







## RINGING THE CHANGES: NEW FANZINES

It's another example of a notorious case-history, my article; begun, laxly, in October, it's nearing its hurried completion towards Xmas. I don't know why. Entropy, ultimately; an ingrowing lack of interest. It isn't only laziness. This is all something of a pity, I think, because there really is something of a fannish 'renaissance' now. Eve and John Harvey, Simone Walsh, the late D. West, Paul Kincaid, Alan Dorey, Kev Smith, D. Langford and others give our shared 'today' an identity and sometimes an exuberance. In the fannish generations that have come and gone since I surfaced in the stagnant late 1960s, actors and actresses of a lot less value and ability have trodden the creaky boards of the fannish stage. Believe me.

Not that way back then was any sort of golden age. Even the great ground-breaking fanzine of the era was afflicted by numerous enemies and long and thoroughly tedious debates about the use or mis-use of naughty words. Things are better today, thank you very much.

In fact, I think 1978 has been quite a good year, so far. Luckily GANNETSCRAPBOOK has come to put a stop to all that...

Let's start in strict order of seniority—I naturally mean Simone Walsh's very own Seamonsters. A bit disappointing. I hate to write that. Simone's own pieces have usually had a rare warmth and an inimitable punning style; only I thought her article here was..well, a little loose in construction and surprisingly sour in atmosphere. A great pity; Simone is unique, unlike the ambitiously angry young men who appear and re-appear in each fannish generation.

Christopher Priest contributes a rather rambling article, amply illustrated with anecdotes—the illustrative stories were perhaps better than the article taken as a whole—and names lots of famous and near-famous names. I liked the telling line

"..but I'd never before seen anyone visibly frightened of fandom.."

Times, reader, really do change, don't they? I also noticed that Chris has adopted the newish (and now-traditional) fannish habit of demanding notice. In this case 'notice' is success in the Locus and Checkpoint fan-polls. Although D. West, Joseph Nicholas and Alan Dorey all do this, with some success, I think it likely that this technique is counter-productive..though this may just be my own antiquated prejudice.

There are also some letters, ranging from Rich Coad's fine, evocative nostalgia through Ann Looker's common sense on the Trekkies to a one-page effort by Ian Williams which he himself more or less describes as "predictable as always". Ian Garbutt is of course up for the blinding pillar of incandescence award, with true eccentricity and rudeness.

I think Simone is probably doomed to stardom, though, especially when she gets Gregory back into harness. At the moment, the zine looks like a stage-setting without the cast. Or without the right cast, anyway.

At the other end of the seniority scale is young Mr. Alan Dorey, of Woking in Surrey. Fresh, angry, talented, ambitious and truly fannish (and wasn't everyone?) he's risen to deserved prominence. First the raw opinion, now the qualification: I did feel disappointed when Gross Encounters 4 had nothing in it as hilarious as his old BSFA parody, the Forest King. I prefer fall-about laughs to the usual fannish dissections. I remember and

like such laughter, remember and re-remember people's reminiscences; the 'ruthless' analyses of institutions and individuals, which occasionally entertain and are frequently necessary, are in many ways ephemeral. That said, this issue really is damned good. A bumper edition, it's packed full of goodies. Also, Dorey's editorial judgement is a lot sharper than it usually is with (relative) newcomers; the Silicon report, for example, is exactly the right length, and the letter column is full of real life and not contrived argument--a clear case of people loocing for pleasure, and not out of 'duty' or laziness or mere egoism.

Dorey is at the very least challenging D. Langford for fannish pre-eminence. Admittedly, the famous author/editor of Twil-ddu has--like Peter Weston, Rob Holdstock and Malcolm Edwards--to some extent moved onto higher things. Well, not so much higher as financially rewarding. I think it's called real life, or something. Anyway, though I thought West's cover the evil that godless people do to themselves was superb, I am not so impressed with the contents, Langford's writings. It's an issue that merely marks time. Langford is still one of the golden boys, though, a wit in every sense of the word. Kate Joary's adventures, a few letters. A certain special-thin-issue feeling, though. If Langford's heart is anywhere, as of course it must be, nowadays it isn't really in his fanzine.

Also, there's Nabu 5, in which Ian and Janice Maule prove that there really is life after death, or at least fannishness after marriage, all rumours to the contrary. Actually, it's very good: a few whispers say that the editorial team are aiming for awards. The Maules might even make it, too. Certainly Peter Roberts' TAFF report (chapters 3 and 4) is as good as you'd expect from a man, or at least a vegetarian, who's a living legend in his own lifetime. It's excellently illustrated by the wicked pen of D. West, too: this visual lampooning is far, far better than the stunningly dull cover.

But even though I liked this particular Nabu, I can't pretend that it's very striking--and familiarity, after all, breeds.. As an example, look at Ian and Janice's tame boy wondor, Joseph Nicholas; he exudes naked, sweaty ambition and he preaches fire and brimstone, in a way that has been done too many times since 1970. It's very well done, certainly; but I think I'd prefer to read something original done well instead.

Let's say four stars out of five, all round.

To begin the last round-up, let's take a look at Tripe Pickers' Journal, from Paul Kincaid and Mike Scantlebury. This actually raises 'old' issues, as in the stimulating and reasoned editorial, and manages to say something new. It's truly fannish, and it's perspective is up-to-date. The editors (I suspect the editorial views are largely Kincaid's, but they both put their names to the comments) threaten 'iconoclasm', and acknowledge in a very frank way that the old guard, 'the old Mafia who have been dominating fandom for so long', are in eclipse. Naturally, they don't quite have the arrogance--or perhaps I mean courage--to suggest what, exactly, we should do.

Anyway, Paul Kincaid's article on 'Workshopping' fascinated me. It was mostly description and self-analysis, and a nicely balanced mixture; he has an ability to evoke that's very necessary to a writer. As I, like most fans, have had at one time and another various ambitions to write fiction, I was interested in Kincaid's description of the atmosphere, surroundings, the tutors, Tom Disch, his own fiction and his fellow workshoppers. Interesting.

I still think that such social goings-on are by-ways, though, side-tracks; the essence of writing is really very lonely—since it involves, and this isn't merely a metaphor, playing God.

