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Oh no!

It's the  
4th issue of  
the 4th best fanzine  
from the 4th best UK fanwriter

DOT

As God said unto Moses,  
come fourth!

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### THE HOLLOW MAN

This insignificant and unworthy editor most humbly thanks the esteemed and honourable persons who graciously demeaned themselves so far as to show favour towards his base and undeserving scribblings in the Checkpoint fan poll. Did he but know the elegant names of his exalted benefactors and of those doubtless more glorious ones who considered him too disgusting to be worthy of even the barest hint of a vote, then he would set down in his awkward and deformed prose on these despicable pages effusive praises which would still not attain to one hundredth part of the just deserts of all these illustrious persons. But such knowledge is beyond his dull and slow-witted mind, and his too easily roused suspicions are base and lacking in all merit or foundation, and would undoubtedly be greeted with great hilarity should he inadvertently publish them.

He is honoured almost more than he can bear to receive passing mention in the same excellent fanzine as his infinite superiors in the top five, and fervently hopes that these Mandarins of fandom will be so gracious as to accept his unworthy person as one of themselves. He considers certain reports he has heard to be lying slanders perpetrated by louse-deserted scoundrels and he will not hesitate to publish them in order to demonstrate the vile depths to which these abominable and deformed ones can sink, should the need arise.

He also begs the forgiveness of the noble and magnanimous Kai Lung for his vile appropriation and despicable desecration

of a unique and exquisite style. Even this wretched and almost unrecognisable attempt has taxed his inferior brain to the utmost and he will continue no further to offend the delicate sensibilities of his esteemed and well-informed readership.

### MORE THAN SOMEWHAT

Really, if this sort of thing goes on I shall have little choice but to stop going to the One Tun. I mean, I was only there for five minutes---at most---in July, and look what happened.

Well, what did happen? You see, the Thursday of the July Tun was picked out by a guy at work as the night of his leaving celebration. This was not deliberate; he knows nothing of Tuns and what have you. Since this guy was a friend of mine, and since he would only be leaving the once, and since several pints of beer would be free, I felt I had to go to his celebration rather than the Tun. In addition I had the thought that I might be able to get to the Tun as well, afterwards. This was probably a foolish thought, since I haven't been to a leaving celebration yet (and in my firm of late there have been many) where I wasn't one of the last to leave.

As it turned out, only two pints were free, paid for by the leaver, but by circulating among the attendees and observing the state of their glasses very carefully I was able to insinuate myself into conversations just in time to be bought a pint. In this manner more than one pint found its way to my stomach. (I nearly wrote 'beer gut' instead of 'stomach', but to call my slight excess of flab round the middle a 'beer gut' is to insult the achievements of Peter Nichols, Ritchie Smith and Rob Jackson to an extent far greater than I can reasonably contemplate.) The same sort of thing happens by accident at the Tun as well. Some days I don't buy a drink all night, and others I seem to buy every round that's going.

Anyway, the result was that by the time we left the pub I was not---how shall I put it---entirely level-headed. I blame it all on the draught Bass, personally, but then, I am biassed. (That's 'Biassed'!) The time was about 10.45, and I'd given up all hope of getting to the Tun. Now, as I was stolling down Moorgate to catch the drain (not a misprint) from Bank to Waterloo, and thence return home to Teddington, things began to get wierd. I mean, wierd. A car hooted at me from London Wall (which is not actually a wall any more, but a street) and I looked round to see Andrew Stephenson, dressed in his distinctive yellow Vauxhall Chevette, grinning up at me. He had been giving someone a lift to somewhere and was now returning to the Tun. Naturally I asked if I

could go too, and he said yes, and I got in his car. We talked about this and that on the way to the Tun (I have to put it that way, since although I distinctly remember talking I distinctly do not remember what about) and arrived at about eleven o'clock. I knew this because the Tun clock said it was ten past eleven.

People were leaving when I arrived---I assume this to be entirely coincidence---so I went quickly round saying hello to all the folk. The folk remembered that; they said I seemed very happy. Bass often has this effect, so I'm told. I can never remember, personally. The suggestion was made, as the suggestion so often is, that we visit the Pizza Hut for a pizza. Not that you'd expect a curry from such a place, of course. I gathered, probably more from a process of osmosis than by exercise of intellect, that a large number of fans were going to the Pizza Hut---so many, in fact, that the two available cars could not accommodate them all. Two people would be left over; two people would have to find their own way there. So which two were selected? The second drunkest ---me---and the drunkest---Kate Jeary, that's which two.

