this was that I took some fanzines into work for the benefit of my offices three s.f. readers. Yet, three years ago, I never knew such things existed. How did I, a humble s.f. reader, reach such heights of fannishness?

Blame it all on Rob Jackson.

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Well, not really. The tale of how I got involved in fandom in general and the Gannets in particular is worth telling, even if it does seem a little long winded. But it has a bearing on how I have come to live my life over the past few years.

It all started when I went to Newcastle to do librarianship at the Polytechnic. Like most freshers, I signed up for many societies, and one of them was the Little Green Men Society. By the end of October, I had tired of waiting for a meeting, and went to the Porter's Lodge to tannoy for a committee member. Along came one of our leading Marxists. "Oh, it folded at the end of last year. Go and see Cy Powell - he was last year's chairman - and he'll tell you more."

So I went to see Cy, Societies Secretary for that year.

"Well, I lost the membership forms. Look, I'm a little busy - would you like to start it?"

And, silly little...librarian...that I was, I did.

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To cut a boring tale short, I got a society with a respectable name, and then set about finding something for it to do. I investigated films, looked up author's addresses in the Writer's and Artist's Year-book, badgered two bookshops into giving me book tokens as prizes - and saw a notice of an s.f. talk in the local arts association news paper, Northern Arts:

SCIENCE FICTION AND THE GLASS BUSHEL : A TALK BY BOB SHAW

PRESENTED BY THE NORTH EAST SCIENCE FICTION GROUP

"Aha!" I thought. "Perhaps I can persuade this goodly writer to come to talk to us sometime."

My right hand man and I went to the Bridge Hotel at the appointed time, and met those who were later to become familiar names : Rob Jackson, Ian Williams, Harry Bell - and Bob Shaw.

During the meeting, it transpired that the eye-catching title had been concocted on the spur of the moment by Rob, when Northern Arts had asked him "...and what will be the title of Mr Shaw's lecture?"

I secured a promise from Bob of a talk in May. The problem of money then reared its ugly head. Bob was asking for about £8 petrol money and we didn't have a budget from the union.

And that's where Rob Carter stepped in.

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Now, I might be accused of telling tales about Rob Carter; after all, I've said some slightly harsh things about him recently. But I've only told the truth as it appears to me. And the truth is that Rob was a great help in May '76 when he gave me £5 towards Bob Shaw's expenses, thanks Rob.

I made a profit of £5 on the evening.

But don't anyone come rushing back for it. When Bob Shaw was the S.F. Society's guest at our Xmas dinner in 1977, I was £5 out of pocket after I'd paid the hotel bill. Swings and roundabouts...

+++000000+++

At the end of '76, I changed addresses a few times, and ended up living at Winlaton - five miles from Newcastle, five parsecs in Northern General Omnibus space time. So, I didn't see many Gannets between October and January, as I had to get the last convenient bus home at nine. During that time, we had the 'one hour late and full of worry' Robert Sheckley talk, where twenty-five fen invaded the Bangladesh at 23.30, and where I was introduced to Irish whiskey and Malayan curry. In January I moved to digs in Heaton, not a million miles from Rob Jackson's old home. The weekend after the move we went to Faancon in Derby.

Faancon '77. My first con.

Most Gannets remember that Faancon for the journeys there and back. To me it was a chance to go home and stock up on necessary items for the digs. It was also a chance to meet other fen for the first time. Dave Langford, Martin & Liese Hoare, Ian & Janice Maule, (if my memory serves me well), Rob Hansen, Terry Jeeves, Pam Boal. Apparently, I didn't go unnoticed. Mike Meara is later said to have remarked "...this guy turned up, and everyone wanted to talk to him because nobody knew who he was..."

It seems to me that I probably did the right thing by going to Faancon first, even though it was pure coincidence; I became a fannish fan.

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The rest of the year was notable for my extreme poverty, due to a slight misunderstanding over rent - with the effect that I didn't manage another con until Easter '78. Before that was the Maya 14 collating party and my journey to London at 07.30 the next morning, and the aforementioned Bob Shaw Xmas Dinner. And thereby hangs a tale...

I was just about to get ready on the evening of the dinner when there was a knock at the door. Rob Jackson and Bob Shaw. We all sat down, chatted a while, and then I decided to get the evenings ugly business

over. I produced the cheque I had for Bob from the union.

He was very reluctant to take it.

"Are you sure this isn't coming out of the fan's pockets?" he asked. Eventually he did sign for it, and we arranged to meet later on at the hotel. After they had gone, a terrible thought struck me. Had I told Bob he was speaking?

Of course I hadn't.

But in ten minutes, he concocted a marvellous talk which lasted until final orders, and which was quite rightly, at my expense.

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After that my Gannet career, drew towards its end. At Skycon, I made contact with the Matlock s.f. group, who are my main personal contacts in fandom at the moment. Within 24 hours of the end of that con I was in France - a trip which heralded my first published article in GANNETSCRAPBOOK.

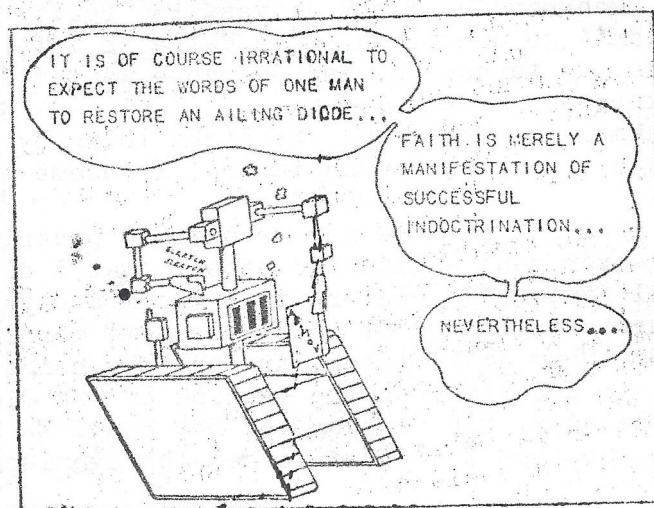
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And that was it. 'In the Footsteps of Harry & Ian' appeared in GSB5. We printed it on the saturday afternoon, collated it saturday evening and had a party on saturday night. The next morning, I left the north east and stopped being a Gannet.