In addition, I enjoyed Kincaid's fanzine reviews. Scantlebury is a funnier writer, and probably he has more warmth, but I preferred his co-editor's efforts, which I also happen to think are closer to what English fandom is all about. All right, this 'Journal' has some way to go, no doubt of it, in terms of quality control, finish, and even ability; but it has certainly begun in the right way, and it seems to be headed in the right direction.

I also received (among other things, like photographs of Mars and dollar bills) a copy of Pete Presford's poetry magazine. There were some telling lines within it, I suppose, but to be brutally frank I have some difficulty in associating the spirit of Pete, as I remember him, with the spirit of poetry, as I remember that. Barddoni is like Pete himself in being very well-meaning, but I think that it's also ultimately misguided, in Welsh or in English.

Now, let us turn to David Wingrove, editor of Kipple 2. Wingrove is (very often unfairly) a favourite target of the anti-BSFA, anti-'serious and constructive' fans, and I can't imagine that they'll be pleased with his offhand 'if you don't enjoy (Kipple) because it isn't fannish, that could be because it isn't supposed to be'.. I'd better declare an interest here: I find Wingrove pleasant, intellectually aware, and I'm interested in what he's trying to do. I like him. Of course I know that words like 'Proust' and 'Kafka' and 'Jung' are less 'entertaining' than the more familiar names of fans, who you can actually meet and defer to; I also know that such literary ambitions are unlikely to be fulfilled. But I don't see why those ambitions are less worthwhile in themselves than the ambition to become king of the fannish ant-hill. I also think, in reading Kipple 2, that Brian Griffin's article on 'the' Brian (p.5, and the title is Inside-Outside) is the most intellectually distinguished item in all of the fanzines I've so far considered. It really is good: it has a sound and relatively original argument, an excellent subsidiary critical and historical apparatus, and is in an all-around way damned impressive. In comparison, the fictions seemed light-weight and rather tritely written, and Wingrove's appalling puns—much as I love some variety in my reading—never quite fit into the atmosphere. ..Only, I happen to like incongruity. Anyway, one more thing. It's this: there is talent here. So there.

Finally, there's another Twll-Ddu, no. 14. A lot of this is dialogue, and parodies of things. Letters too. Actually, it's rather hard to describe the atmosphere, without quoting some of the by-plays; let's just say that it's the work of a master. Langford has made his own world here, and he never puts a foot wrong inside it. To think that the man might give this up simply for filthy lucre, for money, for fame.. Actually, it's so good that for some strange reason I feel that it can't last. Like a sunset. Of course, this is probably merely my own pessimism. Enjoy it while it lasts: 'Cut to Dave Cockfield bestowing a passionate kiss on Dave Cobbledick. Cut to Joseph Nicholas bestowing himself again on Helen Eling. Cut to next day's News of the World with the headline MY 16-YEAR-OLD HUNK OF MAN, SAYS 33-YEAR-OLD HOUSEWIFE...' —this is what it's all about, it's great, and man can say no more-- thanks for the fanzines.

Ritchie Smith Feb. 79.

SIDDHARTHA 9

a personalzine from Ian Williams, 6 Greta Terrace,  
Chester Rd., Sunderland, Tyne & Wear, U.K.

## 1. Introduction and apologies.

Yes, I know it says 'Ganne tscrapbook' round the outside, and that there are other contributions that indicate this really is a Ganne tscrapbook. But this really is Sid:9 after eighteen months, albeit a substitute Sid. The fifteen or so already typed stencils have to be junked because they're so out of date. So, my apologies especially to Joe Nicholas who did three updates of a very funny fannish piece for the real one.

Siddhartha of course is that well-known piece of chest-beating by that sometime loveable, sometimes not, manic-depressive dwarf, yours truly. It's a kind of diary fannish characterised by soul-bearing (sometimes serious, sometimes...you get the picture), conreps, a bit bitchiness, a bit of niceness, and a whole dollop of self-effacing egocentricity. You think that this issue is going to be more of the same? Wrong.

Pause for gasps of disbelief.

Well, maybe not completely different, but there is a difference.

I'm happy, very happy, pleased, maybe not elated but feelin' pretty good. And why? you might ask. Well, to no-one's great surprise, I'm going to tell you. Whether it makes this issue different from any of the others, you'll have to judge for yourselves.

## 2. Context.

About a year ago, or even less, I was pretty fed up, not an unusual state of affairs, I grant you. Life was just so damned predictable. I was marching sluggishly into the future along the same dull path knowing every foot of the way. There was just nothing new happening. Gannetfandom grew smaller with the breakup of the Bells marriage and was to diminish even more so later in 78 with the departure of Rob Jackson and Dave Cockfield. Work was slightly improved in that I'd moved to a modern, slightly busier branch library with nice staff, but no more money. I was still living at home. It was all just the same as before with even less happening, a static, stagnating situation. The 78 Eastercon, Skycon was a bit of a disaster, made interesting for me only by the fact that the winners of the bid for the 79 Eastercon, Leeds, asked me to run the Fan Room for them. I was flattered and pleased and accepted.

After that, things slowly began to perk up a bit. More interesting British fannzines began to appear, just when I'd considered the scene totally moribund. Spent a pleasant weekend at Leeds with Mike Dickinson, then a couple of days later went down to London for five days with Cockfield to enjoy the company and hospitality of Greg Pickersgill and Simone Walsh. I was also saving furiously with the intention of buying a house or a flat.

In August I came within a hairsbreadth of doing just that. Out of general interest I was looking through the property section of the local paper and saw a flat advertised at a price within my

reach. I investigated, got advice, liked it, made an offer which was accepted. No problem with the building society over a mortgage. All was set to go. Then the valuer decided I'd offered too much so the building soc would only let me have 90% of the valuation. As I couldn't raise the difference, the deal fell through.

In between all this was the superb Silicon:3 which was the best fannish even of the year.

Feeling down after the flat, I decided if I couldn't change my lifestyle, then at least I could alter my appearance. So I went and got contact lenses. Apart from the first few weeks, I adapted to them relatively easily. They caused some amused comments at Novacon as I was still in the adaptation period and could only wear them six hours a day. It was also the poorest Novacon I'd been to. The lenses were strange at first having worn glasses for 24 out of my 30 years, but now I think they're great.

