



MICROWAVE

J.

Contents

Publish and be Damned! - Editorial	1
Serendipity Uber Alles - Terry Jeeves	2
Dr Hackensaw's Secret - Anon	4
The Best Little Ethnic in Town - Margaret Hill	6
and the band played on . . . - Terry Hill	7
"A Garden is a <u>What</u> , Ghod Wot?" - Vinç Clarke	10
Any Post, Dear? - Letters, letters and more letters . . .	13

ART - always welcome, and this ish my thanks go to:

Harry Bell - page 1

John Cook - cover, pages 4, 8(2), 9(2)

Terry Jeeves - pages 15, 20, 21

pages 12 & 13 are mine, but you didn't want to know that did you?

In the last minute panic to finish, I find I've left out the WAHFs. So, We Also Heard From: Terry Jeeves, Syd Bounds, Archie Mercer, the real Bob Shaw (Cheats! You stole that front cover from Perry Rodent!), Harry Turner, Frank Arnold and Chuck Connor (who 'phoned).

MICROWAVE TWO is edited By Terry Hill from 41 Western Road, Maidstone, Kent. ME16 8NE England. The 'phone number is (0622) 20234 and you're all welcome to call as long as you don't expect me to pay! Duplicating courtesy Vinç Clarke and the new toy I found him.

This effort is available to anyone misguided enough to ask for it, providing they send me 20p in stamps...all others are urged to respond with letters, articles, artwork, gold, precious stones, old paperbacks (i.e. Scion, Curtis Warren, Gannet etc.), or anything else you think you can palm me off with.

PUBLISH AND BE DAMNED!



There has been a lot of chest-beating and soul-searching lately over what does or does not constitute a good fanzine, what a fanzine should or should not contain, and even whether or not a faned should use the 'zine to get his or her political rocks off.

Now I am not a political animal. Politics annoy me. They get in the way of living. I've yet to hear a politician who makes more than superficial sense, either in the establishment groups or in any of the 'little league' contingent, left-wing, right-wing or biplane. You could say that I've disenfranchised myself, knowing little and caring less about any party's aims and policies. I'm an opportunist, making the best of what comes up. The day you can prove to me that who's in charge depends on one vote, and furthermore that that one vote is mine, then I might study politics - if sponsored so to do by all concerned parties!

Returning to the subject of fanzines, I've had a bit of criticism for 'lack of editorial stand'. The above is probably the nearest you'll get to such from me and may well be the last that you'll see; you may want to frame it.

Hopefully, I'll lay the hackneyed argument of fanzine anatomy to rest, as far as MICROWAVE is concerned, by saying that what goes into a fanzine and what doesn't is for the editor to decide. That's what editors are for. If an editor wants to devote the entire 'zine to lace-making or infections of the middle ear, who's to say he shouldn't? The readership may (and probably would) complain and criticise the lack of interest in the 'zine and

the editor's poor choice of material, but they can't say that it was wrong, that it is not a proper fanzine and that the editor shouldn't have done it. Whose 'zine is it anyway? A fan-ed putting out such a boring 'zine would be very poorly advised to ignore the readers and continue. This is where criticism and advice are needed, not in long tedious articles that appear to be dictating fairly hard and fast rules on content, production and even attitude. The self-styled arbiters of fannish taste would be much better engaged, for my money, in making specific criticisms and suggestions to the struggling fan-ed, rather than writing generally as if there existed somewhere, enshrined in an air-tight, brass-bound cabinet, the perfect fanzine. Even NIRVANA was never accorded that honour, although I believe it was suggested.

Attempting to produce the perfect fanzine is not unlike the quest for the Holy Grail. Besides, as soon as a 'zine meets the requirements of one critic and he or she cries 'This is the perfect fanzine', another critic with diametrically opposed standards rejoins; 'A new low for crudzines!' Sometimes it's not worth getting out of bed. In my opinion - for what it's worth - it's better to publish than to sit around continually planning a world-beater. If you've taken the plunge you can only improve with advice and help; no amount of re-writing and re-thinking will guarantee a good reception to your first ish. The would-be fan-ed plotting to set fandom on its ear with his 'zine will probably never do more than plott. One way or another the answer seems to be:-publish and be damned!

TJH

WELL IT LOOKED LIKE A HARD-BOILED SLUG....

SERENDIPITY UBER ALLES

-- Terry Jeeves

When comparing man's achievements with those of animals or future computer intelligences it is often maintained that some unique 'spark' sets us apart from, and on a higher plane than either. To determine what that 'spark' might be I indulged in some research and discovered that our modern world might have evolved in a vastly different way.

Archimedes is reputed to have postulated his famous theory whilst playing with a wooden duck in his bathtub. Leaping from the water, he ran naked through the streets shouting "Eureka". Nowadays, he would have been clapped in the clink as a streaker. Nevertheless, the fact remains that had Greece been suffering from a drought that year, Archimedes would never have had bath or brainwave.

The discovery of glass is attributed to Phoenicians building a bonfire

on the sand dunes. Had they camped in a farmer's field, we may now have had panes of baked cow dung in our windows.

Whilst napping under an apple tree, Newton was struck by falling fruit and so evolved his theory of gravitation. This would have been lost forever had he chosen to snooze beneath a coconut palm.

Many years ago, an infant record industry was striving to develop a hard-setting plastic for disc-making. Their problem is reported to have been solved by a workman carelessly dropping a piece of his lunchtime cheese into a solution vat. The resulting mess hardened beautifully into the required plastic. Consider how changed society would have been had the fellow been eating baked beans. Our first 78s would have been self-repeating, wind-borne sponges.

Rumour has it that Watt's steam engine stemmed from idle day-dreaming over a rattling kettle lid. Again the element of chance steps in to aid humanity. Had he been gazing at a window catch rattling in the breeze, the Industrial Revolution might have been powered by reciprocating windmill engines.

Many similar instances come to mind. Fleming's left-over sandwich scrapings which gave us Penicillin could well have given us a world-decimating plague. Baird's hole-filled, TV scanning disc could have wound up as an electric tone-organ and even Dunlop's garden-hose-inspired tyre might have been water and not air-filled thus enabling it to save the lives of many a desert-stranded explorer.

Obviously, the great factor in all the above is chance. Each event proving a pivotal point where mankind could have taken a different direction. Only that hitherto undefined 'spark' helped us to pick the right path.