Young Kate had been hitting the bottle that night. At the time I had no idea what she'd been drinking, only that there had been a lot of it. Later information was that she'd been drinking barley wine, nine pints of it! This I find very hard to believe. How can anyone drink even one pint of barley wine without nausea? Unless it is mixed with bad Courage Best to make it palatable. It had already been decided that Kate was in no fit state to go home on her own and that in consequence she would be spending the night at Greg and Simone's ample residence in South Ealing. Now, then, did we two manage to become carless? I cannot believe Alan Dorey's assertion that I volunteered. I was incapable of the original thought necessary to volunteer.

Be that as it may, Kate and I found ourselves on Farringdon Street (actually on it, not on the pavement) trying to hail a taxi. Now, one thing that is true about London is that it is impossible, when drunk, to find a taxi. London taxi drivers have to take an ESP test to ensure that they can spot a drunk three streets away before they are let loose. They don't have to take any other test at all, actually, such as a Knowledge Of London test, or a driving test; especially not a driving test. Another thing that is true about London is that it is impossible to find a taxi on Farringdon Street. Pre-frontal lobotomy ensures that no taxi driver knows of the existence of Farringdon Street until he actually has a passenger and thus does not have to stop on it. This is also the reason why taxi drivers are always knocking over pedestrians on the pedestrian crossing on Farringdon Street; they don't like stopping even for pedestrian crossings. Thus we had no chance, and embarked on a strange and wonderful journey

across London by Underground.

It was a long journey, how long I had no idea because I wasn't wearing a watch, having given it up on principle and because my watch-strap broke. Seventy minutes was one estimate. It was a long journey because of the changes of train that were necessary; at that time of night you can be a long time waiting during a change. I also have a sneaking suspicion that we made one change that was unnecessary, getting off a train going where we wanted because I thought at the time that it wasn't. Naturally, the next didn't come for an age.

But we got there eventually, just as all the others were leaving. This was becoming a habit, it seemed, but I still ascribe it to coincidence. I deposited Kate with Greg and made straight for the bog. It must have been this that confused Mister Dorey. It hurt when he suggested, in Gross Encounters 3, that by the time I reached the Pizza Hut I was sober; "stone cold sober," he said. A great kidder, Mister Dorey. I was moving on will-power and dying for a piss. Such a thing makes the shortest distance seem eminently reasonable, not to say essential. Of course I was moving in a straight line! If I was stone cold sober I must have discovered a means of deferring drunkenness---not curing it, deferring. Next morning I couldn't move. I couldn't get up until gone one in the afternoon. I couldn't go into work, and had to stay at home watching the Ladies Singles final at Wimbledon on the television.

Now, of course, I've forgotten completely how to bring off the deferred drunkenness trick. It would be useful at times, such as ten thirty most weekday evenings and eleven most weekends.

### RAGTIME

Something I haven't really tried to do before is review fanzines, unless you count 'Pet's Corner' in DOT 1, which most people don't, although I quite liked it. I have a pile of fanzines sitting on top of my typewriter case which date back to an arbitrary time a while ago. Actually it probably dates back to April 20th, which was the day I moved out of Hawks Road, Kingston. Did he? some of you ask in wonderment. I didn't know that. Indeed I did move out of Kingston, but this is not the time to tell you the full story; at the time of typing the story is not finished. I hope that by the time of printing it will be, so that I can tell all on the last stencil. When I moved I chucked things into boxes, and a lot of the boxes have never been unchucked. The fanzines I've received since then have just been stacked in an untidy pile.

On the bottom of the pile is Gross Encounters 2 from Alan Dorey, and on the top is Gross Encounters 3, also from Alan, of course. This is physical location and not value judgement. They are both rather enjoyable issues of a rather good personalzine. Number 3 especially shows an ability and willingness to get hot under the collar about the Great Matters of our time. Unlike a lot of people who get hot under the collar, however, Alan remains lucid and reasonable. In frequency it bids fair to outdo Dave Langford's Twll-ddu: number 2 is dated 26 May 1978, number 3, 20 July 1978. That's two months. Good grief! I never knew such short publishing periods existed. Alan tells me that two months is going to be the regular interval. Ha! We've heard that one before. Or wait---maybe he's practising to edit Matrix...