There were even minor changes socially. Usually I just see the fans in the area and one old schoolfriend. But during the autumn I was invited out on several occasions with a librarian colleague and her husband. They're a fun couple and it made for a refreshing change. I also went on a couple of brief professional courses which I enjoyed very much. The autumn was a good time with several little different things happening. None of them were important in themselves, but cumulatively they boosted my spirits no end.

Then in the beginning of December I got quite a surprise. I was visiting Sunderland Central Library, my hq, as usual on a Tuesday to order books from sample copies, check requests from the Central catalogue, and to gossip with other branch librarians doing the same when I was called into the Director's office. Despite being assured by his deputy that it was nothing to worry about, I couldn't help wondering what the hell I'd done now. I hadn't done anything, but I certainly was about to. The libraries had been given £25,000 from the local lottery to buy a new mobile library. This was to go round the disadvantage urban areas of Sunderland, the generally run down areas with social problems and the new council estates that didn't have access, reasonable access that is, to a branch library. The Director had decided to base the mobile at my branch East Herrington. Which meant I was in charge of it and my branch. I'd be getting extra staff to help run it, a larger book fund, and they'd put in for a regrading for me because of the extra responsibility and work. My reaction to this: bloody marvellous!

I like being a branch librarian. But there isn't much turnover especially in the higher grade branches, so promotion is far from frequent. I'd moved from a smaller branch a year ago to Herrington which is busier, bigger, more modern but still on the same grade. I was also pretty happy there (still am). In November a higher branch came up and I applied for it. Then I found out that because of certain reorganisation going on I wouldn't be getting any real extra responsibility, just the money. I decided I'd be happier staying where I was so I withdrew the application. That may sound crazy, but job satisfaction means a lot to me. A few extra quid in my wallet isn't compensation enough for not getting it. And it looks like I did the right thing anyway. When I look

at the number of bad decisions I've made in the past (as my friends will verify), this is pretty good.

But Christ, they haven't given me much time to get the service set up. The mobile arrives in April and everything is expected to be ready by then. I've been ordering books by the hundreds and getting lots transferred from other libraries. I reckon I'll need a basic stock of 8,000 volumes to start the service. All of them have to be obtained and processed in three months by me and my staff in addition to running Herrington as normal during one of our busiest times of the year. And we've got to store them in a pretty limited space. Over a thousand books arrived last week.

I'm really into work these days.

I'm also getting on with planning the Fan Room for Yorcon at Leeds this Easter. I've got plenty of ideas and have been gathering material together. What I'm really waiting for is fans I've been writing to about photographs to let me know if they can help. Next on the agenda is to ask other fans to appear on the panels I'm arranging. (Like Peter Weston.). It's all coming together, slowly maybe, but it's coming.

Alright them Williams, I hear you asking, isn't it time you moaned about women? Well, not even that this time. No, I don't have a deep meaningful relationship either, but I have been seeing another librarian recently. Her husband left her last year for another woman and she's still pretty cut up about it. She doesn't want to get involved with anyone for a while yet, so we're just friends, going out occasionally. I don't think it'll go any further than that either (we diverge sharply on major areas of interest) or even if it will continue for long, but at the moment it's pleasant and she's nice. She's even reading a certain novel I wrote with Rob Jackson.

Ah yes, the novel. Well, a year after we completed it, it finally got sent to Les Flood of E.J. Carnell Literary Agency. Two months later (last week), I got a reply. He thinks it's probably too long for a first novel, but that he thinks it is publishable and is worth his trying to sell it for a while. So whilst fame and fortune isn't exactly on our doorsteps, it's an encouraging response and enables me to drop, "Well, my literary agent..." into conversations.

I've even given up cigarettes again and just smoke my pipe. It's now been a whole four weeks without one of the damned things. I'm even turning into a bigot about them when I expressed my displeasure and disgust on seeing a friend who normally smokes cigars light one up. The fool....

I'm also putting on weight unfortunately. I'll do something about that too this year. But not yet. One thing at a time.

I haven't a bloody thing to complain about. There's a lot happening and most of it is pretty good. It could be better, but if it was I think I'd be in paradise. Mind, it's not before time either. Just about everything from 74 has been a downhill slide and it's great that things are finally picking up. The optimist in me says things should be okay for a while. The pessimist says they won't. The realist says it's all up to me anyway. I tend to side with him.

### 3. Pontifications

on a number of things.

I went to see 'Superman -the movie' just before Christmas. You know, I think I enjoyed it more than 'Star Wars'. I wasn't too keen on Marlon Brando and thought Gene Hackman's Luthor was too camped up. Wasn't too sure about the time reversal at the end either. Having said that... The opening scenes on Krypton were a visual delight with stunning special effects. The high technology was well visualised and the space craft that takes the infant Kal-el to Earth more convincing than the comics version. (The science in the movie was pretty hokey, but I think in the context, it can be forgiven.) The second prologue concerning the discovery by the Kents of the baby and of his adolescence was generally faultless. There was really spectacular photography of the mid-west plains. 'Superboy' never exists in the film, but hides his powers during adolescence until the discovery of a recording, after Pa Kent's death, that takes him to the arctic and ultimately on a guided tour of the universe courtesy of the 'ghost' of Marlon Brando. He returns aged about 30 and the movie really begins.

I can't imagine anybody playing Superman better than Christopher Reeve, or Clark Kent for that matter. Hesa damn good actor. After the initial shot of Superman flying out of his Fortress of Solitude (a superb piece of effects), we get to Clark Kent starting work at the Daily Planet and meeting the rest of the characters (Ferry White, Jimmy Olsen, Lois Lane, all perfectly played, especially the Lane character by Margot Kidder). After all this and the sub plot about Luthor, Lois Lane finally ends hanging from a helicopter about to plunge over the edge of a building and Superman gets into action. When he flies to the rescue really brought out all the comics loving kid in me --I almost broke out cheering (along with the rest of the audience I might add). I could go on describing all the good things about the movie. Humour is well used, except when it goes over the top into camp. Effects are first class, good acting. The best things (apart from Superman in action) was Reeves portrayal of the human, cheery, yet vulnerable Superman, the interplay between him and Lois Lane (apart from an excruciating bit of verse she's thinking when they're flying together).

I can hardly wait for Part 2. If you haven't seen it yet, go tonight. If you have, see it again: I did.