I returned to Newcastle for Silicon 3, and stepped momentarily into the limelight as 'The Fan Who Fell to Earth'. I went to Novacon and was rather depressed by it all. And yet, I enjoy going to cons and getting fanzines; for which I have to thank Gannetfandom.

If I hadn't stumbled across the Gannets, I might have remained a plain simple s.f. enthusiast all my life - or worse gone to a big con, become totally lost and disillusioned, and never gone again. But instead I met what strikes me as the friendliest of friendly fan groups - and they accepted me, just as fandom has. For although I live my life very much on my own, I do have friends. And fandom has given me some of the best friends I've had in a long time - foremost among which are the Gannets.

ROBERT DAY MARCH 1979



After Mary's little contribution you probably think we should all be carrotted. But wait, gentle reader wait until you've read this ornithological monograph from Neil Hepple.

ARCHAEOPTERYX OF THE TRADE

Well, I suppose you could call me a fledgling Gannet. Taking to the wing for the first time, flapping through the beginning of a literary career.

It all started in the pub, Andy turned his eagle eye on me; I quailed when he told me to take up quill and write.

Well, I'm not one to duck my obligations, so rather than crow about my abilities, or tell of people raven about me, puffin me up with praise, I shall be swift and dive straight in. Having dove, I'll thrush about for a while, owling and grousing about Andy, who must be cuckoo or a real booby to ask me to write anything. After all writing's not my pigeon. I'm really robin people of space. I'm more mechanically minded. Petrel engines and osprey painting are my line. After all it's just a lark isn't it?

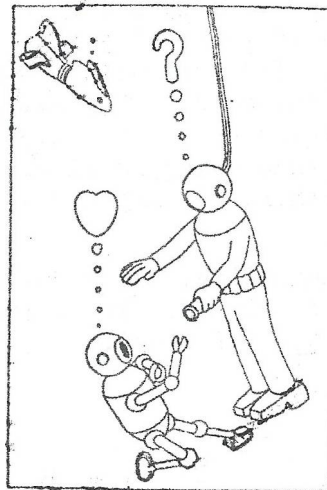
My father wanted me to be a mynah but I was bittern by a desire to go to sea. Gullible I was then. Eider swallowed their lyres to this jay if I hadn't heard that mariners aboard the Beagle had had their Cook well and truly goosed by Solomon Isles, or was it Albert Ross? So I took up partridge walking, which is enjoyable, although the storks of bracken chafe inches up your thigh, and you often need a linnet bandage to protect your red shank.

But the other day I was driving along the motorway (my car runs on Kestrel lubricating oil) when a crane backed out onto the flyover. I was quite shaken. "Why do-don't you rook where you're goin?" I stuttered, "P'lover and let me pass."

"Keep your bloody herron. I'll flamingo when I'm ready." the ignorant pheasant replied, without budgying. It was a sparrowing time as I was dying for a kiwiwi. When I got to work I regaled everyone with my starling tale but they all thought it was emusing.

Not only is this my debut, it could also be my swan song if I'm given the bird. I should like to thank Sue for egging me on, and I promise I'll re-tern the favour, if she ever puts penguin to paper. A TAIL OF AVIARY AND PTARMIGANATION BY NEIL HEPPLE

....An ostritch in time?



Hard-hearted editor Andy Firth would like me to call this piece 'Late as Usual' as punishment for my tardy transgressions. But out of a spirit of sheer rebelliousness, and also because it's relevant, I'm going to call it:

Sue and I spent our fortnights summer holiday in Southern Ireland, spending some time with relatives in a small village called Portlaw near Waterford (two pubs, a chippie and a cigarette machine). It was quite an experience. We took quite a few photos:

I'd warned Sue that Eire was very much a country whose key arterial highways were similar to English country lanes. I was immediately proven wrong as we drove off the ferry on to a broad sweeping three lane road which sped us quickly in the direction of Wexford. I was beginning to take back my words when without warning the road was suddenly transformed into a lunar landscape simulation. I hit it at about fifty m.p.h. The car plunged, banged, crashed, shook rattled and very nearly rolled. By the time I'd got it back under control we were fifty yards into it, and there at the side of the road was a dust-covered oil-drum on which the barely discernable words 'SLOW' were painted. Ten miles further on an unmarked trench cut across the road and I thought that I'd lost both wheels. Soon after that we actually came across what we eventually came to appreciate as a rarity in this land of the slow, relaxed and carefree - a road sign. 'DANGER - ROAD WORKS!'. I slammed the brakes on and dropped my speed to about five miles an hour thinking that if it was worth a signpost then it must be an abyss. After driving for a couple of miles at this snails pace on a perfectly smooth road I realised that the sign must have been left by an errant navy long after the work had been completed.

THE DRIVERS

road, everything stopped - except for rats - the Irish aim their cars like battering rams at rats and don't mind driving into a ditch to do it. They think nothing of treble-bank parking in the centre of busy towns and, if they cause an obstruction, nobody minds. They sit quietly behind their wheels humming or whistling and wait. I pulled out behind a car containing about eight nuns (we saw a lot of these in Ireland - the deadliest things on the road). We were in the centre of Tipperary. I followed them down a narrow side-street with cars parked anyway in the usual way, and room for only one car to pass. Without any warning they just stopped. In the middle of the road. A huge nun popped out of the car like a penguin from a pea-shooter and then proceeded to chatter on to the other nuns in the car with no urgency whatever. By this time I had learnt to sit and wait patiently. A queue of about ten cars built up behind me - all waiting patiently. Eventually after what must have been about three or four minutes, she gave all of us waiting in the queue a cheery wave and waddled off. The entire country is in a permanent semi-siesta.