Dave L., of course, will be quite happy to see such a fanzine come out so frequently. In this way, he reasons, someone will stand a chance of wresting the Nova Award from him. One is all he can take, more than he can take, in fact. He was very distressed when I passed on the glad tidings that Seamonsters would soon be out to replace Stop Breaking Down, and that it would start at number 1: only one issue of SD in the year, then, and ineligibility for the Nova. "Publish another DOT, damnit!" said Dave. He must be desparate.

But really, if he continues to put out fanzines like Twll-ddu 12 he must expect to go on winning things like the Nova. This issue maintains the high standard established by all the others, though it doesn't actually raise it, and unless Anode Enzyme pubs his ish twice before Novacon I can see another piece of purple plastic finding its way into a cardboard box under the Langford stairs. His report of the Walsh-Pickersgill Whitsun gathering convinced me that I was wasting my time writing one myself. I'd actually started it ---a description of the inaugural meeting of the Picker-Walshof terrorist gang---but it began to bore even me by line 2. Besides, who could possibly imagine Don West as a terrorist?

Well, Maya 15 finally forced itself into being, despite Rob Jackson's other preoccupation of the moment. It's a good looking issue, but I haven't actually read all of it yet. There just looks to be so much print, so many words, that I put off starting it. I'm like that with big novels, too. I had John Fowles's 'The Magus' on my shelves for well over a year and only read it in the end because a revised version was published. Now I have the revised version on my shelves ---unread. (On the other hand I sliced through the six Dorothy Dunnatt 'Checkmate' novels in about a week and a half, and they average 600 pages each.) One thing I will say about Maya is that it is far more deserving of a fanzine Hugo than Richard Geis's Science Fiction Review.

SFR 25 felt like a small earthquake when it thudded onto

my doormat. It is huge! It's an interesting zine to dip into now and again at random. Geis himself totally dominates it and his bits between the major articles and letters tend to be the only bits I read. His journalistic writing is much better than his fiction, however. SFR 25 contains the first part of his novel "One Immortal Man", largely a reprint of his story in Peter Weston's *Andromeda 2*. It's awful, and I'm not sure that I haven't done the world a disservice by naming it. There is no doubt that SFR is a popular magazine, and that it attracts a lot of the heavyweights, but why does it win fanzine Hugos? It isn't really a fanzine, though of course Geis would accuse me of sour grapes for saying so. It strikes me that it ought to go up against Analog, F & SF and the rest on the Hugo ballot. Might stand a chance, too.

Another American zine on my pile---this time a true fanzine---is Mota from Terry Hughes. Number 24 has a couple of quite nice pieces, by Bob Shaw and Ben Zuhl, but it isn't an outstanding issue. Mota 25, which arrived while I was writing this column, is a fair bit better. It does contain one major flaw, though, and that is the insult to British beer perpetrated within its pages, and I am formulating plans to take revenge on them damned colonial rebels. Mainly it involves recolonisation, followed by export of all Watneys' Special produced in this country...

Only one more fanzine to be mentioned---Dave Bridges's One-Off 5. This was an odd-looking fanzine with odd bits attached to it, but the contents were worth reading. I especially liked the running sequence of pieces about Dave's interfering neighbour. In London one doesn't speak to one's neighbours, of course, so this was something new to read about. I was a bit irritated by his quoting the price he paid for his new house---and admitting that you know it is cheap doesn't get you off the hook, Master Bridges. For that price I might just be able to buy a terraced kennel in Canning Town. I suppose I could always buy something in Sheffield, but the commuting to London would be hellish.

Oh, rats! Another fanzine has arrived, to make a liar out of me. It's Seamonsters 1 from Simone Walsh. I've had the personal assurance of the editor that another one will be out before November, so maybe Anode Enzyme can rest easy and Dave Langford will not win the Nova anyway. Simone thinks so too. Could Seamonsters become the focal British fanzine that everyone and his mother seems to think British fandom needs? Well of course it could, if British fans focus on it and the editor doesn't shrivel up under the concentrated glare. I was going to close with a comment about the wickedness of the ubiquitous Rob Hansen for depicting the editor in such a fashion on the cover, but I've decided not to. (She's very tolerant, though, isn't she, Simone?)

That's it! No room for even the best fanzine in the world.

