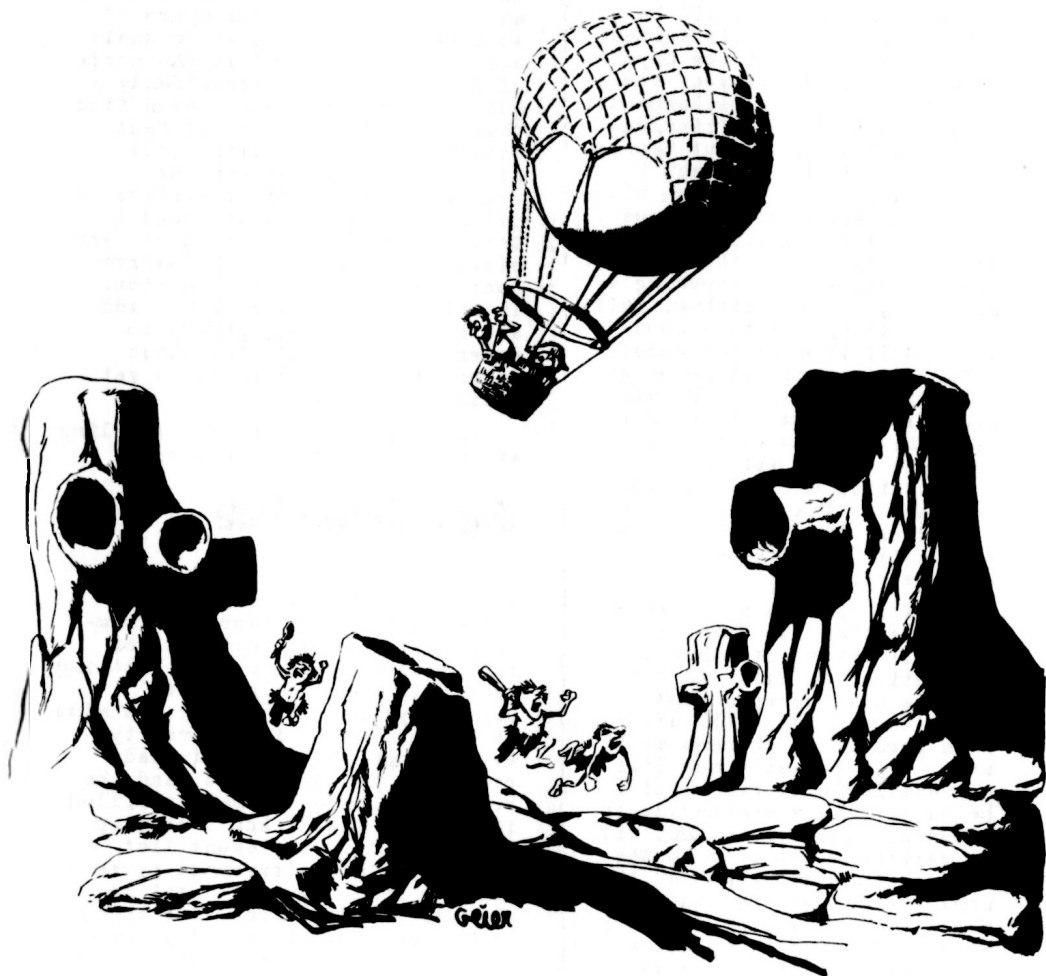


# RASTUS



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RASTUS 1 is a by-product of the warped mind of John D. Owen, by whose whim it was brought into being. Loosely answering to the description of a 'personalzine', it comes out mainly because of the fact that the aforesaid John D. Owen is a lazy bum who can't get his act together fast enough to produce more frequent Crystal Ships. The editorial address is: 4, Highfield Close, Newport Pagnell, Bucks, MK16 9AZ. All items enshrined within these pages are copyright c 1983 John D. Owen, with all rights reverting to originator on publication.

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Availability? You may well ask!

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Well, a big 'Hello' to everybody and welcome to RASTUS.