Another thing I enjoyed recently was the fanzine Deadloss:1 from Chris Priest. It's a fascinating ragbag of Chris's thoughts on a variety of subjects from literature through sf to conventions (specifically Seacon). It's well written, perceptive, funny and honest. It's also deadly accurate i.e. I agree with just about everything he says. It's definitely the most entertaining and stimulating fanzine to come my way in a long time. Chris says the next issue will be the last. I sincerely hope not. Even if it's only one a year Chris, please don't drop it after No.2.

Another fanzine I liked recently was Arena:8. from Geoff Rippington. It's quite remarkable how this has improved from the earlier, utterley abysmal Titan. This issue has a lot about Kurt

Vonnegut which I regard as wasted space because he has turned into a cynical old fart. During the interview he complains that Rolling Stone has allocated him his place as a sixties writer and not of the seventies. Kurt isn't pleased about this, he wants to be a writer of the seventies too. Perhaps if he'd written anything of any worth in this decade he might have cause for complaint, but he hasn't. He's an author whose overstayed his time cheapening his real works of merit by creating self-indulgent dreck and whining about how badly he's been treated. Stableford's essay on Vonnegut's work was worth including but not the interview. The rest is mainly reviews (well written, interesting) and a lively lettercol filled with our favourite pros (Brian, Chris, Thom, Fred, Arthur, and Mike) mostly talking about Ian Watson's article in the last issue. Arena is a worthwhile fanzine which could be so much more if it was published more frequently. It's about time we had a sercon fanzine to take up where Spec left off.

I buy records now and again. The last three lps I got were Neil Young's 'Comes A Time' which was nice and low key, Dire Straits again a nicely underplayed piece with lots of delicate guitar work (the best I've in heard in some time), and lastly 'Moving Targets' from Penetration which is my current favourite. Penetration are a local band from County Durham and are lumped (justifiably) with the punk/new wave scene. Basic lineup of lead, rhythm, bass guitars and drums, fronted by Pauline Murray on vocals. The songs are all around 3/4 minutes, are hard, fast and direct. The lyrics don't bear intellectual analysis but they are about things, not soppy love songs, but neither are they tirades of hate. Pauline's voice is strident, punching out the words. About the best comparison I can think of is a tight English version of early Jefferson Airplane without the pretensions. Really is great exciting stuff.

Seeing as I'm writing about things I like, I'd better include a book or two in here somewhere. Le Deighton's 'S.S.-G.B.' is a pretty good sf novel on the parallel world theme. It's set in Britain a few months after the successful Nazi invasion and centres around a Scotland Yard detective finding a case getting more and more complicated and political. Detail, characters, plot are all excellent and convincing. Pity it won't get nominated for a Hugo, it deserves it. Nice words too for Brosnan's 'Future Tense' on sf films. My god, I liked a Robert P. Holdstock novel. 'Necromancer' is a damned convincing supernatural thriller which I was most reluctant to put down, but at over three hundred pages, a single sitting was out of the question. If he can keep writing like this instead of in the vein of his first two tedious sf novels he might make it after all.

Television too. There was a magnificent Dennis Potter play on two evenings ago -- 'Blue remembered hills'. He showed the realities of childhood by casting adults as the children thus removing the distancing effect. Marvellous acting to match Potters writing -- genius is the word to describe him, a totally unique talent.

#### 4. How could I forget?

One of the best things I did ~~last year was to buy three units~~ of metal office shelving by post. Counting it as double sided, I got 126 feet of shelves for £36.00.

And I put all my science fiction collection on them, in author order, in one sequence. A dream of years has been fulfilled. You see before my books were in bookcases, cupboards, a trunk, sideboards, on chairs, under my bed, in cabinets. I could never find anything, was never really sure what I had and hadn't got. So finally after hassles with my family about shifting a cupboard into another room, I wrote off for the shelving. It was easy to put up with a little help. What took the time was sorting out the books. It took a day and a half all told and I still haven't arranged the prozines in date order yet. I also keep meaning to put the books in title order under each author. Whatever, it's great just to be able to stand in my bedroom and see all my sf books (with two door open so I can see a wooden bookcase in another room) at a glance. Even now after three months I still just go into my bedroom and stand looking at them for some time, all my Philip K. Dick's (all except the bleeding Cosmic Puppets), Anthony's, Simak's and Silverbergs, Tuck's and Tuckers, joy, joy, joy!

#### 5. Now what?

Well, that's it really. Said all I was going to say. Talked about the good things that have been happening. Rabbited on about the things I've enjoyed. And I'm left with half a bloody page to fill. Shit! (Oops, that was a booboo. For once I was trying to make this a relatively pure, unvulgar, four-letter word free issue of Siddhartha. And at the last minute one "slips through. Blast.)

Got to think of something to write as I hate wasting space. Neither do I want to write about hating to waste space for half a page because that's a bit of a cheat too.

Anyway, that's what I've been doing recently. As I said, a lot of good things have been happening to me and I hope they continue. It's certainly about time.

#### 6. Idiot critics.

I have got something to talk about after all. Dave Cockfield arrived home from London yesterday for a week's holiday. After regalling us in the pub with his tales of working in customs (opening a package and finding a large spider crawling over his hand; finding grilled stinking dead monkeys that look like human fetuses; the time somebody else opened a package from Haiti to find it full of freshly severed white human fingers and marked 'religious item') he'd also brought me some magazines and a couple of books. One of the books was Tiptree's novel which had quite an attractive cover. The other was 'Destinies:2', the Baen edited paperback publication that reads like a poor man's 'Analog'. What really pissed me off about that was 'Spider vs the Hax of Sol 111', Spider Robinson's review column. Now I know what Chris West means when he writes 'Spider Robinson (ho ho)'. It's about

the biggest pile of crap I've read in recent months. What really aroused my ire about it was that Robinson is another critic who has some good words to say about a book by James P. Hogan called 'Inherit the Stars'.

As everyone knows I'm no great intellectual critic of sf. My taste is held to be quite suspect in many quarters. I look avidly and unashamedly forward to any new novel by Piers Anthony and Philip Jose Farmer. Jack Chalker is one of my favourite new writers. I like Michael Coney and Marion Zimmer Bradley. I've even been mildly entertained by Alan Dean Foster. (Stop sniggering Chris.). But even I've got my limits.

There are bad books and bad books. It was me who brought the immortal 'Runts of 61 Cygni C' to the attention of fandom. That's the one where one eyed Runts play games of sex in the sand and a spaceship travelling at the speed of light takes months to get to Jupiter. Mind, I still think that was written by an experienced pro trying to create a book that was appalling in every department.