ASYLUM PIECE

Last weekend was a Dave and Hazel Langford party weekend. The invitation said to arrive from mid-afternoon, since certain outdoor events were planned for which daylight is useful, such as croquet. I started early, determined not to be late. It was 8.30 am when I set off for Birmingham. Now, Dave and Hazel do not live in Birmingham so that this may not seem quite a rational act. Indeed, if I did not already know the reason why, I should begin to suspect myself of insanity. I mean, who would want to go to Birmingham except for a con? The reason was to go to a wedding. An old flame (good grief! Am I really of an age to have old flames?) had decided to commit an act of matrimony with a Slavic Canadian from Oxford called Gordon, who also has a PhD. in Aristotelian Philosophy.

Eva and I had kept in touch of late only by Christmas cards once a year, this being the optimum number of times in order to coincide with Christmas. Suddenly I received an invitation to her wedding. As a way of waving hello that's on a dramatic level not much below tossing in a hand-grenade. I said yes, I'd go, and bought the present, suspecting that I wouldn't know anyone there except the bride and her parents. I wasn't quite right. I met one guy I vaguely remembered, an academic doctor of medicine. After the reception, whilst talking generally about this and that, we began to evolve a theory of accountancy based on physiology. The circulation of the blood became cash flow, blood pressure was profit, anaemia was inflation, and so on. We didn't get a lot further but I suppose that if you extend the analogy, paying a dividend can only be likened to having a shit---a concept that should delight the jolly Marxist heart of Mike Dickinson.

After the wedding I set course for Reading, switched on the automatic pilot, and arrived at about eight o'clock. I parked the car and wandered towards the party. I was just outside the front gate when a voice said, "Hey!" to me. This was not particularly informative, so I turned round and saw Harry Bell and Greg Pickersgill sitting in the back of Martin and Liese Hoare's taxi, waving large cans of Fosters. (Don't ask me why Martin and Liese have a taxi. I don't know, and the only answer that suggests itself is the unlikely one that occasionally Martin gets so drunk that he needs a large back seat to fall into without missing.) "This is where it's all happening," said Greg and Harry. "This is the breakaway taxi party. Come on in and bring some women." Since I didn't have any on me at the time I declined their kind offer and went into the house.

There were people inside, all shapes and sizes of people. There were people as big as Andrew Stephenson and there were people who were not, which included most. There were people as tiny as Boris Lawrence, if you can believe that. The lean-

ing tower of Bingley was there, failing to find people to win money off at dominoes; his reputation obviously preceded him. So were those two dissimilar pillars of Yorcon, Alan Dorey and Mike Dickinson. No, let's get it right---Mike Dickinson and Alan Dorey. Mike is the co-chairman, after all. I ventured to suggest that the idea of having two chairmen would not work. Mike thought that it would. Well, he's the one who has to work it, not me. Thank goodness.

Who else was there? Lots of people. Roy Kettle wasn't, nor was Rob Jackson, nor Rob Hansen. To be perfectly honest there were more actual people not at the party than at it, but most of the important ones were there. There was plenty of booze, plenty of bread and cheese. Things were all set for a great time.

In discrete groups here and there plots were plotted against the BSFA. "Are you with us or against us?" Don West wanted to know. "Oh yes," I said. Well it's true, I am. Mike Dickinson confessed that he would like to edit Vector. Out of the goodness of his heart and the generosity of his soul he would shoulder the burden and give the down-trodden BSFA membership value for money. Well, not exactly. Mike thought it would advance his career, in the manner of Malcolm Edwards. Strange, I always thought Mike was a teacher. "Well, sir, I'm editor of Vector now." "Good lord, man! How would you like to be a headmaster?" But I mock too much. For whatever motives, Mike would make a much better Vector editor than the present incumbent, or the previous one, and that's something to keep in mind, surely.

In the 'airlock', the short passage-way between the Langford kitchen and dining room, Harry Bell and Greg P. and I and others stood around drinking. It was crowded in the airlock, and we completely obscured the way to the fridge and the cold booze, but we stood there. Harry developed a technique of standing with a knee outstretched. In the confines of the airlock, he explained, women would always face away from him and slide their bums down his leg on their way by. As if to prove his point, Liese Hoare came by and slid her bum down his leg. Greg thought this was a very good idea and stood on the other side of the airlock with his knee outstretched. In this fashion the airlock was completely blocked and Simone found herself unable to get through at all, and thus didn't slide her bum down anyone's leg. Harry, incidentally, had refined his technique to such an extent that when men wanted to go by he moved his leg out of the way. I'm surprised at you for wondering such a thing.