THE PEOPLE

The drivers express the essential character of the people, but there is one in particular that I want to describe. His name is Paddy (!) Kirwan. According to the tax office files he is the school bus driver. So he is officially unemployed during the school holidays. However, in his 'spare-time' he also does a few other things, like: he is the village taxi driver, insurance man, he farms a couple of acres, has a flock of a couple of hundred sheep, races and breeds greyhounds and runs a cafe/chip shop in the village. This could only be possible in Ireland. But his great talent is his incredible charm and wit. He falls squarely into the classic Barry Fitzgerald mold (remember The Quiet Man?). Don't believe that stupid image - they're a canny lot.

A strange thing has happened in Ireland over the last ten years. Land prices have soared higher than any other agricultural land in Western Europe. You see raggedy local yokels in the streets in ancient, dusty old suits (they all wear suits, no matter how old dirty or decrepit) and original (not fashionable) collarless shirts, not realising or not caring that they're probably worth thousands. You'd think that this would be a con-man's paradise. But somehow it just doesn't seem to happen. Perhaps it's because their land is their home and they cannot conceive of actually moving off it. They are clearly content with their meagre lot. It is very puzzling to a great fan of civilization like myself. Their pace of life and easy acceptance is great to experience over a two-week holiday but we decided it would drive us barmy if we stayed any longer.

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The Catholic religion has a death grip, and many of the phenomena unique to the country can be attributed in some way to the influence of the church. The older type of Irish family fall into two distinct types. The ones that get married at seventeen or eighteen and have fourteen kids by the time that they are no longer able to (In fact, while we were there, a distant aunt of mine had her fourteenth at the age of 46!), and the others, the families of six or more bachelors and spinsters living together - frequently in abject poverty. A phenomenon unique to Catholic countries. Why? Is it the prospect of an unending supply of babies to bring up? I wouldn't be surprised. Contraception not just isn't generally available, it is even a taboo subject to talk about. If mentioned, they cross themselves and hurry away as if touched by disease. A funny spin off of this compulsion to fecundity is that if you ask how long has so-and-so been married, the response you'll get will be something like:

"Well, let me see, Patrick must be twelve next birthday, so, yes, they've been married thirteen years". The future seems fraught with fear of death, which seems very strange for such a religious country. You can ask an innocent question like, "where are you going on holiday next year, and you'll get: "To Dublin, if we're all alive, D.G." Now, my initials are not D.G. by that they mean, 'Deus Gratia' - God Willing.

Why are truly religious people described as 'God Fearing'? What is there to fear if you've got your transcendental insurance from the Pope and Co. Brokers?

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"Goodman, Mick!" and "Oh, Oi loike that song" (the clear implication being they like it when it is sung PROPERLY). But they have their fair share of good singers too - one of these is my cousin Pat and he morosely expects to be called to his feet at least three times in any one evening, any night of the week. Reluctance is gently overcome and outright refusal simply not allowed. There is something horrifically compelling in a fat unshaven drunken Irish face breathing potently into your face and a huge weatherbeaten hairy hand on your shoulder as he earnestly regales you from a distance of about three inches. But good humour abounds and huge rounds are called, sometimes for the whole pub - something which I have never seen anywhere else.

We went to one amazing place, miles out in the country, called the 'Slate Quarries'. There is nothing there but a pub which doubles as a general store - oil-lamps, frying pans, shoes, boots and clothing hang disarmingly from the ceiling and food and detergents are stacked in shelves around you as you sit drinking. This place is justifiably famous for its entertainment. After a quiet start, old men and young kids (the pubs are full of kids at all hours of the day and night) get up from the tables and turn out to be virtuoso musicians. By the end of the evening the band consisted of: piano, 2 fiddles, guitar, mouth-organ, bugle and bodhran (a skin covered drum held vertically and hit with a bone) - a truly amazing combination. A tremendously enjoyable night was capped by the arrival of a superb tenor bearing an uncanny resemblance to Clark Kent singing 'None shall Sleep' - there wasn't much chance that with the noise that this place was generating. By this time, the place was packed out and drinks were being passed out of the windows to an ever growing crowd standing outside.

THE FIDDOWN REGATTA

A village called Fiddown (population 300) has the grand ambition to stage a regatta every year. But this was nothing like Henley. It was down to earth, simple and hilarious. A typically bizarre Irish event with: a failing PA system, boats that sank, boats that were deliberately capsized, a lost priest, an interminable Ceilidh competition conducted in a disused and converted railway wagon, a greasy pole competition and more prizes than there were contestants.

During the meeting, it transpired that the eye-catching title had been concocted on the spur of the moment by Rob, when Northern Arts had asked him "...and what will be the title of Mr Shaw's lecture?" I secured a promise from Bob of a talk in May. The problem of money then reared its ugly head. Bob was asking for about £8 petrol money and we didn't have a budget from the union. And that's where Rob Carter stepped in.

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Now, I might be accused of telling tales about Rob Carter; after all, I've said some slightly harsh things about him recently. But I've only told the truth as it appears to me. And the truth is that Rob was a great help in May '76 when he gave me £5 towards Bob Shaw's expenses, thanks Rob.

I made a profit of £5 on the evening.

But don't anyone come rushing back for it. When Bob Shaw was the S.F. Society's guest at our Xmas dinner in 1977, I was £5 out of pocket after I'd paid the hotel bill. Swings and roundabouts...