The solution is obvious - if animals and computers are to rival humanity, they must play with toys in the bath, eat cheese and spend much time day-dreaming beneath fruit trees. Until they do that, we have nothing to worry about. Meanwhile, I am trying the effect of dropping scrambled egg and cheese onto paraffin-soaked bread. Who knows what further great leap for mankind is lurking in my kitchen?

BTJ

LOOK, A NORMAL FAN, A MERE CHILD MOLESTER....

Does anyone else think that someone at the Ministry of Defence has a warped sense of humour?

How else could you explain the postal address of the Falklands Task Force
- B.F.P.O. 666?

DR. HACKENSAW'S SECRET



The editor surfaced from the slushpile. Eight years of editing 'Commander Cosmo's Science Fiction Magazine' had taken its toll; dull myopic eyes, receding brain, and greying temples.

"Utter rubbish," he exclaimed to no-one in particular, although his nubile young assistant, who was french-polishing her nails, nearly broke rhythm at the interruption.

"Preposterous drivel," he snorted, thumbing through the pile again.

"Oh, just pick one, sweetie, then we can all go home," his assistant cooed, she hoped persuasively.

"This lot's good for only one thing," he replied, "Publishing under a competitor's banner in a smear campaign. I mean, look at them. Fifty-odd manuscripts, nearly forty possible plagiarism suits, five 'Adam and Eve' stories, and, lord help us, a SHAVER mystery.

There's even another affront to the English language here from that fruit-cake, Dr.

Hackensaw. That jerk makes Volsted Gridban read like Shakespeare."

"Never mind, darling, he may turn in a good one, one day, he tries often enough."

"Often enough! Often enough! Never a week goes by without at least one of these Galaxy-busting, Universe-hopping, Epoch-spanning epics turning up on my desk. The man's deranged, I'm half convinced he believes all that . . ."

At that moment the door burst open and in tumbled the young office boy, panting and wild-eyed.

"They've just arrested Dr. Hackensaw." he gasped.

"What for?" asked the assistant.

"Stupid question." muttered her boss.

"Well," continued the office boy, catching his breath, "You know he was working at the hamburger factory?"

"Presumably believing that if 'Doc' Smith could make it as a doughnut engineer, why not a hamburger grinder?" the editor griped.

The office boy was at the centre of attention for once and he was not going to be done out of his moment of glory.

"It seems he had developed this virus in his lab at home, mutated it or something. Dead potent it was too. They reckon if it had got loose there'd have been no stopping it. All the rejections must have turned his brain, because he was going to have his revenge on the world that refused to acknowledge his genius by adding this stuff to the burger mix. Luckily somebody spotted him, stopped production, and called in the Public Health people."

"They took him away?"

"Yes, they dragged him off, quivering and shaking, and all the time he was muttering to himself."

"Okay, I'll buy it," said the editor, sighing. "What did he have to say for himself?"

The office boy grinned.

"He just kept repeating, over and over again; 'This is the way the world ends, not with a bang but with a Wimpey!'"



In a Swiss village, many years ago, a bowls match was in progress.

When the match was nearly half-way through, the legendary William Tell strode onto the green, and, without a word to anyone, joined in.

The two team captains conferred, and finally one of them approached the umpire.

Sensing the problem, the umpire forestalled the complaint by saying; "Ask not for whom the Tell bowls, he bowls for thee!"

I DON'T LIKE BEING TWENTY-FIVE, IT MAKES MY LEGS ACHE.

THE BEST LITTLE ETHNIC IN TOWN

-- Margaret Hill

Maidstone can boast its fair share of Chinese, Indian and Italian restaurants, hamburger joints (ever seen a hamburger's elbow?),

Wimpeys, Macdonalds, American diners, wine bars, coffee shops, fish and chip emporiums, even a kebab house (a tall, lumpy building with a curiously placed lightning conductor). Recently, however, in a quiet back street, a slightly different take-away establishment has opened its kitchen to the general public. Terry and I will try almost anything once, foodwise that is, so we decided to sample Rumanian cuisine.

From the outside the place appeared somewhat forbidding, being mainly painted black, but the aroma emanating from the smoked-glass doorway seemed enticing, so in we stepped. Inside, the sombre decor continued, broken only by the shaded glow of a few red wall-lamps. The effect was sinister, rather than romantic. Through the gloom we could make out a long low counter of polished mahogany with ornate brass decorations. The proprietor appeared suddenly, seeming to rise from somewhere behind the counter, and placed a menu in our hands. "Best Transylvanian grub", read the heading, "From Count's Castle". Something puzzled me about the man's pallid face with its fixed grin. We withdrew into a corner to study the menu under one of the lamps. Suddenly, the niggle at the back of my mind struck me (I should be more careful).

"Do you know, I believe it's Christopher Lee, you know, the actor." I told my spouse excitedly. Terry looked blank (nothing unusual). "And have you noticed how his upper canines protude?"

"What on earth would Christopher Lee be doing, working in a place like this?"

"Well, I don't know, but you must agree that his teeth are strange."

"My God, I wish you'd never gone to work at that dentists. All you ever notice now about people is their teeth", spluttered Terry crossly, and rather too loudly. A low hissing noise came from out of the darkness.

"Don't swear in here," I said, "These East Europeans can be very God-fearing people". The hissing got louder. "Come on, let's choose what we want and get out of here". The stifling yet chilly atmosphere of the place was beginning to get to me.

The range of dishes was somewhat limited, and the spelling on the menu was atrocious; their typewriter either had a mind of its own (like Terry's) or they had not yet mastered the intricacies of the English language. I settled for the house speciality, a rare 'stake and chips' with home-made tomato relish (The main dish was okay, but the relish was rather runny and salty, and I don't think it had had even a nodding acquaintanceship with a

tomato). Terry had 'fish fangers and croquettes', again with relish. It seemed that the management was rather unjustly proud of its pickle, as it appeared several times on the menu.

Our order was promptly brought out by an anaemic, vacant-looking girl in a diaphanous gown. Strange garb indeed for cooking. As we left, we saw a notice pinned to the door; 'If you should decide to visit this particular establishment, please remember that religious jewellery is frowned upon, and Italians are not served'.

Apparently, it's something to do with the garlic.....