No doubt you will all be surprised to receive this instead of another issue of the Crystal Ship, but don't get your hopes up - this is not a replacement, merely an informal, frivolous little thing to pop out between issues of the heavyweight Ship, when the going gets tough with CS and I need a break. Since I seem to be incapable of getting an issue of CS together in under six months, or of answering my mail very quickly either, this little 'thing' seems a good idea. Call it a letter-substitute, or a personalzine or even a holding action. RASTUS will probably come out whenever I feel the urge to write it, or to goose up the mail a bit (we mail junkies have got to keep getting our fix in, yer know), or because I need to assuage my guilty (and frequently lazy) conscience.

RASTUS will be a lot more informal than the Ship, and probably not as polished a production (ha-ha!), as the essence will be speed and cheapness (though I'm still using the same production process as CS - well, it's the only one I've got available to me!) I'll still be using a fair smattering of artwork, though even that will be veering a bit more to the less serious material, of the sort that's been sat in my files for a while, waiting to be used. Mind you, I won't say no to any other good stuff that comes in

from all of you artists beaver-  
ing away out there!

I intend to write most of the zine myself, though there will be an odd couple of pages spare if someone wants to get up on their soapbox and fire off at the horde of fandom; as it's essentially a quickie-zine, you might even find that it's going to be out fast enough to be up-to-date! I'll also be doing a few fanzine reviews in each issue, sifting the piles of material that comes in through the hole in the door, and picking out those which deserve some kind of further attention. In subsequent issues, I may add another sheet (four pages) to cover mailing comments, which naturally I'd be pleased to get, (this is a hint!).

Anyway, enough of this waffling around - on with the motley!

## ***Oops! Bwain Fade***

Boy, did I make a blunder or two in the CS7 editorial! It's all on account of 'assumed knowledge'. You know, that kind of information that you have rattling around in your brainbox for umpteen years, with never a shadow of a doubt as to it's veracity, even though you've rarely had occasion to remember it, and the braincells have probably misfiled it anyway! That's how I came up with the idiot statement that Arthur C. Clarke (reverent pause - not too long, we don't want to elevate the Hon. Pres. too much) wrote the Kemlo books. Any moronic twit with half a braincell would

have remembered it was a mysterious hack called 'E.C.Elliott', wouldn't they? (Then how come so few of you folks mentioned it in your locs, eh? Being kind, were we? Or were you all too young to remember?) Anyhow, E.C.Elliott's a pseudonym for Reginald Alec Martin, (information courtesy of the Cumulative Book Indexes, circa 1957/8), a hack whose main output used to be westerns, under the names of 'Brett Cameron', 'Rex Dixon', 'Hank McCoy' and 'Scott Martin'. Dunno anything else about him, other than that he was born in 1900 and wrote an awful lot of books for Nelson's.

This business of 'assumed knowledge' is really quite tiresome though. I mean, it happens all the time, doesn't it? How many times have you been in the situation where you've had an argument with someone over some trivial fact (maybe 'who won the Cup Final in 1955?' or something similarly mind-bogglingly important), and both of you have been totally convinced that your answer is the right one? Plenty of times, I'll bet. And how many times are you wrong? Indeed, how many times are you both wrong?

Memory is a tricky thing, and I'm learning not to rely on it too much for facts: if a thing can be checked out, then do it rather than rely on the fallible braincell. Of course, there are many things that can't be verified in a reference book - remembrance of things past in your own life, for example (unless you're famous enough, and old enough, to have had a biographer do your remembering for you - but if you're that famous, how come you're reading my silly fanzine - go away at once!). Comparing memories with my wife is always an interesting, if often frustrating, experience, since she often remembers things differently to me. Yet memory makes us what we are, forms our opinions, is the basis of

our day-to-day judgement, and colours our whole outlook on life. Is it any wonder that humans are such frail things, with an intelligence that is tricky, unpredictable, and often plain crazy? After all, when you build the foundations of your intelligence on the quicksands of ultra-fallible memory, is it any wonder that the whole structure comes out more than a little bit out of true?



*Startibartfast of Magrathea,*  
a great fan of science, you know...

## BOOK AND CHIPS?

Being employed in one of those places that considers itself (quite wrongly) to be at the forefront of the new information technology revolution, I often come across absurd suggestions about the future of books. 'Books will all be replaced by computer chips, or videodiscs, or teletext devices', goes the cry - to which

I am heard to reply (with some distaste) "Humbug!".