+++000000+++

At the end of '76, I changed addresses a few times, and ended up living at Winlaton - five miles from Newcastle, five parsecs in Northern General Omnibus space time. So, I didn't see many Gannets between October and January, as I had to get the last convenient bus home at nine. During that time, we had the 'one hour late and full of worry' Robert Sheckley talk, where twenty five fen invaded the Bangladesh at 23.30, and where I was introduced to Irish whiskey and Malayan curry. In January I moved to digs in Heaton, not a million miles from Rob Jackson's old home. The weekend after the move we went to Faancon in Derby.

Faancon '77. My first con.

Most Gannets remember that Faancon for the journeys there and back. To me it was a chance to go home and stock up on necessary items for the digs. It was also a chance to meet other fen for the first time. Dave Langford, Martin & Liese Hoare, Ian & Janice Maule, (if my memory serves me well), Rob Hansen, Terry Jeeves, Pam Boal. Apparently, I didn't go unnoticed. Mike Meara is later said to have remarked "...this guy turned up, and everyone wanted to talk to him because nobody knew who he was..."

It seems to me that I probably did the right thing by going to Faancon first, even though it was pure coincidence; I became a fannish fan.

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The rest of the year was notable for my extreme poverty, due to a slight misunderstanding over rent - with the effect that I didn't manage another con until Easter '78. Before that was the Maya 14 collating party and my journey to London at 07.30 the next morning, and the aforementioned Bob Shaw Xmas Dinner. And thereby hangs a tale... I was just about to get ready on the evening of the dinner when there was a knock at the door. Rob Jackson and Bob Shaw. We all sat down, chatted a while, and then I decided to get the evenings ugly business

over. I produced the cheque I had for Bob from the union. He was very reluctant to take it.

"Are you sure this isn't coming out of the fan's pockets?" he asked. Eventually he did sign for it, and we arranged to meet later on at the hotel. After they had gone, a terrible thought struck me. Had I told Bob he was speaking?

Of course I hadn't.

But in ten minutes, he concocted a marvellous talk which lasted until final orders, and which was quite rightly, at my expense.

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After that my Gannet career, drew towards its end. At Skycon, I made contact with the Matlock s.f. group, who are my main personal contacts in fandom at the moment. Within 24 hours of the end of that con I was in France - a trip which heralded my first published article in GANNETSCRAPBOOK.

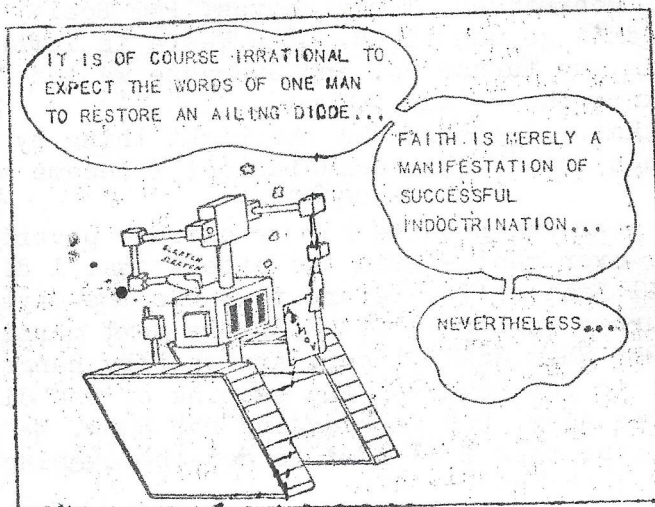
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And that was it. 'In the Footsteps of Harry & Ian' appeared in GSB5. We printed it on the saturday afternoon, collated it saturday evening and had a party on saturday night. The next morning, I left the north east and stopped being a Gannet.

I returned to Newcastle for Silicon 3, and stepped momentarily into the limelight as 'The Fan Who Fell to Earth'. I went to Novacon and was rather depressed by it all. And yet, I enjoy going to cons and getting fanzines; for which I have to thank Gannetfandom.

If I hadn't stumbled across the Gannets, I might have remained a plain simple s.f. enthusiast all my life - or worse gone to a big con, become totally lost and disillusioned, and never gone again. But instead I met what strikes me as the friendliest of friendly fan groups - and they accepted me, just as fandom has. For although I live my life very much on my own, I do have friends. And fandom has given me some of the best friends I've had in a long time - foremost among which are the Gannets.

ROBERT DAY MARCH 1979



After Mary's little contribution you probably think we should all be carrotted. But wait, gentle reader wait until you've read this ornithological monograph from Neil Hepple.

ARCHAEOPTERYX OF THE TRADE

Well, I suppose you could call me a fledgling Gannet. Taking to the wing for the first time, flapping through the beginning of a literary career.

It all started in the pub, Andy turned his eagle eye on me; I quailed when he told me to take up quill and write.

Well, I'm not one to duck my obligations, so rather than crow about my abilities, or tell of people raven about me, puffin me up with praise, I shall be swift and dive straight in. Having dove, I'll thrush about for a while, owling and grouching about Andy, who must be cuckoo or a real booby to ask me to write anything. After all writing's not my pigeon. I'm really robin people of space. I'm more mechanically minded. Petrel engines and osprey painting are my line. After all it's just a lark isn't it?

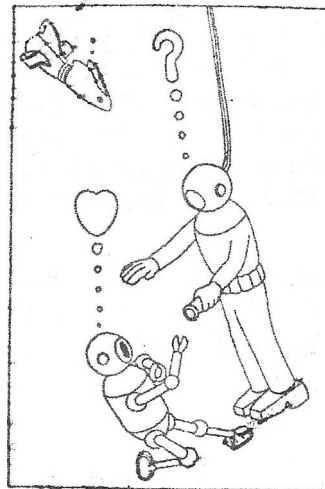
My father wanted me to be a mynah but I was bittern by a desire to go to sea. Gullible I was then. Eider swallowed their lyres to this jay if I hadn't heard that mariners aboard the Beagle had had their Cook well and truly goosed by Solomon Isles, or was it Albert Ross? So I took up partridge walking, which is enjoyable, although the storks of bracken chafe inches up your thigh, and you often need a linnet bandage to protect your red shank.

