



Never mind the Sex Pistols here's the bollocks.....

.....but first roll on the credits.....

PHOTOGRAPHIC ADVISOR.....MIKE COLLINS.
PRODUCTION ADVISOR.....MIKE COLLINS.
DUPLICATION EXPERT.....MIKE COLLINS.
MORAL SUPPORT.....PLAYTEX.
HISTORICAL ADVICE.....MIKE COLLINS.
FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT.....MIKE COLLINS.
ADVICE ON WHERE TO PUT MY 'ZINE.....BRYN FORTEY.
MUSICAL DIRECTOR.....MIKE COLLINS.
WARDROBE.....MIKE COLLINS.
SPECIAL EFFECTS.....MIKE COLLINS.

.....this is, of course, issue 3 of.....

EPSILON

EDITORIAL...

Among the few LoC's received on EPSILON 2 was the following from Dave Rowe:

"Pity. EPSILON 1 had large hints it was not going to be a run of the mill fnz.

The only individualism 2 can boast is it's format, which is a little like saying the noteworthy feature was made by default.

It is a pity as you're obviously capable of better things, and better writing even."

Now I can imagine cries of, "Ignore the ponse!", from a certain section of my readership but that reference to 'individualism' made me stop and take a hard look at what I'm doing, at just where EPSILON should be heading, if anywhere. I was going to claim that I disagreed with any notion of a total concept and a definate direction, to claim that each individual issue will be crafted from the best articles I can get from those whose work I admire and from the best of my own work which I can get together at the time, which of course they are. However, on reflection I realise that this is palpably untrue, that any of the 'successful' fanzines you care to examine has a distinct sense of purpose and a visible direction, even though these could be largely unconscious on the part of their editors, a by-product of ongoing enthusiasm and preferences, but a vital part of the whole nonetheless.

So where exactly is EPSILON heading? I don't know. I stand by my own earlier statement that I put an issue together using those pieces that I personally enjoy and the best I feel I am capable of, and yet.....and yet, I can feel a sense of identity, of direction,

emerging - something I hope will develop and grow in issues to come. The type of fanwriting I personally prefer is the humourous anecdote, a form I dabble in to a small extent in ODZUNSODZ, and because of this I expect EPSILON to lean in that direction as things proceed. we shall see.

So much for direction then, but what of the deeper accusation implicit in 'lack of individualism', the notion that EPSILON is a pale shadow of other 'zines, a 'run of the mill' production with no distinct identity? There's truth in the claim, of course, as there would be if the same claim were levelled at most any other fanzine you can name. Fandom's been an ongoing institution for forty years or more with the same themes and ideas surfacing time and again and fanzines evolving into a variety of forms and types, most of which can be placed in a suitable and instantly recognisable category. Thus, to that extent, EPSILON probably does lack individuality but the school of thought I choose for EPSILON to follow (fairly obvious I'd imagine, and in part the reason for dave's reaction, no doubt) is the result of a conscious decision on my part, my decision as an individual, since the charge was lack of individualism rather than lack of individuality. As it happens I think EPSILON 1 had less of Rob Hansen the individual in it than did issue 2 which was the main purpose of initiating the ODZUNSODZ column. I could just ride ramrod over the contributions of others but I happen to prefer my own prescence in the 'zine in more than an editorial capacity.

I hope you do too.

The more observant among you will have noticed that this issues cover unfolds to form a wall poster. Brought to you at great expense, this little number is an example of your editor's renowned generosity but don't get too bloody complacent and expect one every issue. O.K.

Contrary to my initial plans this issue of EPSILON has turned out to be a personalzine and due to my godawful slow typing some of the stuff contained herein reads like ancient history. However the next issue of EPSILON will be in a different format and should contain material by some of our most revered fanwriters if the pictures I took last con come out. I have approached both a famous fanwriter and his woman (clue: they're not married they just co-edit) for articles and I fully expect to run an article by the guy. If not, why then I'll just have to acquire one of his early pieces of fiction from that nice Mr. Fortey and run that instead.

This issue of EPSILON is dated Jan/Feb 1978. I fully expect issue 4 to be out in the autumn.