MKH

I'VE JUST BEEN STEPPED ON BY A HUMAN.

and the band played on...

-- Terry
Hill

The response to the quiz in the last ish was underwhelming. Only Chuck Connor made any serious attempt, and notched up a magnificent score of 2.

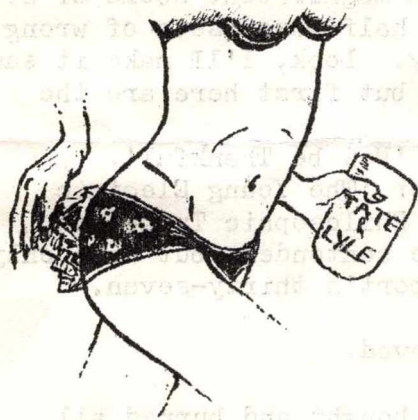
Come on now! You can do better than that! A half-dozen sets of wrong answers would have been better than one brave try. Look, I'll make it easy for you by trying something different this time; but first here are the answers to the last quiz:

- 1) a) Fairport Convention; it's the B-side of 'Now be Thankful'.
b) As far as I know; Capital Radio did offer 'The Young Electric Psychedelic Hippy Flippy Folk and Funky Philosophic Turned-on Groovy Twelve String Band' as a possible contender, but with only fifteen words it's no contest with Fairport's thirty-seven.
c) It's an instrumental, honest.
- 2) 'Thing', and it has to be heard to be believed.
- 3) Dennis Waterman.
- 4) Kenny Everett. Although he claims to have bought and burned all copies, if you know of one, please let me know.
- 5) a) Bill Oddie.
b) My cock-up; I wrote the questions from memory in hospital and only realised after MICROWAVE 1 was printed that this part of the question actually refers to the B-side. Called 'Harry Krishna' incidentally, and the D.J. was John Peel.
- 6) Dr. Hook, a marvellously descriptive song; Perhaps the lyrics will turn up here one day.
- 7) The New Vaudeville Band, a track from their L.P. 'Winchester Cathedral'.
- 8) 'Ire Feelings' which will not have its lyrics printed here! (cos I couldn't spell 'em)
- 9) a) C.W. McCall.
b) 'Convoy'.
c) 'Classified'.
- 10) The Strawbs; it was the B-side of 'Lay Down' and is unmemorable apart from one line about 'the spiders from Uranus'.

That's that. By the way, Chuck Connor answered 6 and 10 correctly. Now on to a horse of a different feather.

In order to give more of you a greater chance to get involved in this fiasco, this time I'm going to give you ten portions of lyrics. They are genuine, I assure you. You can either do things the hard way and give me the name of the record and/or the artist(s), or you can exercise the strong imagination that fans are credited with, and complete the lyric. I won't complain if you try both. Wild guesses are also eligible and points will be awarded for originality and neatness.

- 1) "Chewy, chewy, chewy, chewy, chewy, chewy, baby.
Always got a mouthful of such sweet things to say."
- 2) "When you're driving down the M1 in your 1920 Ford, without tax or MOT or any brakes, and you're back from driving late and you reverse into a truck and the driver is the same eight-stone bully who kicked sand in your face in the last verse . . . "

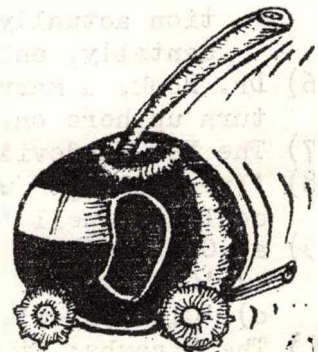


- 3) "The way she moves.
The way she grooves.
The way she had me crazy 'bout her.
Let me tell you something brother.
That girl got sugar, oh yes,
in her panties."

- 4) "Mad Dan Sugar-man and Henrietta Haulocaust (~~Sic~~) introduce to you what's new on the humanoid scene.
(It's a wow, it's a scream)
Knick Knack Paddy Whack, give the dog a humanoid, let's have fun.
Gonna get a personality cell, if all goes well."

- 5) "Her shaft is bent and her rear end leaks,
you can fix her quick with an oily rag.
Use a nail to start her, I lost the key.
Don't pay no mind to that whirring sound,
she uses a little oil, but outside that she's a cherry."

- 6) "There she is, parading on the quayside,
you can find her every night,
waiting for a stevedore from Tymeside.
Why, it's Rene, the docker's delight."



7) "I joined the Navy and I sailed away to sea,
I never realised how lonely I could be.
I learned to drink and swear and tell some dirty jokes.
It's not true what they say about sailors, they're a friendly bunch of blokes."



8) "In awe, with admiration, we listened to their talk.
Such pride felt they, such joy, to be upon the moon to walk.
My romantic vision shattered when it was revealed to me;
Spacemen wear old diapers, in which they shit and pee."



9) "Dontcha like the way I dance, does it bug you?
Dontcha like the cut of my clothes?
Dontcha like the way I seem to enjoy it?
Stick my fingers right up your nose."

10) "Your Mother's made her home here,
we never are alone, dear, any more."
"Poor ole Momma's a-driwin' me crazy with them aches and pains in her legs. That rheumatism's a-gonna kill her, she needs her medicine so bad and she can't get out in this rainy weather to git it, and her social security check's late agin too."
"And it don't seem to bother you,
I toss and turn the whole night through, and walk the floor."
"You woke me up off and on all night last night, if it was once it was a hundred times. I didn't know what in the hell was wrong with you. I figured it was that chili you had for supper on the way home from work."

You should be able to make something out of that lot, either way. If not, check the obit column in your paper - your name is probably there.

TJH

SHE LOOKS LIKE A BADLY-FOLDED PARACHUTE.

"A Garden is a What, Ghod Wot?"

-- Vin~~e~~ Clarke

I had a letter from a fan at the beginning of April - I won't tell you his name in case his wife gets hold of this, but his initials are EB - and in this letter he says "Got to go and garden now so that I have a clear conscience next weekend." (Chammelcon weekend.)

So. Once again the terrible menace of the Garden in Spring and Summer overshadows the far more satisfying ~~hobby~~ hobby of Fanac! This poor fellow has fallen victim to the Curse of Gardening to the extent of acquiring a conscience!

Let us examine this perennial problem in more detail. For those fans who live in flats/apartments/~~abandoned~~ cars, etc., a 'Garden' is like a window-box, but bigger.