The book, that simple device of sheets of paperbound together with printing on each page, is one of the most portable items in the world. You can take it anywhere; up an mountain, into a forest; onto the seashore (though it doesn't mix well with water - but neither do electronics). You can read a book sitting at home (in any seat in the house), or on a bus, or train, or plane. One of the surprises of working at the OU is to find just how many of the students study at odd times - while commuting into



work on a train is quite commonplace; studying the texts at lunch, either in the office or the canteen is equally popular.

There's something satisfying about a book, too. It gives tactile pleasure as well as visual stimuli. The feel of a new book, the smell as you open its pages, all contribute to the joy of reading. Is it any wonder that there is still a demand for fine bindings and papers, such as clubs like the Folio Society supply? They all go to heighten the experience of reading. I recently discovered, in a

collection of letters by C.S. Lewis to his friend Arthur Greeves, that the two of them seemed to get almost as much pleasure out of the way a book was presented, as they did from its contents. I think I understand that attraction, and in a way, that's why I lavish so much attention on the appearance of CS - to make it a pleasure to handle as well as read.

Think what it would mean to do away with books in favour of electronics. Libraries would be contained in a little box alongside a computer or playback unit. That unit would do everything, from looking up a telephone number, displaying a favourite recipe, to reeling out WAR & PEACE. Somehow it seems a soulless way to read. Portability would be a problem - currently, the most portable of the micro-computers weighs about 15-20 pounds; not too heavy, but hardly something you would slip into a knapsack on the off-chance that you might like to sit and read on a mountainside! Display is still a problem - the portable machines now have 2-3 line displays; hardly conducive to quick and easy reading. Even if you had a tv screen added, bright sunlight would almost certainly make the image very difficult to see (ever tried watching a portable tv outside in the summer?) A really bright image would be too bright for normal viewing inside - you could have dual brightness controls, which adds to the complexity and cost. If you drop a book, at worst it ends up in a puddle and you have to buy a new copy, at minimal cost. If you drop a piece of electronics in that same puddle, then you've really got problems!

There are uses for the new electronic informations systems. Reference books are more easily consulted by using a computerised system. It's a lot easier to do extensive literature research by calling up all the relevant information from one computer

rather than hunt through the index and the stacks for yourself, since the computer can lead you directly to the relevant research papers easily. Currently, there are so many research papers published each year that it pays publishers to issue digests as well as the full fledged journals. These digests will be replaced by the computer network in the not-too-distant future, simplifying the whole process.

So, in the area of research, and in pure reference works, the computer probably will replace the book. After all, think of the boon to an author of a fully integrated computer system that was both encyclopedia and dictionary-cum-thesaurus. You could target in on the precise word you were after from only the vaguest of notions!

But in the pleasure market, where books are read for interest, for escapism, for the sheer pleasure of reading, then the good old bound volume, with its paper made of any damned thing you please, from rice fibres to plastic sheets, will be in demand for a very long time yet! And thank heaven for that!

## *You Have To Laugh!*

It's amazing how many ways you can interpret words on the page. This point, never exactly unknown to me from prior experience of 'mis-reading' in fandom, was brought home yet again not long after CS7 hit the mails. It came in the form of a letter from Joseph Nicholas, most of which located the status slip that came with CS7 (Joe is a very original thinker), though as Joe DNQ'd the letter, I'm unable to bring you it in its full pyrotechnic glory. At the end of his long vituperation, Joe mentioned that he had just received MAINSTREAM from Seattle fan, Jerry Kaufman, and that there was a line in there by Kaufman that really put me in my place. The line in question

was: "It ((CS)) gives the impression of existing in an English ((sic)) fandom quite other than the one we know". "Ah ha", implies Joe, "when even the Yanks have got your number, Owen, then you're really on the skids!" "Ah ha", says Owen, "there is a remark open to misinterpretation!" And I waited for my copy of MAINSTREAM, which duly arrived a day or so later.