ROB HANSEN.

SPECIAL THANK are due to John and Eve Harvey for being conned into duplicating this issue for me. When issue 4 is ready faneds with dupers may get the impression that I'm attempting to ingratiate myself with them. This will, of course, be all in their imaginations.

ODZUNSDZ

It's occurred to me that if you didn't know where it was at the opening paragraph of my last ODZUNSDZ column must have seemed pretty incomprehensible if not downright cretinous, and in view of the fact that the person being parodied didn't realise it I have cause for concern. The paragraph was in fact a word for word copy of a paragraph in STOP BREAKING DOWN with booze substituting for records and was intended as an introduction to the section headings which were all advertising slogans for various ales and, in tinn, a parody of Greg's habit of using record titles as headings. Sometimes I think I've employed subtlety I never knew I possessed.

So onto my ramblings this issue and we begin with a trilogy of reports on recent fannish parties I've enjoyed:

AN 'ACTION REPLAY' REPLAY?

Dai Price and myself decided to attend the July One Tun meeting; Dai had arranged to stay the weekend with the Langfords and I to stay overnight at the PickersWalsh homestead. However things didn't quite work out that way and I ended up staying three nights. It was all Holdstock's doing actually, because at the Tun he invited me to a get together at his flat on the Saturday night and so I stayed.

Those present on the night were Rob and Sheila Holdstock, Leroy Kettle and girlfriend Cath, Simone Walsh and daughter Sarah, Greg Pickersgill, John and Eve Harvey, and your intrepid editor.

Before eating we spent an hour in the rather ample garden behind Sele House playing baseball. Not exactly conventional baseball since the ball was a football and the bat our fists. At the bottom of the garden, of course, was the river where Rob has been known to shoot at rats. Nice garden.

In the flat itself Rob showed us his workroom and we reverently examined the impedimenta of the writers craft and his complete collection of the BEANO. Being a bit of a celt (I said CELT!) I was intrigued by the Celtic war-axe slung over his teddy. Although only an imitation it was easy to imagine holding off the Saxon hordes with such a thing.

Rob, as you all know, is living off the immoral earnings of Chris Carlsen and he proudly showed us the rather grotesque cover painting for the (then) forthcoming first Berserker novel. I've since read the novel and thoroughly enjoyed it. Nice one Rob.

It was a good evening with lots of excellent food and drink and my thanks again to Rob and Sheila for laying it on.

"AN 'ACTION REPLAY' REPLAY?" REPLAY?

On Saturday 6th August resident Welshfandom minus one (Mike Collins was already up in London) set off for the PickersWalsh home for a party that evening. I'd listened carefully to the weather forecast the night before and it promised to be a dull and dry day; perfect driving weather. Of course it pissed down through all three hours and hundred and fifty miles of the journey. Misting of the

windows inside the car was a problem and when I asked Bryn to wipe the back window his hand came away with half the aluminium foil window heater and filthy.

"Don't you ever clean your fucking car!" he shouted.

August being holiday time I had visions of us getting caught in a long tailback on the Severn Bridge so we set off at eight. Of course we missed all the traffic and arrived at Lawrence Road at a quarter to twelve, rather early.

"I refuse to knock on their door before twelve," said Bryn, and went for a pint with Dai while I parked the car. I couldn't find them after I'd parked so as it was already twelve I knocked on the door of 7A. Through the frosted glass I could see a grotesque shape shambling down the stairs to answer.

"Hello Greg", I beamed as the door opened.

"Christ, you're fuckin' early ain'tcha?" he growled by way of greeting. He was happy to see me.

Shortly afterwards Bryn and Dai arrived closely followed by Mike Collins and we trotted off to the local chippy for food. Greg told us that Holdstock and Kettle would be arriving early and we settled down to a period of stimulating conversation. First arrivals were the Charnox.

"Kettle and Holdstock will be here early", I informed them.

Mike had to leave early but he was to return later with his girl. Apparently Mike Glicksohn had been at the August One Tun and taken a shine to young Collins. The mind, among other things, boggles.

The afternoon wore on and someone called Dave Wingrove arrived.

"Kettle and Holdstock are coming early", I told him.