It starts at the back door and extends to the horizon. In the old days, it was where you assembled the very first Moem Rocket out of flattened cocoatins and complete with Mad Scientist Uncle and Beautiful stowaway soared into the night ("you mean....this is Mars?") In later days, it housed Triffids and Pods with Things in them. In other words, as s-f writers realised in their subconscious, it was a good place to get away from - fast.

In the old days, in real life there was some excuse for a garden. You could bring out the typewriter, settle yourself down into a deck chair, and undertake your letter writing and sunbathing at the same time. But now things have changed; the next ice age is getting nearer and it's cold outside; we've all heard of the dangers of ultra-violet - we can now go around to the local sun-parlour and be massaged as well; we don't write letters, only comment on fanzines, which, things being as they are, doesn't take long.

So you would think that any sensible fan would concrete over the place, the ultimate Corflu, if he could afford it, or just let it grow, if he felt like it. But there are obstacles in the way. Female members of the household, for one. Wives, daughters and others have a strange desire to utilise the garden. They want flowers, as though you couldn't buy better at the local florists. Or plastic ones from Woolworths, which could have the additional advantage of being scented by a judicious stop at the perfume counter on the way out...rose smelling of 'Nuit D'Amour', etc. And the females want vegetables - as though yourspring onions and cabbages don't come to fruit/flower at the very moment when there is a glut at the greengrocers - when what has taken you hours of patient rearing throughout the growing season can be obtained in a juicier and more luxuriant form for 15p. at the shop. It's like s-f; why spend days writing down your own story when you can go out and buy almost the same quality product in the shape of INTER-ZONE? (Advert.) (Probably).

You might get away with an appeal to logic in this fashion - especially if you can arrange an unannounced visit by the ready-mix concrete lorry and present the household with a fait accompli. It's hard to argue with several tons of drying concrete. But it's better to rely on sympathy. Also cheaper. Plead a bad back - if you haven't any idea of the symptoms, it's the sort of feeling you get after carrying 16 cases of beer up four flights of a Convention hotel staircase and before you've drunk the beer. Point out to your loved ones that if you get a blister on your typewriter finger it'll cripple your chances of getting to be Fan Face No. 1 in the next LOCUS poll. Advance the argument that dandelions and daisies are quite pretty to look at, that the Thistle is the national emblem of Scotland, and if nature intended these creations to flourish, who are we to flout Darwins law of natural selection and cut them down?

Unfortunately, purely rational discussions are very hard to conduct when one side can't even comprehend the great advantages of powdered potato over the worm-infested, dirty ugh! -natural type, so the fan finds himself thrust outside with a crude digging implement in his hands and an infinity of toil in front of him.

Don't despair!

You can, for instance, meet a very interesting class of person over the back garden fence. Known as 'neighbours', these mundane people collect model soldiers, cigarette cards etc., and can discuss their hobbies for hours at a time. A bit like s-f fans, actually, although not so intelligent or star-begotten. A possible bonus is that sometimes the said neighbour is blonde, young and female. A conversation conducted with this type in rather louder tones than usual will soon see you safely back behind the typewriter.

But there comes a time when you have to get down to the nitty-gritty, or in some cases the muddy-muddy. Too late then to plead a sudden conversion to Buddhism and a reluctance to risk halving a worm with a spade. Now is the time to look on the bright side; here's a priceless opportunity to compose, with the nine-tenths of your brain you won't be using, an article for your favourite fanzine. Here's the chance to plan the... You suddenly find that you have to switch your whole intellect to the matter in hand. Before you grows a large, sneering green plant. Is it a legitimate inhabitant, or a loathly WEED?

It's these decisions that sort out the men from the boys in the back yard, like the graduating exercises at Galactic Patrol HQ. There is only one answer. If the thing is flourishing, growing almost visibly, shouldering aside its neighbours, pulsating with chlorophyll...blast it! Cut it to shreds! It's a weed! It's the weakling neighbours who look as though they could do with splints and a litre of Lucozade each who are the rightful heirs.

There's nothing like a few life-or-death decisions like this to give you

the courage to apply the ultimate solution to your problem. Said solution is a good strong weedkiller. Put it into the watering can and spread liberally over the whole garden. Any fan worthy of the name can then think up an excuse for the 'mistake' of confusing weedkiller with fertilizer. Such as sunstroke brought on by too much outdoor work.

oo000oo

(The opinions expressed in this article are not necessarily those held by the wife of the publisher.)

AVC



WANTED! URGENTLY! for future issues of MICROWAVE.

Informative, witty, provocative, probing, ~~boiling~~, exhaustive, definitive, state-of-the-art articles on lace-making and/or infections of the middle ear. All submissions should be typed and approximately two pages (quarto) in length.



Any Post, Dear?

At first, I thought the level of response to MICROWAVE 1 was a little disappointing. Then I got word that the general level was pretty low these days, so I did a re-think and decided that it was, after all, pretty good. Including those of you that traded without LoGing, it comes out at well over 50%. Still, some of you that I would have liked to have heard from said nowt; if they feel inclined to do the same again they don't get No. 3. That's the way I'm running things; if two consecutive issues get no response, that's it, fimito!

KEVIN RATTAN, 23 Waingate Close, Rawtenstall, Rossendale, Lancs. BB4 7SQ

First off, I loved the cover. Terrible puns like this are just my kind of thing, as the BaD group know to their cost....

Editorial. Are you sure this is your first zine? That editorial reads a lot better than other firsts I've come across, and beats mine hollow. Would you believe I've only heard of one of the old zines you mention? You ain't the only NEO around here..

The Lament Of The Science Fiction Widow: I've seen something like this before, but that didn't stop me enjoying it. ((It's been pointed out that it's a bit cliched but I didn't know that, honest!)) Margaret's comment about asking for post upon returning home struck a chord, because I'm always doing that! It drives Mum up the wall.

Terry Who?: Hmm, people less conceited than me might take it badly. That is, dedicating a page to yourself could be seen in a bad light, I, however, sympathise with the urge to let Fandom know who you are, and do like to know something about the people behind the zines I receive. It's much better than reading in a vacuum.

OBscure Record.: Far, far, far too difficult for me, I'm not even going to attempt it. ((Shame! Perhaps this time, eh?))