In the front room Mike Skelding and Dave Raggett were playing 'Moriarty'. A cunning game this, requiring years of practice. The two contestants crouch on the floor. Their left wrists are tied together with a short piece of string,



giving them a freedom of movement of about six inches. Into the right hand of each is placed a rolled up newspaper (or in some variants of the game, an iron bar) about three feet long. They are then blindfolded.

The first player says, "Are you there, Moriarty?". The second player says, "Yes," and then rolls out of the way of the thunderous blow aimed at his head with the newspaper (or iron bar). But of course, he cannot roll very far because of the piece of string. The second player then has his turn to attack. As a spectator sport 'Moriarty' is truly amazing. To see people crouching or lying on the floor in a desperate effort to avoid huge blows that are missing them by miles anyway really brings out the old sense of wonder.

Joe Nicholas, as is becoming usual at these events, fell asleep and was decorated and photographed. Afterwards I tried to sell him the felt pen that had been used for the warpainting, but he seemed less than overcome by emotion at the thought of owning the Actual Pen. I can't understand it. A funny lad, Joseph.

The party survivors emerged at various times during the next morning. Joe, Paul Kincaid, Dai Price, Christian Lehmann, Mike Damesick and myself were left, plus Dave and Hazel. Paul Barnett had stayed the night, occupying two mattresses until one was forcibly removed from him while he slept, but he left before anyone became less than comatose, leaving a note to say he had gone to play cricket in Plymouth. He also left behind the manuscript that Mike Rohan had given to him to take back to David and Charles. Thus Mike could once more have avoided being published, but Dave said he'd post it on. I suggested that he should use a very battered envelope so that the crumpled state of the manuscript might be blamed on the attentions of the Post Office.

Outside the sun was shining, so to make best use of it we went outside as well, and played Frisbee. Joe repeated his star play of the Greg and Simone All Weekend Party, generally failing to get the Frisbee moving in the right direction, or fast enough to reach anybody. Joe is a natural athlete. On the football field his skill and aggression can turn balls which are all his into 50-50 ones, which he loses. But despite his natural skill, he had improved his Frisbee play by the end of the session. This was brought on by the onset of rain. For lunch we demolished the three remaining french loaves and the various cheeses that had been left. Harry Bell had spotted the french loaves the night before and had suggested a novel use for them involving Ian and Janice Maule. Fortunately he had refrained from actually following it through. At least, I hope he did.

It was a good party; these things often are. Alan Dorey

was having one the next Saturday, but he'd foolishly arranged it for the same day as a Pieria meeting. That's almost as ridiculous as Chris Southern's arranging his wedding for the Saturday of Silicon. Good grief!

### POSTSCRIPT

DOT 3 was so long ago that most of the letters have lost their freshness and sparkle, so that I won't be publishing them. Do not think they are not appreciated; every letter saying how good DOT is is received with great delight, and so are the others, mostly. Therefore I am having the WAHFs first, only it would be more accurate to say IHFs (I Heard From). So here are the IHFs. They are in an order which is not alphabetical and not chronological and is perhaps best described as random.

IHF---

Joe Nicholas (imagine---Joe Nicholas an IHF!), John Steward PCA, Pamela Doal, Coral Clarke (whose offer now seems superfluous), Garry Kilworth, Edgar Edgar Belka Belka, Alex Kernaghan, Paul Kincaid (who is not allowed to laugh whilst reading this fanzine, since it isn't meant to be funny), Phil Stephensen-Payne, Ira M. Thornhill (who went in search of something British and Strange, and found it, in DOT 2 and 3), Ben Indick (who postponed gafia to write, he wrote), Andy Richards, Andrew Darlington and Terry Jeeves (who gave three cheers for Peter Weston's taste in sf).

Andy Firth had this to say:

"I particularly enjoyed your observations on The State of SF. It must be a trick of the format, as it is just as good to read sober as it was when I was drunk. But short, so short."

Well, Andy, it's the shorts that give me the inspiration to invent the tricks of the format. It isn't generally known that DOT was first developed especially for sober readers, but somehow, as the norm of sobriety, I chose Mike Glicksohn...

"DOT 3 crossed the Atlantic in a mere two months and arrived only slightly torn and tattered. I see you've a letter that purports to be from me only it's clearly a fake: I'm never that coherent. Please try to be more accurate in the future: if you can do Runyon you ought to be able to do a pastiche of anyone's style. Or even Greg Pickersgill, for that matter.