Sure enough, in the context of the loccol of MS, Jerry's little quip is really quite unremarkable. To me, all it shows is that Jerry has picked up on an element in CS which I would sincerely hope is there: that it's a zine produced by someone outside the central British fan groups, using contributions from writers and artists also largely outside those groups.



(Notice the careful avoidance of emotive words like 'clique' or 'elite'?) This is, of course, nothing but the truth - I'm me, I'm sat up here churning out my fanzine in the depths of darkest Milton Keynes, and all of my contact with the outside fannish world is through the mailbox. (The only fan I've ever met in the flesh is Peter Presford - no wonder I'm warped!)

To Joe, though, Jerry's words seem to say something much more pejorative. Joe's implication is that even the Americans can see that I'm slightly beyond the pale, not one of the 'in group', that I really don't know where the 'action' is! And this, to Joe, is truly a



terrible thing - a plague upon my house, even!

Well, nuts to Joe's half-baked interpretation. I operate my zine the way I do because that's the way I want to publish the thing. I don't seem to be doing too badly with it, to judge by the response rate, and the number of writers and artists prepared to contribute to the zine. If I'm not further involved in the British fanscene, it's because I don't want to be further involved. I don't go to cons or join SF groups for the simple reason that I have neither the time or the inclination to do so. No slight intended on those that are so involved - I'm just not a very social person anyway!

At the back of all of this there is a disquieting feeling that British fandom is very much a conservative (with a small 'c', naturally) grouping, with rather rigid little ideas floating round in it about what constitutes 'fannish activity'. Everyone is busily playing variations on a theme, rather than trying to be a bit more original, more open in their thinking, more ready to look at things from more than one viewpoint. I've long ago given up expecting our Joe to really make much sense; his role as court jester suits him well enough though, as long as no one ever gets conned into trying to make sense out of his mangled English. He's much too fond of firing off accusations that other people are 'hysterical and paranoid' to really be able to think straight anymore, in a 'fannish' sense, anyway. So much so, that even I'm beginning to feel sorry for the poor sod, to the extent that I'm declaring here and now an end to my own sniping at the guy - he reacts in such a predictable and pathetic way that I can easily write his replies to such things for him, as can we all by now.

The other aspect of Jerry's statement, is to cause me to wonder just how representative

of British fandom as a whole is that portion which is seen from Seattle? Is 'the English fandom' that Seattle knows the 'real' thing? Can any single person, on this side or that, really answer that question with certainty?

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Just to make for a little variety from my editorial voice, here's a little thing that I've had on file from Harry Andruschak since last year. In a way, it follows on from some bits of the previous article, since it shows that there are many more strings to the fanmish bow than many people realise.

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## ***REVERTING TO TYPE***

### ***Harry Andruschak***

Back in the good old days when I had my health, I was the editor of an index to all fannish apas called SOUTH OF THE MOON. As a result of that effort, I became a member of an apa called NAPA, The National Amateur Press Association. It was one of the last of the old time Letter-Press Associations, with such people as Don Wollheim and Fred Pohl as ex-members. Indeed, Don Wollheim went on to start FAPA based on his experience in NAPA.

These ancient dinosaurs of the 19th Century are mostly extinct. Once they numbered in hundreds, today only six are left. Vaguely known in fandom as 'The Mundane Apas', they are the last refuge of true hand set letter-press. One of the sub-groups of this apa is NAPA WEST, an informal organization of members who live in California. As a member I was invited to the fall 1982 meeting.

About 30 people showed up at the home of Richard and Ruth

Hoffman. To the outside, it looks like another suburban house. Inside, it is a shrine to printing. For Richard Hoffman is the last of an almost extinct breed, the Master Printer.

Freedom of the Press. How many times have you heard that phrase? And how many times have you actually thought what it really stood for? It stands for the right to own your own printing equipment. This is not allowed in dictatorships, a factor that results in the fandoms of the communist countries, and South Africa, and any other country where fans cannot own printing equipment. A strange fandom in comparison with those where a fan like me thinks nothing of owning a ditto machine.

In Richard's library is a press that dates from 1829. The dining room has a small press from 1841. In the guest house at the back of the property are three other presses. Over 600 typecases of every sort of font have been collected. Equipment for making rag paper is in the back yard.