Yet more awful puns, and in an artistic way, too! Keep 'em up. ((There are those who would disagree about them being artistic. Me amongst them.))

Nothing Really Changes. I wasn't born. (then, that is, not a general statement)

JOB. Nice little piece. Don't you like Joseph Nicholas, or something? ((on something.)) Tut, tut, tut, and he's such a friendly guy, too.

Your Stars. On first glance, I passed this by, on second I giggled, on third, I laughed aloud.



FAN-DROID

5 Replies: Know what yer mean. Have you actually had that reply about UFO's??!??

London 1957...: Yeh, uh, right, uh, yeh. Pardon? Why?

Generally, I enjoyed this zine, and it shows great promise. Only please make the next one longer. Two articles and bits and pieces just isn't enough, especially when you want it to be a genzine rather than a personal. I liked the insulting little squibs dotted throughout, too. Keep it up, I look forward to number 2. Only MORE of it, please.

SID BIRCHBY, 40 Parrs Wood Ave, Didsbury, Manchester. M20 0ND

What a pleasant surprise, this Monday morning..raining and ice-cold, with the wind blowing off the Pennines like a demented vacuum cleaner..ah! they don't make Monday mornings nowadays like the Manchester ones. The United Nations stepped in.

Yes, a pleasant surprise, and Microwave is a lot better than the usual first-issue. Mainly, it has a definite character to it..indeed, two characters..Margaret's contributions are just right, and you should persuade her to continue. I was delighted to hear of the arrival of Keith, by the way.

Vinç Clarke was always one of the nicest fans, and judging by his recent letters to me, he still is. We came back into touch, as you know, by way of Terry's work on the Wally Gillings biography and Keith couldn't have a better Godfather. It never does any harm to keep in with the Mafia.

Reading through Wells's 'Time Machine', I was struck by an oddly old-fashioned air about parts of it, despite its futuristic plot, and I think it is this: there is no mention anywhere (unless I've missed it) of electricity. When the Time Traveller and his friends have dinner before his departure, the dining room is lit by 'the soft radiance of the incandescent lights in the lilies of silver' (gas-light, probably) and later they go into his laboratory, where there is a 'small shaded lamp and perhaps a dozen candles'.

When the Traveller visits the Year 802,701, he explores a deserted museum in which 'white globes hung from the ceiling, which suggested that originally the place had been artificially lit'. More gaslight, I'd say. Many's the time I've lit an incandescent gas-mantle in a white-glass shade, but the early electric light bulbs, so far as I know, were not so enclosed.. they gave off as much heat as a small electric fire.

As to what powered the Time Machine..not gas, but also not electricity. The Traveller gives it a 'last tap', puts 'a drop of oil on the quartz rod', and sits himself 'in the saddle'. It all sounds like a meeting of the 'Wheel-tappers' and Shunters' Club, and his journey through Time jolts him about like a trip on the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch miniature railway. In my opinion, the Time Machine was driven by Steam, and Wells's Future was lit by gas!

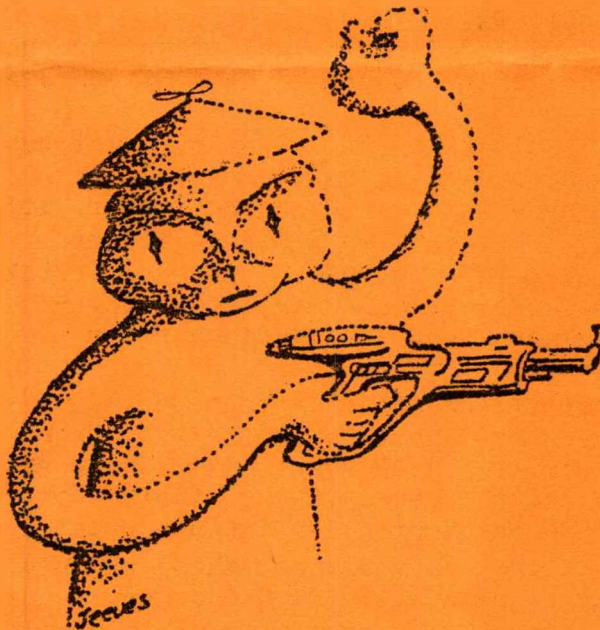
What Ken Bulmer would have made of this in 'Nirvana', I can't imagine, not having read his fanzine when it appeared. The 'Steam' thing was an in-joke of which I was always out, so you'd better ask him. Maybe you would get an article. ((Guest answerer to Readers Letters Vinç Clarke replies: All groups have 'in-group' references...since coming back to fandom I've had to find out what this stuff about Burgess's Pork Pies was all about, and

I still can't figure out why it's always "D. West". STEAM had a short but interesting life amongst the readers of QUANDRY, Lee Hoffman's marvellous early-'50's fanzine and one of the most influential 'zines of all time. In the QUANNISH, Aug-Sept. 1951, columnist Walter Willis wrote of visiting the Epicentre, the flat in London shared by Ken Bulmer and self. Walt wrote: "Ken (editor of NIRVANA) is dark and impetuous of manner, with a wacky sense of humour. I remember the time he invented the steam engine. We were all sitting in the kitchen before supper when the kettle started to boil. The lid jumped up and down at a tremendous rate. Ken looked at it for a while and then said thoughtfully, "You know, there must be a way to harness all that energy...."

A few issues later Lee published correspondence, wherein the FORT MUDGE STEAM CALLIOPE CO. of Savannah wrote to the Epicentre suggesting mutual research into the properties of STEAM, receiving in reply a letter from the Bulmer Aqueous Vapour Co. asking them to cease and desist "in view of possible military uses of these processes..." etc. etc.