"We all have our problems", said Simone.

Afternoon turned into evening and I was having an interesting chat with Greg and Gra Charnock about music when someone announced it was eight o'clock and eating commenced. People were arriving thick and fast now.

"Hello Rob", said a voice.

"Hello", I replied, "Kettle and Holdstock will be here early." I felt rather foolish when I realised it was Rob Holstock; (Hey, Rob, what is a faux pas?)

Rumour had it that Rob was watching everyone closely, picking up character material for his stories. I believe it. I, for one, am convinced that in Rob's Berserker novels the basic Berserker concept is based on Greg.

"Second book dedicated to Greg and I", Simone informed me.

Andrew Stephenson arrived hawking copies of his new novel NIGHT-WATCH, all about a fanzine editor becoming an anthology editor and ruling the world, or somesuch, and spent most of the evening trying to steal Mike Collins' girlfriend.

About half way through the evening Joseph Nicholas decided to liven things up by vomiting and afterwards it was difficult to tell where his flesh ended and the white blouse-like garment he was wearing began. On returning he fell into a deep sleep on a chair and various people decorated his head with leftovers.

In response to some amorphous threat posed by Dave Wingrove Rob Holdstock organised a group of people together who then started

kissing each other. Hostess Simone Walsh seemed to enjoy this part of the party but Bryn Fortey, however, didn't as he was kissed by Malcolm Edwards.

"It's not as if I really know him that well!" said Bryn later.

By now Jim Linwood was fast asleep on the floor and Leroy Kettle, after demonstrating his dexterity with a lemon and coming close to demolishing a pile of plates in the process, decided to start kicking him. This action, not unnaturally, woke Jim who opened his eyes and smiled up at his attacker benignly. Showing great compassion Simone led Jim into the bedroom where he promptly collapsed onto the floor and was lost to the party.

In the kitchen Pickersgill, Kettle and Holdstock were leaping about like a bunch of loonies trying to catch a moth and at length Rob emerged with the unfortunate creature in his hand and promptly thrust the thing inside Bryn's shirt. Bryn didn't flinch but by his expression he was not amused.

After missing the antics at their last party Greg had made a definite effort to stay sober and alert so as not to miss anything but there was no repeat performance. Greg was disgusted.

The next morning we discovered that Joseph Nicholas doesn't exist. Who then, you may ask, is that slender effete individual seen in languid repose at recent cons? A mere non de plume, my friends, a pale phantasm, a frail charisma. Y'see Joseph he may be but Nicholas ain't the name he was born with, at least that's what info from Don West and Brian Parker seems to indicate. So what was his maiden name? We don't know because, incredibly, even under gruelling interrogation by Leroy 'thumbscrews' Kettle he didn't break.

"Your name's not fan, is it?" asked Leroy, innocently.

After getting no nearer to solving this great fannish mystery we got round to forming a committee committed to tiling the Mediterranean and Bryn decided to put out a fictionalised version of the project under the title of Wierd Tiles, but he had second thoughts.

At about six that evening we left for South Wales, guided onto the motorway by Simone in order to avoid a repetition of the mess I made of th job last time. A fine party.

' "AN 'ACTION REPLAY' REPLAY?" REPLAY?' RE...aw fuckit!

On Saturday 20th August we had the pleasure of returning some of the hospitality shown us by Greg and Simone when they came down to Newport for Bryn's 40th birthday party, accompanied by Jack Marsh.

The day started for me when Bryn, Mike, Dai and myself met in the Geyhound pub, our usual venue for meetings in Newport, to plan our course of action. First stop was the local off-license where large quantities of throat lubricant were purchased and then, minus Bryn, onto Mike Collins' parents house where the party would be held. The house is a detached bungalow and most fans, myself included, expressed admiration for the place.

First arrivals at around three in the afternoon were Greg, Simone and Jack in a car whose exhaust had suffered a mishap on the way down and was now held on by wire. Between us Mike and myself had brought along about a hundred and fifty LP's and on seeing them Greg fell upon them, his fingers sorting through them feverishly, drooling all the while. When he looked up he spotted the sword and pistol hanging above the fireplace and in no time at all we were treated to the sight of the boy soprano of the Welshfandom choir brandishing

them about like some overweight John Carter.