The proceedings started at noon with a buffet. I came later as I ate at home, not expecting anything that could fit a diabetic's diet, (I was right). Then came a short and informal business meeting to plan for the 1983 National Convention.

NAPA was one of the first of the big apas, and started in 1876 as an amalgamation of several regional apas. It was decided to hold National Conventions every year over the 4th July weekend in rotation around the country. Sites were bid for one year in advance. As further apas were created, they sometimes held their own annual cons. And the idea slopped over into fandom, since several fans were members of NAPA in the 1930s.

After the business meeting, we had demonstrations in paper making. You were allowed to make your own sheets. After drying

them on the tribbles (the correct name for the wire racks) the paper could be taken to one of two presses set up to print poems for free distribution.

The library was immense. Book after book on printing. There was a whole bookcase devoted to Ben Franklin - his own published works, biographies and criticism. Ben is the spiritual godfather of American printers, a man who staunchly defended freedom of the press at the constitutional convention.

The meet was over by 5pm, short by fannish standards, with no booze or drugs. As I went home, I felt comforted by the fact that a few people still have pride in their ability to set words to printed page, not regarding it as a tedious chore.

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Thanks, Harry.

You know, I think Harry is right to be comforted by the fact that there are still people around who believe in craftsmanship. I often despair of the lack of respect for quality in the modern world. At the OU, I tend to get quite involved with the printers of our correspondence texts, and the modern breed of printer, with their computer typesetting, film reproduction, is a sorry animal compared with the printers I remember seeing when I first joined Punch Publications in the late 60s. There, they still used hot metal settings, and the works were inhabited by old craftsmen who really took a pride in the work they turned out. The modern typesetter is divorced from that pride by the very impersonal nature of the machinery he uses; it comes between him and the paper to the extent that a quality job is very hard to come by. Getting just what you want out of our printers at the OU is all too often an exercise in futility! Give me hot metal anyway!

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# SPORT FREAKS

No doubt you've all come across the total sports freak before now. Maybe you are one yourself (there does seem to be a fair sprinkling of sporting references in fanzines of late). I seem to be surrounded with them, both at work and in my own family. These people (nearly all of 'em male, though not exclusively so) will watch any sport that appears on the box, will often play as many of them as they can themselves (my own kid brother seems to be always en route to another appointment on the tennis-squash-badminton courts, or the football or cricket pitch, or the bowling alley or... I dunno where he gets the energy from!) and will read the newspapers almost entirely for the sports news. These people worry me!

Let's make it clear from the start - I managed to duck out of the group sports indoctrination at school right from the beginning by having a cast-iron alibi. I was asthmatic, and therefore excused all games whenever I felt like it! (For some strange reason, games masters simply hate pupils falling down and turning blue in the middle of a game - some kind of left-wing prejudice, I suppose.) It was a very useful attribute, since it gets you out of all kinds of unpleasant-ries, like cross-country running across muddy fields in winter, or freezing to death in skimpy football gear in November fogs, or risking life and limb in 'gymnastics'. About the only things I used to take part in were during the summer, when I'd occasionally do some field sports (though doing 100 yard sprints several times in succession did cause me to keel over on one occasion), or far a knockabout cricket match. Nice slow things, done more for personal satisfaction than the 'group sports' bit.

So, having escaped indoctrination, I've always had rather a jaundiced eye for most sports. Something that is well-played, by acknowledged experts, can make interesting viewing, if I've nothing better to do. In June each year, I normally find myself watching some extracts from Wimbledon, for example. Yet I wouldn't go out of my way to see these things, or get very excited by them. They're just not that important to me. There is one sport which turns me on - but that is, I feel, a special case. More of that anon.

No, the reason why these sports fanatics worry me is that they seem to be substituting sports for real life, treating the outcome of a football match as something more important than a decrease in the number of the unemployed, a cricket series as the next Holy Jihad against the infidel (with Australia as the favourite infidel over here - reversed in Oz itself!). It worries me that these people begin to impart those feelings into their everyday working lives. The competitiveness of sport begins to invade the workplace (though often without the concept of 'teamwork' attached), and every liaison with another department or another company becomes a test of skill in defeating the opponent. Everything devolves down to a me-vs.-thee situation, even between friends. I can't think of anything more calculated to encourage ego-mania, personal strife or general bad feeling among work-mates!