Yes, fandom wasn't all light-hearted fun the way they now make it out to be. AVC--)

ABIGAIL FROST, 69 Robin Hood Gardens, London. E14



It seems to me you have not really got any reason for doing a fanzine except a generalised desire to say 'hello' to the world of fandom. Perhaps that is not too bad a reason; better to do any kind of fanzine and make some sort of contribution than just to sit around wondering why you aren't immediately invited to all the smart parties, as some (too many) do. But you aren't, on the present showing, a writer above all else; you throw together a lot of snippets, rather than constructing a finished piece of work, as Simon Ounsley or Roy Kettle do; on the other hand, you have no burning message to give the world and no need to find a unique way of writing to present it, like Pickersgill or Nicholas. (Yes, you say, Joe's way of writing is unique, all right. True. But

what's wrong with his work deserved much deeper analysis than the reactionary campaign currently waged in Pong.) You're doing a 'fanzine' so you fill it with the sort of things you've seen in 'fanzines': jokes (old ones) and references to better-known fans than yourself, and 'light-hearted' self-

deprecatory stuff about your relationship with sf. The trouble is, the days when sf was a taste to be sniggered at in private are gone, and you need more than that to be taken seriously in a culture that really depends on good fanzines. ((There is a definite shortage of sympathetic ears in my town. The only alternative to sniggering in private is being sniggered at in public. I suspect that they move their lips when they read too.))

As far as I'm concerned, fanzines and the friends I've made through them are the only reason for sticking around in all this. I enjoy conventions, but won't be going to AlbaconII (I suffered the first one - someone else can go along to vote this time), and I haven't read sf since I was eleven. To me, fanzines are not a sideline for people whose main interest is rocketships. I'm sure you could produce something interesting in itself; I can say this with confidence, because I think anyone can, if they have the right attitude. ((???)) I'm not one of those who witter about the right or wrong type of content or format for fanzines (they are rarer than everyone thinks), but I don't think that copying the style of the fanzines of the early 60s (I suppose - you know more about that than I) is the way to go about it. ((Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery; if someone sends me a recent 'zine I feel is worth emulating, then I'll steal ideas with the best of them. Till then, I'll develop ideas in my way from 'zines that I like.))

Anyway, I look forward to seeing the next one, and hope it's more of a real fanzine.

VINO CLARKE, 16 Wendover Way, Welling, Kent. DA16 2BN

Look, I'm innocent. Well, yes, I may have lit Terry's fuse, thus launching another active fan from the pad, but it was only because I was a bit careless with this lighted match....ooops..

The potential was there, anyway. You can't take off unless a rocket has been made in the first place; Fate has constructed Terry's personality, warping and woofing it - especially warping - into a Fanzine Publisher. It's happened all over the world; an Irish civil servant, an Illinois cinema operator, a Scottish nurse, a teenage girl in Georgia USA, a Brighton bricklayer, a Leeds schoolmaster, clerks, newspapermen, salesmen, etc. etc. - and I'm not even mentioning the present generation. The defence rests - uneasily.

Anyway, not having seen MICROWAVE until it was actually photocopied (your Honour), the contents came as a surprise. Most un-1980's-ish. Where are the pages of spit-by-spit detail of vomiting at Conventions? Where are the minute dissections of other fanzines and the crucifying of their editors? Where are the macho obscenities? Where are the neurotic neighings about QUALITY WRITING? ((Gratuitous obscenities are available for those who need them; mailed separately under plain cover on request)) My Ghod, man, you write as though you're enjoying yourself, and worse, expecting other people to enjoy the 'zine. Why, I even found myself laughing aloud at the astrological predictions - you'd drive a reader to madness too, wouldn't you?

I'm not going to enter your ridiculous competition - having listened for an hour to your collection of the Worst Singles in the World, my sense of musical appreciation seems to have been permanently blasted; I've played HOOKED ON CLASSICS fifteen times and all I can hear is an echo of that Scottish reggae. Me, who went up to the 'White Horse' enthusing about an

evocative Strauss piece I'd heard, years before 2001 put THUS SPAKE ZARA-THUSTRA into the top LP lists....grrrr. My christening present to Keith will be a pair of ear muffs.

I did think the overall air of friendliness was triffic, though, marred only by your two unkind references to Joseph Nicholas. My knowledge of current fandom is small, but as I understand it this gent. is a remnant from an early-seventies group who merely wanted to blast fandom into its own image and kill everyone who disagreed with it. What's wrong with that, may I ask? There are plenty of very distinguished precedents for that attitude Gengis Khan, Peter the Great, Hitler, Stalin, in mundane history, for instance...and the very presence of MICROWAVE (& others) shows this fenocide was a passing aberration. ((I took a dislike to Joseph's written persona; I've met him in the flesh and I was surprised to find he had only one head and that wasn't very pointed.))

And finally we come to the piece of resistance...Margaret's article. From the hook at the beginning to the sting in the tail I thought this showed talent in large chunks. Humour, sentiment, sharp observation and smooth writing; the feelings expressed made me feel a bit of a Rat inasmuch as it was I who lent Terry THE ENCHANTED DUPLICATOR, but a Happy Rat... Margaret has lots of Potential; so in fact does the whole 'zine, which I suppose is pretty appropriate for a MICROWAVE.

CHRISTINA LAKE, 2 Shepherds Green, Chislehurst, Kent. BR7 6PA

It sounds like you had a good batch of fanzines to 'educate' you. I had to make do with several years of BSFA backnumbers, a Black Hole or two and numerous Hyperspaces (Hatfield Polytechnic's fanzine) pilfered from the Warwick University SF soc. to introduce me to fandom; still it was sufficient! I've been reading the things voraciously ever since, as and when I can get hold of them. Which makes me more a consumer than a critical loccer, in which spirit I shall say that I enjoyed reading Microwave. You seem to have produced it just because you wanted to do a fanzine, not to demonstrate how clever you are, or publicise what you think about this or that burning issue which as far as I'm concerned is the right idea! ((Good Girl! Funny how a fan-ed who is not one of the high-criticism school can be more perceptive. You forgot the Ego-boo though))

Despite being a Piscean fanzine editor I'm facing the month of May with the quiet equanimity of one who knows she's not in imminent danger of praise from Joseph Nicholas and even forgot to take any fanzines along to the Omni party at Channelcon! Just think, if I'd been a Libran and threatened with terminal illiteracy I'd probably have believed you.

Finally the answers to your quiz ... I'll stick my neck out and say that the answer to 1)b) is NO and retire from contention, philosophically deducing I'm not related to you.

Good luck with finding contributions to any future issue. ((I've asked my Mum, and she doesn't remember any girls called Christina, so you could be right. As for contributions, how dare you wish me luck without offering anything? ts. ts. ts.))