'Inherit the Stars' by James P. Hogan is worse. Now you can excuse a shit-head company like Belmont for publishing 'Runts'. Lester del Rey was responsible for the Hogan abortion. The plot? Well, a 50,000 year old human corpse in a spacesuit is found on the moon. The book is about two scientists trying to discover why it was there. "eeen-ta-resting? No", says Robinson. The simple answer is; not in the slightest. The majority of the book consists of two scientists arguing with each other. There is no action (they move around occasionally). Mostly they talk. There is no character development because there are no characters. All they are is two sets of quotation marks containing different arguments. It is a tedious, boring, damn, near unreadable book. There is no story, no nothing apart from a series of evolving hypotheses as to why and how the corpse got there. The situation is all.

Damn it isn't even an idea. The rationale is just a concept which is not the same thing. Unfortunately there seems to be some confusion in current sf circles about this. Fans and critics were knocked out by 'Ringworld' for its concept. Big deal, all that book was was a moderately entertaining adventure. It said nothing. At least Bob Shaw in the flawed 'Orbitsville' tried to show what the effect a Dyson sphere would have on humanity when it went to live there.

'Inherit the Stars' does sweet fuck-all. It's a totally abysmal, worthless book that should never have been published. And that supposedly sophisticated critics like Robinson and Budrys can find anything good to say about it makes me want to throw up.

I was going to do a bit of icon breaking on Pangborn whose characters wake Robinson up at four in the morning but I've run out of space. If anybody wants to phone me about the Fan Room or anything, my number is Sunderland 57881.

Peace and prosperity be yours, Ian Williams 3rdFeb79.



~~But a close inspection of its contents soon showed that this book is~~ destined to become the premier ego-scanning journal of Pandemon. The pages absolutely abound with references, indeed whole sections, on fans, fan groups, SF societies, fanzines and conventions, cheek and jowl with the usual pro and sercon stuff found in all such encyclopaedic-type works on SF, such as: "The State of the Art in Determining and Delimiting SF (why doesn't old Darko ever say what he means? Like ...er..."Worrisit 'n Worris'nit?")

When eventually, I emerged from the pages of this book, Sue was asleep on the sofa, the TV was whining with the white spot glaring and the room had got very cold. "Christ!", I thought, "this book must have something!" I'd spent all this time looking up every conceivable reference to myself: Durfed, Bland, Gannetscrapbook, Gannets, Nesfig..... the book is an absolute goldmine of egoboo!

So I thought I'd try a little cult(ural,) experiment.

At the regular tuesday Gannet (Thursday Gannet according to the ISFYB-bad start that!) at the Duke of Wellington (that bit was right), I took my copy along. It was an unusually well attended meeting, all six of us were there (Dave C. had just left for the South). I placed it on the table amongst the pints and sat back to see what would happen. Whenever a book appears at a Gannet meeting smelling suspiciously of SF, there are usually two distinctly different reactions: the majority ignore it or show less than polite interest, but little Ian and Dave Cockfield race each other to be the first to rifle through it just in case it hadn't arrived in this month's tea-chestful from Rog Peyton, and they wanted to borrow it. Since Dave is now, alas, in London, Ian just managed to win the race.

It was fascinating to watch the book grab Ian...slowly at first as he diffidently flicked through the pages and then faster and faster as he began to tear through the pages, squeaking and burbling behind his pint (I could just see him over the top). He paused only to scrape a noxious turd of vile-smelling dottle from his pipe, refill it and fail again to light it. He sat in fascinated and feverish silence, eyes boring into the book in a hectic search for those two lovely little words, 'Ian Williams'.

After an hour or so had passed, people began to miss Ian's conversation and eventually, Harry turned to him, "Worraryareadinwilliams?"

"Grunt"

Harry poked at Ian until he could see the title, "Oh, I've heard of that - give us a look".

"Grunt"

.....and on Ian went, ripping through the pages, trying to define the hopelessly complicated coding system by induction...and failing. I could almost see the keywords rushing across his fevered brow: Williams, Maya, Siddartha, Goblin's Grotto, Gannet's, Nesfig, Tynecon.....

When, eventually Harry managed to wrest it from Ian's grip, he was only slightly more circumspect in his approach to the book, and only a few moments after I'd explained the coding system to him, he was hooked, well and truly.....Artists section, Grimling Bosch, Kamikaze, Maya, Gannets, Nesfig, Tynecon, Seacon.....

Even Ritchie Smith after an initial show of disinterest was soon to be seen riffing through the pages.

But where did this goldmine of information come from? Either a hell of a lot of fans sent info to help compile this book, or Colin Lester must have a pile of fanzines THIS HIGH, for by and large the entries seem to be reasonably accurate, if short. But there do seem to be some curious injustices. Some fanzines get all too big an entry, eg.,

•9Mg 1 MALFUNCTION Pete Presford UK.

•9TAF 1 ME ANNALS Mike Hamilton UK.

.....and others unjustifiably too short,

•9Mva 1 True Rat Leroy Kettle UK.

•9SCI 1 Stop Breaking Down (SBD) Greg Pickersgill and Simone Walsh.

But Colin does have a knack of précis, getting across the flavour of a fanzine in a few abbreviated words (usually gleaned from reviews).

The entry for Twll-Ddu reads: 'Dave Langford A4 mimeo irreg Nova Award personalzine high humour'....I for one did not know that Dave was irregular and A4.(D4?). And, Scottishe: 'rumours that Scot is merging with the British Nursing Newsletter are strictly untare'. The entry for Siddartha is very concise and superbly descriptive in what it doesn't say: 'very personalzine'.