But the other day I was driving along the motorway (my car runs on Kestrel lubricating oil) when a crane backed out onto the flyover. I was quite shaken. "Why do-don't you rook where you're goin?" I stuttered, "P'lover and let me pass."

"Keep your bloody herron. I'll flamingo when I'm ready." the ignorant pheasant replied, without budgying. It was a sparrowing time as I was dying for a kiwiwi. When I got to work I regaled everyone with my starling tale but they all thought it was emusing.

Not only is this my debut, it could also be my swan song if I'm given the bird. I should like to thank Sue for egging me on, and I promise I'll re-tern the favour, if she ever puts penguin to paper. A TAIL OF AVIARY AND PTARMIGANATION BY NEIL HEPPLÉ

....An ostritch in time?



road, everything stopped - except for rats - the Irish aim their cars like battering rams at rats and don't mind driving into a ditch to do it. They think nothing of treble-bank parking in the centre of busy towns and, if they cause an obstruction, nobody minds. They sit quietly behind their wheels humming or whistling and wait. I pulled out behind a car containing about eight nuns (we saw a lot of these in Ireland - the deadliest things on the road). We were in the centre of Tipperary. I followed them down a narrow side-street with cars parked anyway in the usual way, and room for only one car to pass. Without any warning they just stopped. In the middle of the road. A huge nun popped out of the car like a penguin from a pea-shooter and then proceeded to chatter on to the other nuns in the car with no urgency whatever. By this time I had learnt to sit and wait patiently. A queue of about ten cars built up behind me - all waiting patiently. Eventually after what must have been about three or four minutes, she gave all of us waiting in the queue a cheery wave and waddled off. The entire country is in a permanent semi-siesta.

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It was a truly memorable event. The town band from Carrick (the local equivalent of Gotham City) played their hearts out on top of a small hillock and the crowd sat around on the bank, the men drinking cans of Guinness, the women eating ice-cream and the kids, crisps. It was the day of the all-Ireland Hurling final (a game of inordinate violence best described as a cross between hockey and Hap-Ki-Do) between Limerick and Cork, and the band had their work cut out to compete with the transistor radios blaring out the utterly unintelligible 300 word per minute commentary. The PA system squawked into action,

"Has...er...anyone seen der priest? Has anyone seen Farder Dooley? As soon as he arrives he'll bless the boats and then we can start the first race".

Eventually the tardy priest was found and there he stood wobbling uncertainly in the little narrow river boat, stole around shoulders and prayer-book in hand as he soundlessly intoned the blessing to the background of the hurling commentary.

Meanwhile back in the converted mail wagon hordes of traditionally clad little girls hopped and skipped, jigged and reeled to tunes played by an anguished-looking old guy with a pudding-bowl haircut. A stern-faced looking judge sat solemnly in the other corner of the wagon and rang a little gold bell when he'd seen enough of each contestant. This was serious stuff.

By now the tide had come in and the greasy pole competition began. This consisted of a fifteen foot long pole suspended horizontally above the surface of the cold, muddy water. It was literally greased and stout hearted, thick skinned and pot-bellied locals tried their best to knock each other off with huge feather pillows. As I said, bizarre.

THE CABARET

The entertainment highspot of the holiday was the one overtly touristy thing we went to, a Irish cabaret. We were in Glengarriff on Bantry bay staying in a beautiful Hotel- (The Blue Pool - one of the most civilized hotels that I've ever stayed in. All the rooms were superbly furnished and the bed...well, I won't go into too much detail here but I shall say that it was so big, comfortable and free of squeaks that we stayed twice as long as we had planned. All the hotels that we came across during our trip to the west coast were half-empty and incredibly cheap. The Blue Pool was costing us a fiver each a night.) When we arrived at the hotel which was staging the 'Cabaret' we discovered that it was being held in a huge hall with a stage in the middle of one wall and a bar at the far end. There were exactly seven people in the echoing vastness of this hall: an old man with a broken arm with two sullen kids, a very quiet couple and in the dark recesses at the far end of the room could be vaguely discerned another couple.

"I want to go", said Sue, "this is going to be awful". "Let's give it a half-hour" says I. But she was right. About five minutes before the show was scheduled to start the door at the back of the stage opened and a rotund worried-looking face popped out. This procedure was repeated a few more times, the face becoming more resigned each time. And then it happened.

There was a roll of drums off stage, and the entire cast of performers trooped on to the stage singing cheerily and putting on as brave a face as possible. There were fourteen of them - twice as many as there were in the audience. The room filled with a miasma of embarrassment. But to their credit, the show went on, they performed as if the place was packed, and very enjoyable it was too, with one notable exception.

The compere.

He'd been stamped out of the same mould as all comperes seem to have been (ie.:

huge, pear-shaped beer pot, garlanded with a cummerbund, white frilly shirt, black bow tie, razor sharp black trousers and a seaweed green velvet jacket). Also, like other comperes he was mildly deprecating about himself ('Oi suppose oi'd better orn moi fee, now. Ho Ho'). But secretly he was fired with the belief that he could out-sing Vince Hill any day. He grabbed the mike from its stand and to our unbounded horror began to wander among the audience, all seven of us, singing a tuneless one note ballad. We felt like crawling under the table - the embarrassment was palpable.