Novacon sounds like fun. Mainly the bit about there being so much booze no-one could be either witty or intelligent. My limited intelligence cannot conceive of such an amount but I'm sure you're an honest chap so I'll take your word for it. Can't understand your (i.e., English fandom's) antipathy to-

wards John Brunner though. He stayed here overnight recently and we all sat around getting merrily drunk on Newcastle Brown and good scotch and no-one felt the slightest desire to hit John with a pie, slimy green goop or anything else.

Don't believe Tucker when he boasts of not being Strange: all around America there are homes for the Mentally Muddled named in his honour. In a year and a half, you'll see for yourself."

More like a year now, of course. Well, Mike, how was that little pastiche of your style? All right, I hope.

Actually, I maligned Mike in the introduction to his letter. He doesn't get drunk when he drinks; it's the people who try to keep up with him who get drunk.

Another man who doesn't drink is Jim Linwood:

"I went down on my knees at once. On the floor close to his hand there was a little round piece of paper, blackened on the one side. I could not doubt that this was DOT 3; and taking it up, I found written on the other side, in a very good, clear hand, this short message: "You have till ten to-night." There was, indeed, great urgency in my delivering this letter to Squire Smith before my presence was discovered by...(searches for suitable metaphor involving a flamboyantly dressed one-legged sailor and his parrot; finds one; rejects it---Dave Rowe and Bernie Peek wouldn't be amused.)

I was surprised that Steve Sneyd, Joseph Nicholas and Pam Boal didn't realise that DOT 2 was a Runyonesque pastiche; suggesting, perhaps, that fans are not as well-read as they pretend. As Runyon had a very distinctive style (although his New York dialects were probably as contrived as Dickens's Cockney) this lack of recognition will put fanwriters off doing the same thing with other stylists. Yup, references to 'fans chatting like popcorn bursting in the cool Illinois air' or 'Fowler was dead all right, and I only had 9,000 suspects to work on' will be lost on these dummies---they should stick to Andromeda."

That's a little harsh, Jim. I know for a fact that Joe Nicholas shrivels up if compelled to read Andromeda, and he has faithfully promised to read some Runyon Real Soon Now. The next set author, of course, is the one from page 1. No prizes for getting him right---Dave Langford and Don West already know, the clever sods---but he isn't very well known. He ought to be, though; he ought to be.

No doubt David V. Lewis will yet again accuse me of "invoking obscure writers to bolster my pretensions." Actually Dave wrote "obscuse", an interesting portmanteau word, presumably for "obscure" and "abstruse". I'm not leaving you behind, am I, Dave?

"I don't give a fuck who Damon Runyon is and I am fucked if I am going to read any of his junk. I have enough trouble

getting through just a tiny fraction of the SF available and am not going to waste valuable time on mere mainstream rubbish.

"Sorry to say my estimation of your fanz has taken a nose-dive since you have caught the virus infecting Dave Wingrove and other lit crit hyenas, i.e. quoting obscure (sic) mainstream references in hope that it gives credence to your maunders. Well it don't. So get your ass into gear and quarantine fast. So we get back to the healthy pre-DOT 3 humour."

Dave, dear fellow, don't be a cretin. But if you really do prefer all sf to any Damon Runyon then perhaps you can't help it. And to suggest a similarity between myself and Dave Wingrove is laughable. That's it! You were kidding all along, weren't you? I'm slow today.

Here's something not a lot of people get, a letter from Ian Garbutt.

"I've been meaning to drop you a line thanking you for DOT 2 and 3 but, being busy, haven't had time before now. I enjoyed the magazine, and will soon, by way of trade, be sending you copies of A For Antares and Tangent. Has Drilkjis finally folded? A pity if it has. The zine was a modern phenomenon."

Incredibly normal, isn't it, apart from the implied threat of Tangent? And yet within a few months he was writing letters of incredible idiocy to Greg and Simone. Is this the effect of holding an office in the BSFA? If so, my resignation as Company Secretary goes in tomorrow. Or has there always been a cretin in Ian Garbutt trying to get out? Not even the Shadow knows.