The odd sport out, as far as I'm concerned, is motor-racing, even though that has had, and continues to have, a huge amount of terrible politicking between the various factions involved in running the sport, which has caused a great deal of bitterness, and confused the bystanders. To me, motor-racing at it's highest echelons, in Grand Prix racing, in long distance sportscar racing, is the most modern of sports.

Competitive, yes, highly so. A team sport, yes, that too, since the ultimate success rests not just with the driver in the car, but with good design work, with skillful management, with outstanding preparation work by the mechanics, and with a level of commitment and understanding between a group of people rarely met elsewhere in sport.

If we look at just one aspect of the sport, it's pinnacle, Grand Prix racing, we find over a dozen different teams, ranging from world-famous car firms like Renault, Ferrari, Alfa-Romeo and Lotus, down to lowly little shoe-string outfits like the Theodore-Ensign team. All pursue the same end with total dedication - some just have a lot more funds than others, as well as more skilled designers (not necessarily drivers though, since the lowly teams often introduce the young drivers who are the stars of the future, and who often drive out-of-date machinery very fast). Yet, within the sport there is a realisation that there can be a turn-round in fortunes for big or little teams. The most successful team of the eighties is probably the Frank Williams Racing team. Sponsored by a consortium of firms, most of them Saudi Arabian, with drivers of the calibre of Alan Jones, Carlos Reutemann and Keke Rosberg, and with one of the very best designers currently in the business in Patrick Head, the Williams team is one of the strongest in the game, with renowned reliability, so their drivers are always around at the end of a race to win if they're in good positions, or to pick up points if in bad ones. The proof is in the fact that, in the last three years, Williams have made their number one driver World Champion twice (Jones in '80, Rosberg in '82), and have taken the Constructors Championship twice, too (in '80 and '81). In the other years they came second. Yet until 1978, Frank Williams

was in the same position that the Theodore-Ensign team is in now - no money, so poor cars, young drivers, the second-best of everything. His cars were the make-weights, the team that made up the numbers on the grid. All the little teams of today can look at the Williams set-up, say "I can do that, too!" and keep looking for that major deal that will bring in the money to do the job right.

That's what is so fascinating about motor-racing. Other sports fanatics behave as if sport really represented life, which it doesn't for the most part. Motor-racing, in many ways, does. It's a technological hotbed, and engineer's dream, and a managerial nightmare. It exists on a knife-edge of tension, for the simple reason that an accident can wipe out month's of work in a second. Yet the engineers and the rulemakers have seen to it that accident damage is minimalised when it does occur, that a driver has the maximum chance of survival in a big shunt. And the figures do show a great decrease in driver injury and mortality in the last couple of decades. True, it is the most capitalist sport out, since it is fueled by money, in increasing amounts as technology throws up new ways of gaining that 'unfair advantage' that every team looks for, the 'edge' to make their car the bearer of the number 'one' that signifies the reigning World Champion.

Umm, just re-read that little lot - maybe the influence of sport in my life is just as great as those other freaks!

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And that's about it for RASTUS number one. I've made up my mind that this is a 'guilt-zine', one I put out when I'm feeling guilt at the size of the unanswered mail-pile, the delay in publishing the big one, the unavailability of copies for enquirers, etc. So I guess it might be pretty frequent after all!



My word - you don't get all that much into twelve pages, do you? I mean, here it is all over and I've not had a chance to do any fanzine reviews. Oh well, I expect the world is better off without them. Perhaps next time (now there's a threat for all you faneds out there!). In the meantime, I'll just say au revoir for now, and get back to the Slave Ship for another bout of hard graft.

Oops, nearly goofed again - can't go without giving the credits for the artwork, can I?

Earl Geier - Front & Back cover  
Joan Hanke Woods - page 3  
Julie Vaux - page 4  
Steven Fox - pages 6 & 9  
Little me - Title and page 5

Every body happy now? Good - further donations welcome for all three CS Enterprise fanzines. Three? No time to tell about it now, next time perhaps!