BOB SHAW, 2/L West Princes Street, Kelwinbridge, Glasgow. G4 9DP

I think I recognise the manic Bob Shaw style of auction. It could be, of course, that there is a generic fan-ish method of waste-disposal that I have picked up, but, if it wasn't me then it might have been. I refer, of course, to the first article within Microwave. It says much for my own attitude to fanzines that I - or whoever it was - would sell off a whole bundle of the things for nothing. In fact, I regularly pay people to take stuff away at auctions, thus causing endless confusion to con treasurers. Honest! ((I don't think it was Bob, but the mists of time and alcohol make it all a little hazy))

Fanzines are done for the love of it. Good production is nice, but not a prerequisite for success, and all sins may be forgiven if one is prepared to slag the BoSFA....

I, however, like good production, and always preface the body of any comment by some mention of production values. Yours are good. Neatly typed, with no major flaws. But - and here there may be a personal bias - you do give a bit too much space away to your contents and credits, and to the by now faintly weak joke on the back page. Beyond that, you have attained a consistent and readable format. Good stuff,

Why not save space next time and put in some more writing, and spread your artwork out within the text. And make the whole production longer. Costs rise less for one reasonably big and irregular 'zine than for a host of regular tadpoles, honest!

Which brings me to the body of your fanzine. I, as you'll have guessed from my own 'zine, like 'slice of life' writing. Yours is what I like. Wry anecdotes about the trials and tribbles of being a skiffy fan, plus embittered wifely pleas. Oh yes, the good stuff! And I like to hear about fans even stranger than those I've met: your weird competition strikes me as being quite the most unlikely I've yet heard of. Do you seriously expect people to visit you in order to participate? ((Well, I didn't expect you to visit, but some fans live in the south-east of England. (The extreme bottom right of your map of Scotland)) Why not get an answering machine and a three minute message tape, and tell us all to ring your number. We could enter by telephone, or at least be rude in a fitting ~~zipp~~ fashion.

I liked your astrological piss-take, and showed it to a friend who is for some reason into such stuff. He started to explain how correct you were "in general terms" and couldn't understand when I attacked him with a rolled-up copy of Joseph Nicholas. ((Why would anyone want to make a copy of Joe?))

London in '57! Come to the Scientifiction Conference! Roll up, roll up! Only 13/6d for ten!

Which is a brief note of thanks for that blast from the past. Good stuff, these old magazines. I was muchly amused some years ago when I picked up a copy of Nebula, a 1950s prozine edited by Peter Hamilton in Glasgow, and found an advert for the 'new-lands' sf club. The first issue of Nebula had, among other features, an A E Van Vogt story, reviews, LoCs (by means of a time-warp, presumably) and that advert.

Twenty-one years after the magazine was published I bought it. Read the advert, looked up the telephone number of the guy mentioned therein, and rang him up.

"Hello, I'm replying to your advert."

(Insert noise of total bafflement)

"Your advert. About science-fiction. The one in Nebula, Autumn 1952, on the inside back cover...."

(Insert noise of telephone being dropped from limp hand as aged and well-gafiated fan hears the sound of a nutter on the 'phone)

"Hello?"

"Hello...hello? Helloooo!"

"Hello!"

It actually was like that. The guy had gafiated years earlier, and wasn't too interested anymore. Also, he was upset 'cos his mother had just died that morning, so perhaps being a smartass isn't everything.

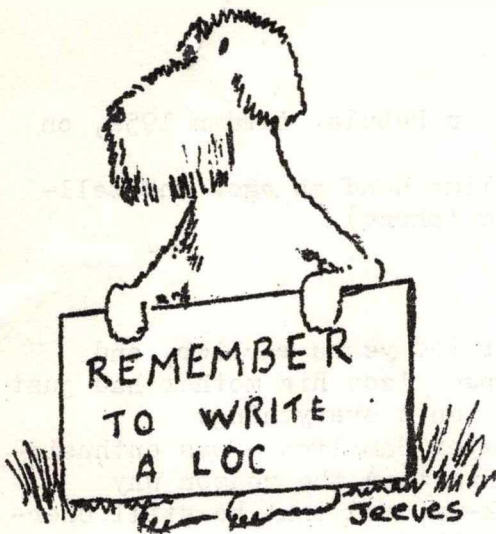
On the other hand, the editor of Nebula - Peter Hamilton - was enthusiastic. He explained to me when I went to see him that the reason why Nebula went to the wall was a US marketing cock-up, and that he still cherished the dream of running an SF magazine. I called at his new business, Lismor Recording Studios, where he was ensconced within an inner room. I told his secretary that I wanted to see him about Nebula, and he was out like a shot! His office, although small, had but one picture on the wall: Buzz Aldrin on the Moon.....

In order to keep this lettercol under twenty pages, here are the edited highlights from the first of two long LoGs from

ARNOLD AKIEN, 6 Dunblane Road, Seaburn, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear. SR6 8FU

...my objective is no more than to ensure that you, and M, do not vanish into the limbo that lurks between issues 1 and 2, and to that end I believe that realistic encouragement is better than gentle back patting...M is neatly produced and has the virtue that every word is legible. Alas there is a definite paucity of these words in terms of both quality and quantity. The trouble seems to be that, whilst you are in love with the idea of doing a zine you don't really know what you are going to do with your zine...you have no discernable editorial policy and, apparently, no real objective... not a lot can be expected of a first issue; and even pretty harsh critics often admit that the most you can expect from a first ish (from a new fan-ed) is the oft repeated formula of 'how I encountered S.F./fandom/fanzines', 'why I'm doing my own zine', introducing me an' mine', lame ad hoc jokes, (often in the form of fillos).....do I need to go on? I've no means of knowing how many fanzines you've encountered thus far, so it is entirely likely that by now you are aware of Ms faults - perhaps all too aware of them; to the point of despair. Never fear: by comparison with best fanzines M might seem rather poor, but, it does show signs that you might improve; given time....But how can you improve it?

Well, to begin at the start: your assets are that you appear to have lots of enthusiasm..... and I mean both of you, effectively you are co-editors and should credit yourselves as such.....the cover illo wasn't bad for the repro method you've chosen and as I've already said, Ms reproduction is neat and legible; It's just that you would seem to have sat down and written the first thing that came into your heads. ((Not true. If I wrote the first thing that came into my head I'd be prosecuted. There are laws



against sending that sort of thing through the mail.}}

I'm reluctant to risk curbing your own ideas, for the development of M, but might I suggest something to you?...to you Both?