Why is it that all events specially organised for tourists are silly, demeaning and embarrassing? When we were driving into Killarney we got stuck behind a jaunting cart with about ten very uncomfortable looking tourists perched on the back. They looked even sillier when we all got stuck in a traffic jam, and as we passed them, out of sympathy, Sue gave a little wave and instantly there was a torrent of waving in return creating a wind of sizeable proportions. Expressions of embarrassment relieved.

THE FOOD

Traditional Irish food as such didn't seem to exist, with the exception of a disgusting red seaweed called dilsc which tasted like strips of extruded, dried vomit. When we were in Tralee we had Boeuff Bourignon at the 'Cordon Bleu' restaurant, in Glengarrif we had Beefburger and Chips, in Killarney, Fish and Chips, in Skibbereen, Egg and Chips and in Cork - A Curry. Traditional Irish food is wonderful.

THE END

A slow, beautiful and utterly timeless country. Recommended for short periods only.

Too much timelessness is damaging to the brain and sense of proportion.

Kev Williams

=====//=====

GANNETFANDOM ROOLS. U.K.?

The old (nearly ten - soon be into puberty) group is undergoing a bit of a revival of fortunes and activity at the moment. The meetings become ever livelier with the Pennan's attending fairly regularly and new members Neil and Sue (roped into the group by me at Seacon) contributing to the bonhomie.

Last week's meeting was excellent. After the consumption of some not insignificant quantity of ale, Harry announced that it was his birthday, and....Lo...did not the children of the Gannet find themselves in that place known as the 'Bangladesh' and ..Lo...was not a great curry consumed by the multitude. Then, on Thursday, a crowd of us visited Ian (and his Gran whilst on the way to the loo), who proudly displayed his bookshelves - nice. And so we came to Saturday night and the GSB 7 collating party. That was all it was - collating. For our depressingly efficient editor Herr Firth had done all the work and there was nothing left to do but shuffle paper. However, we consoled ourselves via a small copse of beercans, and a drunken raucous night ensued. Ritchie turned up with Annie (We've seen more of him since he shifted pubs to London) and entertainment was provided by the editor haranguing a well-known Gateshead fan artist and a latterly insignificant member of Peter Weston's little team, for not producing the goods on time. I can't understand - it was only the third deferred deadline.

So, with the socializing, Out of the Blue, Chimera and now GSB7...and Silicon4, Gannetfandom is alive and boozing.

Kev Williams.

HIS SOOT CAME DOWN FOREVER

'Try and make it an even number of pages Kevin, then I won't have any blanks at the end...'

I dunno, you just can't get the labour these days...

'What's that? Copenhagen! today?! but Diane I've got Gannet Scrapbook to finish...'

'Just put the stencil on the duper like so, must say Harry's done a superb job on this front cover. Just get the wrinkles out... Oh my gawd that's torn it! better make another stencil'

'What's that? Windsor? today?! but Diane I've got Gannet Scrapbook to finish...'

'Well, at least that wraps up the duplicating, Oh my Gawd, run out of staples, I'll never live this down...'

'What do you mean that type of staple is obsolete, now listen here, if that staple gun was good enough for Gannet'scrapbook 1 it's good enough for Gannet Scrapbook.7.'

'Beaconsfield? what the hell are they drilling for in Beaconsfield? Aw come on Diane I've got Gannet'scrapbook to finish.'

'Whaddaya mean Mike Hamilton's got an article he wants to put in Scrapbook? He should have thought of that a year ago.'

'But Diane, it costs a fortune to mail a fanzine from Esbjerg...'

'Christ, they'll murder this ish, who's idea was it to put those stupid illos in? and Ian going on about his cold, again, should've tightened up Bob's piece, God they're going to hammer this, at least Harry & Kev did themselves justice...'

'Diane, do you know how long it takes a camel, let alone a sack of fanzines to cross the Sahara desert? What? I don't care if two humps are faster than one!'

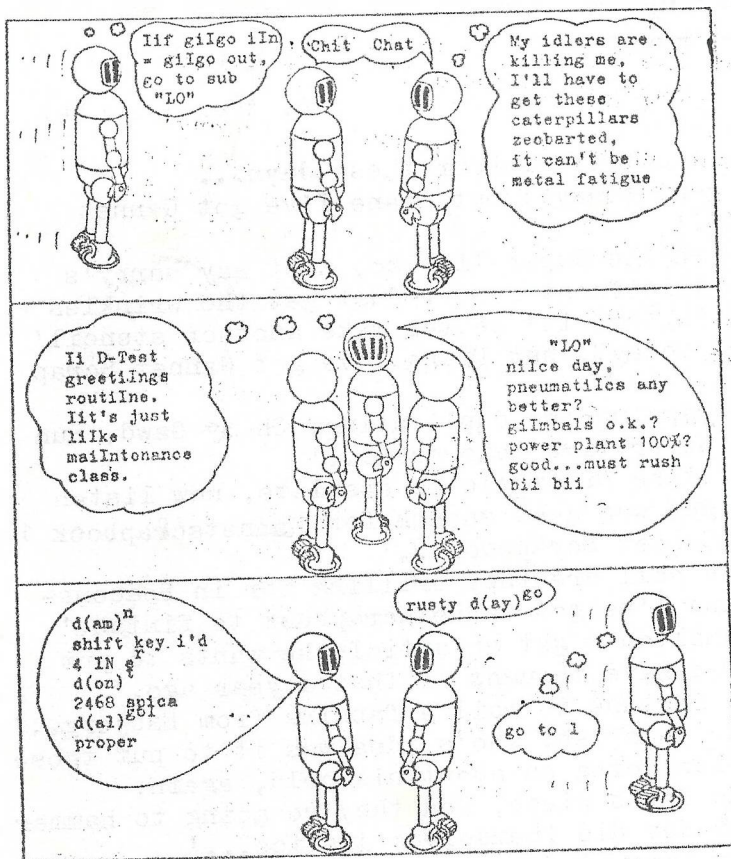
'Whaddayamean it'll cost extra postage? shit must've been those two pages of 75mg. Whaddayamean you can only do it in halfpenny stamps?'