The wife of a non-fan friend of Bryn and Mike had prepared some food for the party which they dropped off before returning home to prepare for the evening. The food was in sealed containers and Mike began opening them to see what they contained. One container was taped up so Mike tore the tape off and watched in horror as a cheese-cake crashed to the floor.

"Just scoop it back into the tin," said Greg, "a little dirt never hurt no-one."

As afternoon turned into evening more people arrived, among them Malcolm Edwards and Chris Atkinson closely followed by Chris Priest and Pauline Jones and, at length, quite a few non-fan friends of Bryn and Mike. Late arrivals were Dave and Hazel Langford who'd been visiting Dave's folks before going onto the party.

The party soon got into swing with all the usual party-type things happening where a lot of drink was drunk and food eaten. Greg took over the record player to become DJ for a large part of the evening and Simone, although having consumed vast quantities of drink, proved to be the most energetic dancer on the floor.

At one point a record was put on which didn't sound quite right to my ears.

"I prefer the Chuck Berry version", I said.

"This is the Chuck Berry version", came the reply.

"Oh."

"Someone kick him", said Bryn, helpfully.

All too soon evening turned to early morning and the party wound down as people began to slope off. Among the first to leave were Chris Priest and Pauline Jones who'd decided to drive all the way back to London, followed by a rather drunken Dave Langford (would you buy a used H-bomb from this man) and wife Hazel.

I spent a restless night in a sleeping bag lent to me by Mike Collins and was awoken at the ungodly hour of eight by Bryn opening the curtains and kicking me. After abluting I hung the sleeping bag over the line to air, an act viewed with some suspicion by Mr. Fortey who proceeded to search for congealed white stains and evidence of other disgusting acts committed by me during the night. Others joined us including a barefoot Malcolm Edwards whose second toe, it was revealed, is longer than his big toe.

"Useful for picking your nose", I observed.

Not to be outdone Mike peeled off his socks to show us his repulsively mutated feet and seemed quite embarrassed by the incredulous stares they received.

Also in the garden at this time was a little black kitten who'd joined us the previous night and was now playing in the garden.

"He's enjoying himself", observed Malcolm.

"I thought it was female", said Chris Atkinson.

Malcolm picked the cat up and began examining its rear end as if he knew what he was looking for. Cat-sexing as well, is there no end to this mans talents (or for that matter any beginning)?

Shortly before dinner Chris and Malcolm left for London via the scenic(?) route and after dinner we sat around ruminating and reminiscing.

"We won't be seeing you in Newcastle next week then, Rob?", said Simone.

"No, but I'll see you in Birmingham in November", I replied.

"Gosh this sounds affluent, saying we'll all meet at different

exotic locales", quipped Greg.

"Like the Jet Set", said Simone.

"Only with no money", I added.

"More like the Jet Lag", said Jack Marsh.

In no time at all it was time for the parting of the ways and Greg, Simone and Jack got into Simone's 1300, its exhaust hastily wired up.

"Sure you'll make it?" I asked.

"Should do, boss", said Greg.

"Don't break down on the bridge, tho'", I added, "'cos according to the signs it'll cost you £8 a minute."

There was a moment of incredulous silence.

"Berk!", laughed Jack, "That says £8 minimum."

Collapse into laughter of all but red-faced Editor. Sods!

"Christ, he actually means it!", said Bryn, "Now you can see what I'm up against."

Still laughing they drove off and then it was time for us to leave as well. A damn good weekend.

Quote from the Sunday Times Magazine, 28/8/77, an article on LEGO:

"The designers, like their bricks (studded with neat little knobs to fit each other), were entirely logical."

Is it just my dirty mind or is there really only one way to take that sentence?

"WHAT DID YOU DO DURING THE SILICON, DADDY?"