As expected, Maya gets a deserved 65ms of column space, and even contains quotes taken straight from the dust jacket of a Gollancz: "Top UK zine" - Walker, "I can't recommend Maya too highly" - Glicksohn...sheesh! Gannetscrapbook is described as a 'co-opzine' though I ought to say here that we are not yet paying 'divis' or giving stamps. Other good fanzines (the structure of the opening phrase of this sentence does not necessarily imply semantically that GSB is in fact, 'good') like Wrinkled Shrew and Mota get very short shrift, although Dot is described as 'a strange device'. Mike Glicksohn has got just the right idea as to how to get a long entry in a publication of this kind, and that is to call your fanzine: 'FLOCCIPAUCINIHLIPIIFIGATION' incorrectly spelt in ISBYB as 'FLOCCIPAUCINIHLIPIILIFICATION'

The hugezines like SFR and Locus (arguably incorrectly listed under fanzines) get prodigious numbers of column inches and the Gollancz blurb writer at it again: "with three exceptions SFR's readership outnumber's every other zine by thousands" - Glycer. "the essential newspaper of the SF field" - Thurogood (George and the Destroyers?). Algol, now having declared itself professional is still listed under fanzines and the reader is referred to the pro magazine section where it gets an entry as big as Amazing, Fantastic and Asimov's together!

Erg gets a strange blurb abbreviation: "UK's longest running regular gly" - all suggestions for the full word will be gratefully received (queenly, quasily, quality?)

Above and beyond all of this is a truly excellent, though brief introduction by Colin Lester led off by a dedication to all those fans who aided the compilation of the ISFYB (so I wasn't alone!) His introduction is far better than the turgid report on fanzines by the well known Giuseppe Caimmi giving quite the best capsule view of fandom and fanzines that I have read. It begins delightfully:

"Put two or more SF fans together and they will be likely to produce, after a short period, something very strange: perhaps a white, crumpled slither of a thing, covered in dirty smears or blotches of the vilest black; perhaps a bouncing shiny, colourful bundle of joy, as entertaining and creative as The Illustrated Man."

He also quotes from such numeries "" Pickersgill "" and "" Jackson "" . It's quite catching, I think we'll use them for the next issue of Durfed - "lumpy" - Jackson, "ruined my quiche lorraine" - Pickersgill.

Fans appear again in section 8: "organisations" and there amongst the SFWA, British Fantasy Society, H G Wells Society and the S F Club of the Hungarian Viscose Factory, NYERGESUJFALU, lie such things as:

The Astral League - "names of principals and associates not for publication. "(Founded) 1874, in its present form 1976 "(Purpose) the promotion of Cosmic Peace and Harmony, the Spread of Scientific Knowledge and True Facts".

Cheltenham S F Group - Aims "to expand the group and take over the world, no, I exaggerate, Cheltenham".

League of Sliding Doors - Faruk van Turk • ? defunct.

Newcastle University S F Society Sec. R M H Carter "many members actively hope to achieve professional status".

All things considered, I think that Colin has done excellent justice by the fans and produced a pretty accurate and detailed listing of a very large number of fanzines, and has succeeded to some small extent, in putting across some of their character and thereby the whole character of fandom to the unwashed and the unknowing.

But I suppose the question uppermost in Colin Lester's and Pierrot Publishing's minds must be, "Will it sell?" Well, apart from the five or six fans who could afford to buy it, I'm not too sure who else would want to.) They certainly don't blow their own trumpet, the cover should be emblazoned with BEN BOVA! DARKO SUVIN?? GUISEPPE CAIMMI?? So I think it will hold a pretty low profile in bookstores. This is a bit of a pity because the readers will never know that for example one day they might be able to win the Mrs Ann Radcliffe Award or that they can look forward to seeing within the next year the BIONIC BISEXUAL starring Little Richard!.

\*\*\*\*\*

## THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT FANWRITER

It is an ancient Fanwriter,  
And he stoppeth one of three,  
"With thy long grey beard and glittering  
Why'd you pick on me?" eye)

"The Conventions doors are opened wide,  
And I am booked right in.  
The guests are met, the feast is set,  
May'st hear the merry din."

He holds him with his skinny hand,  
"There was a zine," quoth he.  
"Piss off, unhand me, greybeard loon,  
Before I do for thee."

He holds him with his glittering eye,  
The young Fan-ed stands still,  
And listens like a three years child,  
The Fanwriter hath his will.

The young Fan-ed sat on the steps,  
Outside the Con Hotel,  
And listened as the Fanwriter,  
His tale-began to tell.

"The zine was cheered, though most times  
But I still pubbed my ish, jeered)  
I tried to make it humorous,  
But some called it rubbish.

The critics words were venomous,  
Inflammatory and vile,  
'You can't have fun with your fanzine,  
Tis nought but juvenile.'

And then there came the diary zines,  
Elitist name-drop rags,  
Each sentence detailing a life,  
As each life clearly drags.

Critics here and critics there,  
Critics all around,  
They cracked and growled and roared  
To put a fanzine down. and howled)

And through the petty bickering,  
And meaningless reviews,  
No science fiction did I ken,  
Though I them all perused.

At length did cross a B.N.F.  
Who said that he would write,  
An article or two to help,  
My poor zine from its plight.

But though he'd read nigh every  
Upon the S.F. shelf, book)  
He never wrote a single word  
'Bout any but himself.

But when they saw his massive name  
Within my little zine,  
Their vitriol was sweetened then  
As if some light I'd seen."

"God save thee ancient Fanwriter  
From fiends that plague S.F.  
Why lockst thou so?" "With my bix  
I lampooned the B.N.F."

And though <sup>PART II</sup> the locs came thru the  
They all said much the same, door)  
'This B.N.F.'s a mate of mine,  
Take not his name in vain.'

My local fellow fanwriters  
Unanimous and stunned,  
Said, 'No more rotten jokes or else  
Our own fanzines be shunned.

Put away your pillory,  
It brings us disrepute.  
Our S.F. group will be disgraced  
Shut up, or get the boot.'

And all averr'd I'd barbed the fan  
Who carried mighty clout.  
Writing of yourself they said,  
Is what fandom's about.

But then an I.M.F. loc came,\*  
From out the distant West.  
'I thought the way you took the  
From that B.N.F. was best.' rise)

Then all averr'd I'd barbed the fan  
Who didn't count at all.  
Writing of yourself they said,  
Made fandom seem so small.

\* Immensely Munificent Fan

"But time wore on, and gradually  
Then sudden came the shock.  
Our whole S.F. group to a man,  
Had caught fanwriters block.

Quarto, quarto everywhere,  
Corflu, stencils, ink,  
Quarto, quarto everywhere,  
But not one thought to think.

The duplicator ceased right up,  
The stapler fell in three.  
And slimy things did crawl with legs  
On the typewriter keys.