'Sorry Diane, negative on Abidjan, I've got to get my tongue to a chiropodist.'

'Bloody glad to see the back of that. 's Ians problem now. Must say I like this new office they've given me. That white foam rubber wallpaper is original, goes well with the cotton wool furniture...'

FINALLY

Congratulations to Mary Long & Cath Penman on passing their motherhood exams. We hope the kids are fine. (you too of course) And special thanks to Neil, Merf & friend for helping collate And you gentle reader, having survived thus far (the typos, the rotten spelling the black splodges, it was hell Ma) if you are ever in Newcastle...Tuesday, Duke of Wellington, Carliol Square see you there, farewell take care.



!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
 GANNETSCRAPBOOK 7
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This issue from Andy Firth
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to whom all trades &
 letters of comment
 (ever hopeful)
 should be sent.

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 ANDREW FIRTH
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 NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

It was a truly memorable event. The town band from Carrick (the local equivalent of Gotham City) played their hearts out on top of a small hillock and the crowd sat around on the bank, the men drinking cans of Guinness, the women eating ice-cream and the kids, crisps. It was the day of the all-Ireland Hurling final (a game of inordinate violence best described as a cross between hockey and Hap-Ki-Do) between Limerick and Cork, and the band had their work cut out to compete with the transistor radios blaring out the utterly unintelligible 300 word per minute commentary. The PA system squawked into action,

"Has..er..anyone seen der priest? Has anyone seen Farder Dooley? As soon as he arrives he'll bless the boats and then we can start the first race".

Eventually the tardy priest was found and there he stood wobbling uncertainly in the little narrow river boat, stole around shoulders and prayer-book in hand as he soundlessly intoned the blessing to the background of the hurling commentary.

Meanwhile back in the converted mil wagon hordes of traditionally clad little girls hopped and skipped, jigged and reeled to tunes played by an anguished-looking old guy with a pudding-bowl haircut. A stern-faced looking judge sat solemnly in the other corner of the wagon and rang a little gold bell when he'd seen enough of each contestant. This was serious stuff.

By now the tide had come in and the greasy pole competition began. This consisted of a fifteen foot long pole suspended horizontally above the surface of the cold, muddy water. It was literally greased and stout hearted, thick skinned and pot-bellied locals tried their best to knock each other off with huge feather pillows. As I said, bizarre.

THE CABARET

The entertainment highspot of the holiday was the one overtly touristy thing we went to, a Irish cabaret. We were in Glengarriff on Bantry bay staying in a beautiful Hotel- (The Blue Pool - one of the most civilized hotels that I've ever stayed in. All the rooms were superbly furnished and the bed...well, I won't go into too much detail here but I shall say that it was so big, comfortable and free of squeaks that we stayed twice as long as we had planned. All the hotels that we came across during our trip to the west coast were half-empty and incredibly cheap. The Blue Pool was costing us a fiver each a night.) When we arrived at the hotel which was staging the 'Cabaret' we discovered that it was being held in a huge hall with a stage in the middle of one wall and a bar at the far end. There were exactly seven people in the echoing vastness of this hall: an old man with a broken arm with two sullen kids, a very quiet couple and in the dark recesses at the far end of the room could be vaguely discerned another couple.

"I want to go", said Sue, "this is going to be awful". "Let's give it a half-hour" says I. But she was right. About five minutes before the show was scheduled to start the door at the back of the stage opened and a rotund worried-looking face popped out. This procedure was repeated a few more times, the face becoming more resigned each time. And then it happened.

There was a roll of drums off stage, and the entire cast of performers trooped on to the stage singing cheerily and putting on as brave a face as possible. There were fourteen of them - twice as many as there were in the audience. The room filled with a miasma of embarrassment. But to their credit, the show went on, they performed as if the place was packed, and very enjoyable it was too, with one notable exception.

The compere.

He'd been stamped out of the same mould as all comperes seem to have been (ie.:

huge, pear-shaped beer pot, garlanded with a cummerbund, white frilly shirt, black bow tie, razor sharp black trousers and a seaweed green velvet jacket). Also, like other comperes he was mildly deprecating about himself ('Oi suppose oi'd better orn moi fee, now. Ho Ho'). But secretly he was fired with the belief that he could out-sing Vince Hill any day. He grabbed the mike from its stand and to our unbounded horror began to wander among the audience, all seven of us, singing a tuneless one note ballad. We felt like crawling under the table - the embarrassment was palpable.

Why is it that all events specially organised for tourists are silly, demeaning and embarrassing? When we were driving into Killarney we got stuck behind a jaunting cart with about ten very uncomfortable looking tourists perched on the back. They looked even sillier when we all got stuck in a traffic jam, and as we passed them, out of sympathy, Sue gave a little wave and instantly there was a torrent of waving in return creating a wind of sizeable proportions. Expressions of embarrassment relieved.

THE FOOD

Traditional Irish food as such didn't seem to exist, with the exception of a disgusting red seaweed called dilsc which tasted like strips of extruded, dried vomit. When we were in Tralee we had Boeuff Bourignon at the 'Cordon Bleu' restaurant, in Glengarriff we had Beefburger and Chips, in Killarney, Fish and Chips, in Skibbereen, Egg and Chips and in Cork - A Curry. Traditional Irish food is wonderful.

THE END

A slow, beautiful and utterly timeless country. Recommended for short periods only.

Too much timelessness is damaging to the brain and sense of proportion.

Kev Williams

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GANNETFANDOM ROOLS. U.K.?