On the weekend when a lot of other fans were up in Newcastle at SILICON 2 I attended the wedding of an old friend of mine (I've known him 18 of my 23 years). The wedding took place in St. Edeyrn's, parish church of Llanedeyrn, in which parish, of course, my home lies. Now, after the actual service the vicar told us a bit about the history of the church and I discovered that the church, and thus the parish of Llanedeyrn, has been around for fifteen hundred years. Hot shit! As he said, if King Arthur existed then the church was around when he was and was founded in four hundred and something AD.

Next to the church of St. Edeyrn's is a pub, the unicorn, which my folks used to take myself and my brother to in the cool summer evenings of our childhood days for a bag of crisps and bottle of pop in the pub garden. In those days the vast Llanedeyrn/Pentwyn housing complex didn't exist and the little village of Llanedeyrn (church, farm and pub) was considered to be 'out in the country'. Little did I suspect that I'd one day be living just a couple of miles down the road from that village, or indeed that the place was so old.

STAR WARS LIVES! (What a meaningless phrase.)

Yes, it does, honestly. It's another EPSILON scoop! Actually at the time of writing I've yet to see the film but tho' I like SF I think I'll go and see it anyway. After all, any film without a message can't be all bad.

Of course the sheep of Hollywood will now jump on the bandwagon and we'll have a glut of extraterrestrial epics but I wonder if any genuine SF will emerge. Somehow I rather doubt it.

This has been the official EPSILON sercon section; you can all go back to sleep now.....

SHIT!

Not a particularly inspired little heading but an accurate enough description of my feelings on discovering that my descision to make thish a personalzine has left me with another page to fill and very little to actually fill it with.

Let's see now.....I was reading a map the other day (don't laugh, anyone who reads SF has got to be a little strange) when I noticed that on the Welsh border, just outside a place called Three Cocks, is a small hillock called Lord Hereford's Knob. Isn't that a scream? No? Alright if you buggers don't want your minds improved with geography lessons and the like then I'll just have to see if I can squeeze a bit more mileage out of the letters I received and initiate.....

...THE SMALL LETTER COLUMN.

Joe Nicholas: One of the things I particularly enjoyed about Faancon was meeting Irish fan David Patterson who was much older than I expected, and claimed that he found me to look just as he'd expected.

((Yeah, some people sure do have gruesome imaginations, don't they?))

Dave Cockfield: Thanks for EPSILON. Nicely produced old boy-loved the bird perched on your shoulder, is he house trained or do you wear white epaulettes?

Paul Kincaid: I liked (EPSILON), I surprised myself how much I liked it. It was the conrep that did it, of course. Boy that guy sure can write. Who is he? Keep an eye out for him, he's going to be a power in the land soon enough, you mark my words.

Actually I was very pleased with the way the issue turned out and I was very flattered by Greg's comments on the article, especially as I consider it my fist piece of truly fannish writing. but 'Beard Growers Weekly'? I'll get you for that, boyo, I'll pull on your own hirsute growth.

((Ouch! Since my de-foliation I only have what could be best termed 'hirsute growth' in one area, the tugging of which is far too painful to contemplate.))

And so over to the proper LoCcol.....



JOSEPH NICHOLAS...

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

Many thanks for EPSILON 2; just to make a change, I managed not to lose it before leaving the Tun. Why, I have it beside me, upon the desk at this very moment, its succulent pages gleaming crisply in the stray sunbeams that fight their way through the encrusted turgidity of the civil service windows with which the office is afflicted, to fall lifeless upon the threadbare carpet before me, there to expire with Langfordian verbosity.

Paul Kincaid's piece was enjoyable, but a bit long winded in parts, and with a somewhat formal tone I personally found rather annoying. He gives me the impression of someone still unsure of his place in the world, still striving to achieve some sort of acceptability through self-effacement and rejection slips. Not that I have anything against self-effacement per se, but it can be taken too far. In point of fact, Paul seems to be the classic type of fan personality that is often subject to second-hand psychoanalysis; introverted, insecure, cut off from the world. Granted that to be a fan you have to feel alienated to some degree; but surely participation in fandom should reduce this feeling of alienation to below the threshold of noticeability? It ought to; it's done something for mine, if that's any good as an example.