And some in dreams assured were  
What spirit plagued us so.  
Lampooned in my last ish he'd made  
Our inspiration go.

Ah! Well a day! What evil looks  
Had I from old and young.  
Instead of S.F., the B.N.F.  
About my neck was hung."

#### PART III

"And then there passed a weary time,  
When not an ish was pubbed.  
And all requests for contribs to  
Our S.F. group were snubbed.

A weary time, a weary time,  
How glazed each weary eye.  
Since in our search for comment hooks  
We'd drunk Newcastle dry.

Then looking Westward, I beheld  
A something in the air,  
Like a scene from Close Encounters  
Or a psychedelic flare.

And though we all observed this thing  
This awe-inspiring sight,  
Not one of us could find the words,  
We'd lost the power to write.

We tried. We knew we must convey  
The sense of wonder seen.  
But only I self-plagiarised  
Could cry 'A zine! a zine!'

For there in faultless margined type  
Full colour and A.3.  
With articles by everyone  
From Aldiss to Zelazny,

There was a fanzine in the sky,  
Perfect in every way. Yea!  
Like the best parts of S.F.R.  
Twil Ddu, Algol and Maya.

The polemic was redolent  
With wit caustic and fine,  
Controversy abounded there,  
A barb in every line.

The sercon stuff was excellent,  
Exceeding expectation.  
Hard science grading all the way  
To wildest speculation.

The artwork was magnificent,  
With bold and towering visions,  
And tiny cartoons with a charm  
That gilt their sly derisions.

The humour ranged from sarcasm  
To crooner spuelisms.  
High sophic paralyptis to  
Base pantagruelisms.

And there I stood like Harlequin,  
All pantalooned and dumb,  
Looking on this mighty work,  
Despairing, aching-numb.

Then methinks we heard a voice  
Say. 'I authored this tome  
My name is Aussie Fan-Deus,  
I'm from a different poem.

Look on this zine and realise  
Ye fan-eds who'd aspire,  
You can't please all your readership,  
You must invoke some ire.'

And then the voice and zine were gone  
I shook my head to see  
The only fan-ed left around  
To pub his ish, was me.

They'd all moved on to harder jobs,  
Got married or matured.  
Of four times fifty local zines,  
Only mine endured."

#### PART IV

"I fear thee ancient Fanwriter.  
I fear thy skiiny hand.  
For thou art short and swarthy brown,  
And clearly four parts canned.

"Fear not, fear not, thou young fan-ed  
My fanzine never failed.  
Alone, alone, all all alone,  
I collated and mailed.

And though I sent my little ish  
To all the fannish folk,  
Not one replied with hate or praise  
Or sent a single joke.

I tried to do a sercon zine,  
But research made me blind.  
And every time I made a point  
A gag would spring to mind.

I still had fun with my fanac  
A fan does what he must.  
But every ish was treated with  
Disdain, dogma, disgust.

Pariahed by my fellow fans,  
In abject poverty,  
The zine which had become my life  
Now took the life from me.

I gave up food to pub my ish,  
And starved to print my zine,  
To capture all the humour of  
The image that I'd seen.

Ex fan-ed ghosts in fever came  
To put things in perspective.  
The B.N.F. about my neck  
Forgave me my invective.

PART V  
I dreamed I had a vast response  
Come through my letterbox.  
And when I woke, there on the mat  
Lay ninety seven locs.

Ex fan-eds said a Huge could  
Be mine and they'd help win it.  
But though they typed and duped my ish  
Their heart was never in it.

They helped review and edit things  
Where they were wont to do,  
They raised their limbs like lifeless  
We were a ghastly crew. tools)

"I fear thee ancient Fanwriter."  
"Oh really? Why? What for?"  
"You've trapped me in a poem that  
Become a crashing bore." must)

"But that's the contradiction,  
The grisly paradox,  
I'd given up my fannish fun  
For a handful of locs.

Endowed each ish with suffering,  
My souls sincerity,  
The price you pay to overcome  
Dread mediocrity."

"You tire me ancient Fanwriter,  
Thou ochre coloured elf.  
Since verse thirty six you've  
Of little but yourself." talked)

PART VI & VII  
"Alas I cannot help this thing  
That now afflicts me thus.  
My thoughts become too involute  
To be gregarious.

Ex fan-ed friends they pity me  
For I've forsaken all.  
My marriage and career have gone  
Neglected to the wall.

And though I've won a Hugo and  
Become a B.N.F.  
My ish costs too much to produce  
To buy any S.F.

I'm trapped in adolescentness.  
My fanatic obsession,  
Stunts responsibility,  
Arrests my lifes progression

Pursuing trivialities  
To put into my zine,  
My unfan life stagnated and  
Then wallowed in routine.

And though I am a big name fan,  
Tis known but to a few,  
Beware the danger young fan-ed.  
This fate could befall you.

4

"I was a sane and happy man,  
Content to read sci-fiction,  
Ere I discovered fandom and  
The bitterness and friction.

I knew not then the meaning of  
Egoboo or paranoia.  
But if you take it seriously,  
Frivolity destroys yer.

I knew not of the backbiting,  
And stark intolerances,  
The sycophants, the twisted minds  
The blind incompetences.

I was respectable until,  
Pathetically involved,  
I sudden found my very life  
Around fandom revolved.

Beware my young fan-ed, beware!  
And always stay aloof.  
Then if the critics pan your ish,  
Just hit 'em with a spoof.

For many hold opinions bold,  
But few may realise,  
Unless some-one originates,  
There's nought to criticise.

And there are causes worthier  
Of your so precious time,  
And literature ten fold more meet  
Than this parodied rime."

The Fanwriter whose eye is bright,  
Whose beard with bear is stained,  
Is gone, his skinny body slipped  
Twixt the grating of a drain.

The young fan-ed turned from the Con,  
Like one of sense forlorn.  
A sadder and a wiser fan  
He rose the morrow morn.

LETTERS ((..from the few, and responded to by Ritchie Smith, within brackets like these..))

Joseph Nicholas  
2 Wilnot Way  
Camberley  
Surrey

I checked the carbon of my previous loc (on Gannetscrapbook 4), and one of the things I didn't say was that the fanzine was lacking in quality because it has no real editorial presence. It doesn't really, it's true, but it's still a better-than-average

clubzine, probably because those who write for it are prepared to devote care and thought to their writings.