Following Rob Jackson's letter last time about Dave Cobbledick and Silicon 2 and the BSFA, and my comments thereon I received a lot of letters from Rob, Dave and Tom Jones. Long ones. At the time I made a note to print all of all the letters; there seemed to be a burning issue there, somewhere. Now I can't get excited about it at all. Tom said Dave and he were still good buddies. Dave said he was still a BSFA supporter and not at all a fannish fan and Rob Jackson was wrong. Rob sent a copy of a letter he'd sent to Dave. In it he was amazingly placatory and shoved all the anti-BSFA comments onto me, making some remark in ink on the copy that was presumably not on the original about Dave not being able to read fanzines properly. This was probably to placate me. And that's it; the Great Controversy in a nutshell. Things have changed, now, of course, and the Great Controversy is still about the BSFA, but it's different. Perhaps we should have a poll to decide the best BSFA Great Controversy of the last decade. There'd be plenty of contenders.

The next letter is really about DOT 2, and arrived late

because of the trans-Atlantic time lag. It's from Harry Warner, Jr.

"Even more amazing is the revelation about a driver's license ((I think he means 'driving licence'-K.)) which expires in 2023. It isn't the appearance of that year which takes my sense of wonder out for a pleasant stroll through the neighbourhood. It's the fact that there is still a government which hasn't seized upon drivers' licenses as a method of obtaining a regular source of supplementary tax money. In the United States, where the licenses are issued by states rather than by the national government, I think the idea of a lifetime driving license has suffered fatal injury throughout most of the land. Maryland, for instance, issues a license for only two years, after which it must be renewed. If the driver has gone blind or has assumed a foetal position on a permanent basis, he is still eligible to have that license renewed as long as he sends along the necessary fee for renewal."

Ah, you miss the point, Harry. In Britain we used to have driving licences (to revert to English usage, rather than American) with a life span of three years. They were little red books, cloth bound, with good strong pages sewn together and real writing on them. They had the solidity of miniature passports. Then the famous Driver and Vehicle Licensing Centre (DVLC) opened in Swansea, with its all-powerful computer. The driving licence suddenly became a piece of green paper folded in half and in half again and tucked into a clear plastic wallet. The words on it were all printed by a computer. And it lasts until the day before the driver's 70th birthday.

This is all progress, you see, and because it is progress everything is done better and more efficiently. As proof of this the DVLC almost never sends driving licence renewal reminders to people in error; it never sends any reminders at all. How about that for efficiency? Another thing about the progress and efficiency of the DVLC and its computer is that it is actually cheaper not to collect any money for driving licences than to collect some. Thus the lifetime licence. All clear now, Harry? You Americans have a long way to catch up on these things, obviously.

I've got some more IHFs. I was going to quote from these but I've decided not to bother. It's all getting Too Big.

IHF (again)---

Alan Dorey and Graham England (both of whom reminisced about the famous 65 bus), Steve Sneyd, Keith Seddon and Craig Miller---Director of Fan Relations, The Star Wars Corporation. How about that? It'd be nicer if I was the only one, but wouldn't it always? Oh well.

That's the end of the letters.

THE FALL

DOT 4 : AUGUST 1978

This was DOT 4, brought to you by the postman. Complaints and recriminations should, however, be sent to----- whose strange thought processes deemed you deserving of this issue.

From:

KEVIN SMITH

at 7 FASSETT ROAD  
KINGSTON-UPON-THAMES  
SURREY  
ENGLAND

Note also the subtle change of address. (This is not an invitation to admire the subtlety; this is an order. Write it down, write it down!) It might seem that I haven't actually moved very far, but this is not so. The move from Hawks Road, K-o-T (scene of Dot 1-3) to Fasset Road, K-o-T took approximately four months and involved crossing and recrossing the Thames, with a sojourn at Wick Road, Teddington. Note the subtle manner in which both my previous addresses are hinted at. (This is an invitation to admire, so admire, damnit, admire!)

PRINTED PAPER REDUCED RATE

The reason I didn't produce DOT 4 in March was Skycon. The reason I didn't produce it in April was that I knew I would be moving from Hawks Road and thought it preferable to know my new address before sending out thousands of copies. The reason I didn't produce it in May, June or July was my discovery of a television at Wick Road, and my total involvement in the World Cup, Wimbledon and the Test Matches thereafter.

Now I'm back in Kingston, the television has vanished, all systems are go; and don't you just wish they weren't!

Box 428  
Letcham, NY 12110

*Jon Howard Fidler*  
*P.O. Box 2038*