Someone, remarks Paul, couldn't summon enough Dutch courage...that someone was me, and it had fuck-all to do with Dutch courage! Christ, you saw her costume; it was a one-piece, so tight about her repulsive form that it would have been death itself to attempt inserting a hand between the material and her noisome flesh. In any case, some of those Trekkie friends of hers are bigger than I...take John Mansfield, for example, and the further away the better....Never mind the fact that it's quite possible she would have enjoyed the whole episode much more than anyone else; after all, just think of all those men feasting their eyes upon her naked body...unless she happens to be a lesbian in which case she wouldn't have enjoyed it at all. (The conrep I did for David Patterson's CYGNUS mentions names, dates, all the rest of it; how come I haven't been approached by a picked band of Helen's Avengers and told to lay off? Maybe they're all lesbian and cliquish together, and don't read fanzines anymore....)

How many people knew about it; anyway? By the time I got to the hall it seemed that more than half the occupants wore expectant looks upon their faces. Bloody hell, even D.West managed to crack a smile at the prospect! With that sort of advance publicity there's a danger the victim will find out well before time and arrange things so that the perpetrator of the crime gets it in the neck instead. Which was another reason why I didn't do it; it would have depended entirely upon surprise from both the point of view of the audience as well as the victim, and once the surprise has gone it's all so dully predictable that you might just as well not bother at all.

((Hah! Excuses, excuses....))

I really do think you're overreacting to Mike Glicksohn's suggestion that you use racist terms in your writing. Can't you see his tongue firmly in his cheek all the while? And while you may consider the term 'paki' a mere abbreviation I consider it a to be a term of racial prejudice. Not, mind you, that I'm going to start accusing you of racism; I'm just pointing out the fact that it is used so by the vast majority, even if, in calling a paki a paki, they are being good-humoured about it. The fact that you use it as an abbreviation fails to distinguish you from those who use it as a term of opprobrium, unless you preface every time you use it with words intended to distinguish the fact that you are using it only as an abbreviation. Which is cumbersome and pointless, never mind wholly bloody impractical.

And, to be fair, you can't really hold up the term 'scot' as an example of a similar type of abbreviation, for the simple reason that that particular term has lost any racist overtones it may once have had; 'paki' hasn't. So there.

MIKE GLICKSOHN...

141 High Park Ave., Toronto, Ontario, M6P 2S3, Canada..

What we have here, clearly, is a failure to communicate. If you'll read the last section of my last letter you will see that I pointed out that over here the word 'paki' has similar connotations to the racial slur 'nigger'. Just as a reasonable person wouldn't call a black 'nigger' or a Jew 'kike' or an Italian 'wop', nor would he call a pakistani 'paki'. If the word lacks those derogatory overtones in England then just say so; the error was mine in assuming that the word would be the same on both sides of the Atlantic but you misunderstood my question. A simple "no, I don't" and an explanation of what the average Englishman thinks when the word 'paki' is used would have straightened things out without leaving an unpalatable note in your fanzine, something I'm loathe to do by mistake, although I'm happy to do it intentionally if ever it's called for. This time it wasn't and I'm sorry we got the lines crossed.

((I read through all the above dissertations on racism with more than a little amazement because, although this is gonna shock a few sensitive souls out there, I don't really care a great deal about the issue. Arguably I should since my own race, the Welsh, have been persecuted down the centuries by the English, a persecution that culminated at the turn of the century in a 'Final Solution' to the 'Welsh Problem'; not the gas chamber but the classroom and rigidly enforced suppression of the Welsh language that was tantamount to cultural genocide. It worked too, because every year the percentage of Welsh people who speak the language is falling and when the language finally dies, as it must, it takes a large part of the cultural heritage that gives us our individual identity with it. But like I said...

In fact I deliberately overreacted to your letter, Mike, because of what I felt, and still feel, to be over-reaction on your part to what, after all, was a fairly casual reference. Actually the only political issue on which I have strong, perhaps extreme, views is punishment for violent crime, as Simone Walsh doubtless knows following an argument in a Bristol pub some time back. Hannurabi Rules O.K!))

WAHF: Paul Kincaid, Pete Presford, Dave Cockfield, Doug Barbour,
Graham Poole, Dave Rowe. ((How about a few more LoCs nextish?))