The old (nearly ten - soon be into puberty) group is undergoing a bit of a revival of fortunes and activity at the moment. The meetings become ever livelier with the Penman's attending fairly regularly and new members Neil and Sue (roped into the group by me at Seacon) contributing to the bonhomie.

Last week's meeting was excellent. After the consumption of some not insignificant quantity of ale, Harry announced that it was his birthday, and....Lo...did not the children of the Gannet find themselves in that place known as the 'Bangladesh' and ..Lo...was not a great curry consumed by the multitude. Then, on Thursday, a crowd of us visited Ian (and his Gran whilst on the way to the loo), who proudly displayed his bookshelves - nice. And so we came to Saturday night and the GSB7 collating party. That was all it was - collating. For our depressingly efficient editor Herr Firth had done all the work and there was nothing left to do but shuffle paper. However, we consoled ourselves via a small copse of beercans, and a drunken raucous night ensued. Ritchie turned up with Annie (We've seen more of him since he shifted pubs to London) and entertainment was provided by the editor haranguing a well-known Gateshead fan artist and a latterly insignificant member of Peter Weston's little team, for not producing the goods on time. I can't understand - it was only the third deferred deadline.

So, with the socializing, Out of the Blue, Chimera and now GSB7...and Silicon4, Gannetfandom is alive and boozing.

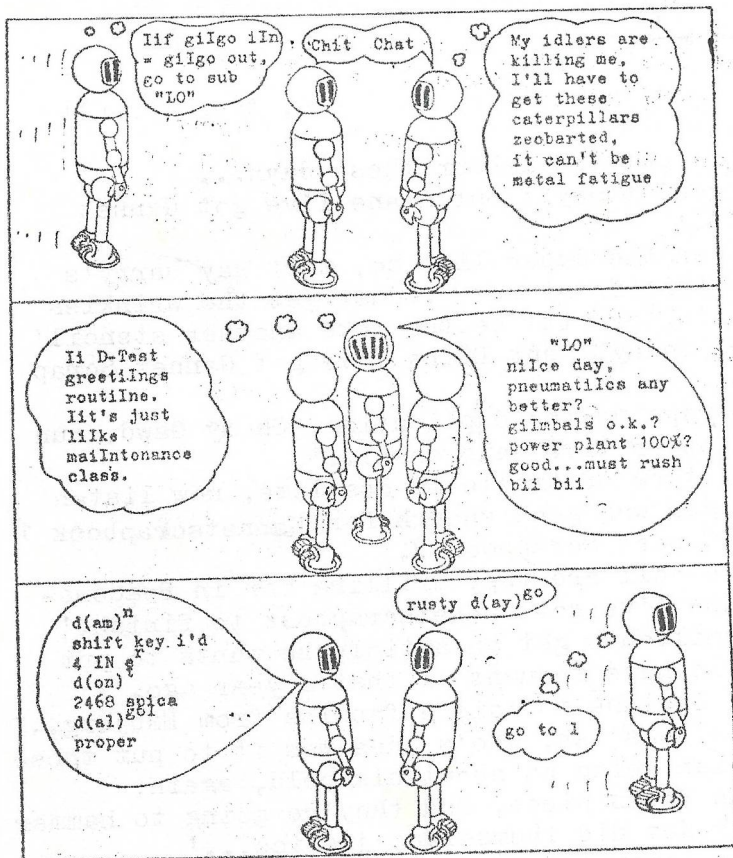
Kev Williams.

HIS SOOT CAME DOWN FOREVER

'Try and make it an even number of pages Kevin, then I won't have any blanks at the end...'
I dunno, you just can't get the labour these days...
'What's that? Copenhagen! today?! but Diane I've got Gannet Scrapbook to finish...'
'Just put the stencil on the duper like so, must say Harry's done a superb job on this front cover. Just get the wrinkles out... Oh my gawd that's torn it! better make another stencil'
'What's that? Windsor? today?! but Diane I've got Gannet Scrapbook to finish...'
'Well, at least that wraps up the duplicating, Oh my Gawd, run out of staples, I'll never live this down...'
'What do you mean that type of staple is obsolete, now listen here, if that staple gun was good enough for Gannet's Scrapbook 1 it's good enough for Gannet Scrapbook.7.'
'Beaconsfield? what the hell are they drilling for in Beaconsfield? Aw come on Diane I've got Gannet's Scrapbook to finish.'
'Whaddaya mean Mike Hamilton's got an article he wants to put in Scrapbook? He should have thought of that a year ago.'
'But Diane, it costs a fortune to mail a fanzine from Esbjerg...'
'Christ, they'll murder this ish, who's idea was it to put those stupid illos in? and Ian going on about his cold, again, should've tightened up Bob's piece, God they're going to hammer this, at least Harry & Kev did themselves justice...'
'Diane, do you know how long it takes a camel, let alone a sack of fanzines to cross the Sahara desert? What? I don't care if two humps are faster than one!'
'Whaddayamean it'll cost extra postage? shit must've been those two pages of 75mg. Whaddayamean you can only do it in halfpenny stamps?'
'Sorry Diane, negative on Abidjan, I've got to get my tongue to a chiropodist.'
'Bloody glad to see the back of that. 's Ians problem now. Must say I like this new office they've given me. That white foam rubber wallpaper is original, goes well with the cotton wool furniture...'

FINALLY

Congratulations to Mary Long & Cath Penman on passing their motherhood exams. We hope the kids are fine. (you too of course) And special thanks to Neil, Merf & friend for helping collate And you gentle reader, having survived thus far (the typos, the rotten spelling the black splodges, it was hell Ma) if you are ever in Newcastle... Tuesday, Duke of Wellington, Carliol Square see you there, farewell take care.



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 GANNETSCRAPBOOK 7
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