You really are co-editors you know: the whole balance of Ms content reveal this to be true - so why not take advantage of it. There must be many subjects on which you are in accord - and an equal number upon which you disagree. Take advantage of your differences - and even your unity. You two already have the elements of a dialogue in M1. so why not rifle your memories....no, you don't deserve a pun so awful (and so obscure) even after those dreadful fillos that I was obliged to endure....why not seek out

a topic that Both of you find interesting (and, ideally controversial) and then develop it as a kind of thematic dialogue which will, with any luck, be joined and extended in loc col of no.3.

...In essence fanzines are ideas in print - tangible extensions of the editor (and contributor)'s personalities. The impression that many of us will get of you two will be governed by your fanzine. ((Just to keep Arnold happy, I let Margaret edit his letter.}}

DISGUSTED OF ML4 IAG, which upon checking the post codes on the mailing list turned out to be JIMMY ROBERTSON, 64 Hamilton Road, Bellshill, Lanarkshire.

I see that despite your interest in 30-year-old fanzines, you have slipped effortlessly into the current mode of meaningless namedropping and banal catchphrases such as 'milly traffic'. I also have to admire the way that you emphasise where you have made jokes, in case the reader hasn't appreciated them- doubtlessly you will soon reach that point at which you needn't strive to find new forms of such emphasis, but merely remark 'wot' after the attempt at humour - a simple shorthand which I'm sure you will find comfortable and comforting to use.

You have also industriously bespattered each page with the obligatory attempts at typos, but you have not used enough to meet with critical respectability. Might I also advise you that it is expected of you to at least try to make them look like genuine typographical errors; mere inability to spell correctly will undoubtedly (and quite rightly) bring down coals of scorn on your unsuspecting head from all informed opinion.

You have also chosen not to include a lettercolumn. ((A bit difficult in a first ish, Jimmy, as I don't have Peter Hamilton's resources. (See Bob Shaw's letter, page 18).}} I know things are hard all round, but you really should reconsider this. A fanzine like this really must have one, and I am sure you will have already gathered, despite your limited experience, that all fans thrill to a letter from Chook Connor or Ken Mann, who will be de-

lighted to drop you a line at the merest rumour of a chance of publication. You must also remember to print them in full, no matter how foolish this may make the editor appear. ((or the letter-writer?))

In closing, the correction of an error of fact. 'The selfrepairing Robot' was not a story, but an article by J. W. Campbell. Go thou and do likewise.

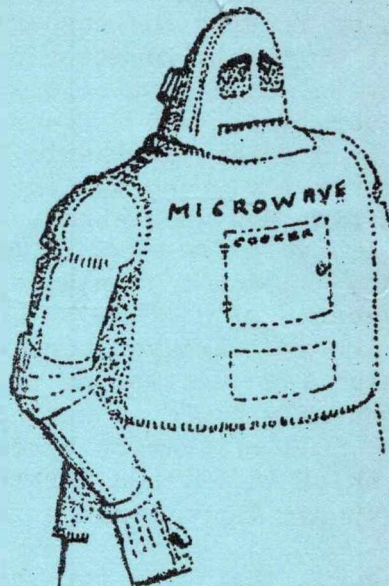
((Ooch, Arnold will be pleased, Margaret has asked to reply to Jimmy's comments: "I feel I must reply to this one, at least in part. As far as I can discern, as a mere outsider, it is every editor's aim to produce the perfect fanzine. Therefore every fanzine should strive towards perfect content, perfect layout and presumably perfect production - what's all this, then, about "obligatory" typographical errors. If it were possible, Microwave would have NO such blunders. It is not possible because a) I don't hit the typewriter keys hard enough and b) I don't wish to get that involved. Although I proof-read all the rough drafts of articles to correct any spelling mistakes and punctuation errors, I take no blame for any which appear in the final copy - Terry's province. I think that correct English makes even the most boring article more readable. I tried to read an article recently by a lady whose typewriter apparently possessed no comma and only a transient full stop. It was such hard work, just trying to make sense out of it that I gave up less than half-way through. Doubtless said lady had an important point to make but I for one shall never know what it was. I would have thought that her co-editor, who criticizes others for such faults, would have pointed this out, but having glimpsed the lady in question, I can understand that she might not want to argue with her!

P.S. It's very rude and conceited not to sign one's name at the end of a letter, Jimmy!!!))

WALT WILLIS, 32 Warren Road, Donaghadee, N. Ireland. BT21 OPD

I have sent you a Maserati in part exchange for this precious lifesblood of a master spirit. I locked the steering, engaged first and aimed it in a south-easterly direction down the sailing club slipway. I'm sure it will arrive safely --- the windscreen wipers are very good --- and when it does it will certainly be a nice clean specimen of the year. ((I haven't got it yet, Walt, but the chap at the top of my street got a beauty about a week ago - are you sure your compass is reliable?))

I liked the interlineation on the inside front cover, and the editorial too...cheerful, illuminating and unpretentious. Margaret's piece was well written and so sincere sounding that it worried me a little. That seems a nice girl you've got there; are you sure you're treating her right?



Your little Biography seemed to me to perform very well its essential job of letting the reader know what sort of a chap you are, the main and most difficult function of a first issue. Difficult because it's all too easy to sound egotistical when talking about yourself. I thought you handled it very well, and I found it very helpful. For instance I had imagined you to be a rather aesthetic bookish type until I read your job history: I suppose I'm wrong too in imagining you as being tall, dark and saturnine? ((A bit. How does short, dark, bearded, overweight and balding sound?))

I have a few obscure records but nothing of the same Stygian opacity as yours. I don't even understand the data in your questions, never mind the answers.

Are you sure you were fair to your dentist's nurse in dismissing as nonsense her question as to whether Analog contained "real science fiction"? Especially since it was an old Analog. The last Analogs I remember seeing were full of fiction based on unreal science, like the Dean drive. Come to think of it, it's a terrible thing that I haven't seen an Analog for years. I suppose there isn't a BRE anymore.

Well, that's it for this ish, I'm just about played out from all this typing. I look forward to hearing from you, and don't forget, articles, artwork etc. are badly needed if MICROWAVE is to continue. Meanwhile, I've got my next week all planned out - gafia, sweet gafia.....

AIR MAIL

PRINTED MATTER

REDUCED RATE

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By air mail
Par avion