((Is this boy that easily fooled?))

If I'd paid £1 to see Elvis Costello and Ian Dury, I probably would be bored stiff, and in very short order...

((This put-down comes from a person who has boasted of liking Fleetwood Mac and Jefferson Starship!))

..and I once dreamed of becoming a Huge Name Science Fiction Writer. Then I got my first rejection slip and.. Well, it wasn't quite like that, for all that I still do get rejection slips from time to time. That doesn't mean that I'm selling two out of every three stories that I write, mind you; it means that I'm just not writing as much as I once did. This is partly due to the fact that I'm older than I was (as are we all) and the glitter has thus gone out of the whole idea of writing; and partly due to the fact that I find it almost impossible to write Science Fiction. It's so limited a field in which to work; far from being the forward-looking literature that it often claims to be, it is instead a literature of conservatism, smugness and incest. Every year sees it slipping further and further back into the pulp ghetto that it once showed signs of shaking off. (This is one of the reasons why I write book reviews - they give me a chance to vent my anger on the writers and editors who are holding it back and dragging it down). And I don't want to write pulp hackwork solely in order to sell - I want to write for myself, and if what I write doesn't sell then that's just too damned bad. It doesn't mean that I'll stop writing, but the failure to sell is discouraging, and results in a vastly decreased output, into which is ploughed less and less effort and conviction. It is, I suppose, a self-reinforcing (not to say vicious) cycle, but I keep going in the hope that I might make a breakthrough one day.

I've come close a couple of times; close enough to convince me that I'm not just wasting my time, and that there is somebody, somewhere, who'll find something of value in whatever I have to say. And I came really close a few months back, when New English Library wrote to me enquiring about the fantasy novel that I was working on. They sounded genuinely interested, and I sent them a long and detailed explanation of my aims for the novel - what I was trying to achieve and the way I was going about it, and why I was being so deliberately "different" from all the other writers of "modern" fantasy ("modern" in the sense that they're post-Morris or post-Howard, and dedicated to the maintenance of the fantasy status quo by the creation of yet another mock-medieval society or yet another barbarian hero with an extra muscle where his brain ought to be). Their reply was pretty lukewarm; they were, quite obviously, looking for yet another mock-medieval society or yet another barbarian hero with an extra muscle where his brain ought to be; some "product" for which there was a pre-existing market to give them a guaranteed return on their investment. Thanks, but no thanks....sigh. And

there was I, thinking that the breakthrough had finally arrived. No wonder so many young writers never make it into the big time; they get ripped-off by short-sighted publishers and retire in disgust.

There's nothing else that I can say in response to this issue, actually. I most enjoyed, of course, the Harry Bell cartoon of Ian Williams in the centre. Superb! I laughed like a drain when I first saw it, and I imagine that a lot of other people did too. Those who didn't laugh either have no sense of humour, or are called Ian Williams.

((Thanks for the letter. I really must agree with you about the essential 'conservatism, smugness and incest' of SF, and also that it's 'slipping back into the pulp ghetto'. Last week I wandered into the largest local bookseller, and looked at the SF there; that's lots of feet of shelf-space. And 95% of it was bullshit. Appalling. Quite a lot of Phil Dick, admittedly; but I suspect that this is only because he has become trendy among the poseurs, rather than from any fair estimate of his undoubted literary and imaginative merit. The rest was either tedious, re-released Old Faithfuls, or empty, third-hand imitations. Not only re-hashes of 'Doc' Smith, Burroughs and Howard, though; there were also the new half-literary imitations of SF with genuine literary merit..people like Vonda N. Macintyre, who of course has the 'right' names dropped on the cover. Not exactly a lot of hope, is there? No wonder people like Michael Moorcock end up like people like Michael Moorcock..))

+++++

Bob Day  
154 Sandbed Lane,  
Belper,  
Derbyshire, DE5 OSN.

Andy's article reminded me of a small incident I was involved in, in 'The Royal Archer'. Friday night, and the service in there was as bad as ever (i.e. ten minutes to get served when the bar is empty). I had a deep-felt need for a

pint of Ex, and the lady I was with had a similar craving for (of all things) tia maria. I shouldered my way to the bar and after some ten minutes of waving a pound note around, had my order taken.

'Lemonade in it, sir?' asked the barman.

Somewhat confused by this remark, I nodded yes. I don't know what they normally put in tia maria, I remember thinking. I emerged from that reverie to see the barman putting lemonade into my pint of Ex!

((The mind boggles, and the gorge rises..))

All this aside, the question of editorial control, so hotly debated of late (!) rears its ugly head once again..

((Actually it doesn't. Not at all. Other than the fact that, yes, more editorial control and personality probably is desirable in GSB, and, yes, such is our lackadaisical way of doing things that these virtues aren't likely to be developed at all. Unfortunately..))

+++++

Roger Waddington  
4 Commercial Street,  
Norton, Malton,  
North Yorkshire YO17 9ES.

I can see now how, as a fanzine, GSB might be less than the sum of its parts; would it be more correct to think of it as a very regularly produced one-shot? Must admit that I see more virtue in that concept, and the idea of it as

a regular showcase for the burgeoning talents of Gannetfen, and maybe the

opportunity to try something out that they wouldn't feature in their own zines.

Kevin Williams and Bob Day notwithstanding, I'm content to live within these home waters, in reach of the home coastline, and though maybe wondering what lies beyond, more than I can read in the papers or see on TV, be quite happy and contented in exploring and becoming acquainted with these confines, where I see all the seasons pass and grow older with those around me... The view of the world I have will maybe be more circumscribed, but is it any the less true? I think not.

Some of us Got It? Some of us wouldn't even know what It was, even if It bit us, and some lesser few of Us are wondering how we got by without It all these years..

+++++

WAHT: Pauline Palmer  
Harry J.N. Andruschak (thanks for the NASA pictures of Mars)  
Jim Meadows III  
the boys at UMIST

everybody's favourite travelling fan, Mike Glicksohn..and I'd quote some of your pre-Phoenixcon postcard, Mike, but I'm still recovering from the eye-strain its miniscule print caused..

and, last but not least, good old Mary Long from the USA

(plus, probably, one or two more people's letters mislaid somewhere; thanks to all, though..)

this fanzine, Gannetscrapbook 6, is due to be collated on Saturday, 3 Feb. 1979.

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