

Fuliginous clouds drifted slowly across the face of the mottled sun, ebon fore-  
shadows of the doom that was closing upon Ancient Earth. From Mount Ev'rst,  
worn into a shallow sand dune encased in eternal ice, to the tumourous glaciers  
floating sullenly on the S'hara Sea, the icy hand of Time gripped the planet,

In the black shadows of the ruins of L'don, Jance the Messenger shivered,  
cast a wary glance from roving, alert eyes at the darkly scarlet sphere which  
had moved scarce three handbreadths in the last few hours, thrust an exploratory  
finger encased in a white p'lar bear glove into the aperture before him. Nothing  
bit it off. He nodded, There appeared to be no outward menace lurking behind  
the cracked oak door, in the flavescent luminosity which had seeped through the  
letter flap. All was as it should be. He extracted the packet from the green  
leather sack on his back, opened the flap with one hand, shoved in the packet with  
the other. With both hands occupied he realised, too late, his vulnerability.  
Jaws closed on him from behind. He shrugged. At least, he had delivered

# NOT SCIENCE MARCH FANTASY NEWS 1983 No 3

INTERIOR \*\*\*\*\* Terry Hill, editor/publisher of noted  
ALTERATIONS \*\*\*\*\* fanzine MICROWAVE is out of hospital  
after donating kidney to brother, is  
working on next issue (Ist. Annish)....

NSFN seems to have drifted into being a letterzine with accoutrements; it  
just grew that way, obviously reflecting my own inclinations. Weird...a year  
ago I'd have said that I'd have liked to do a genzine.

This ish. is not really late; I was cunning enough not to give any future  
publication date for it in NSFN2, and the fact that I expected to get it out in  
January is of minor importance. What does irk me is that I'm owing a lot of  
letters still. About Xmas I decided that I was getting swamped with paperwork,  
and must have More Room. Enlisting the help of Terry Hill & ATom I redecorated  
a spare room inch-by-inch and started to put up shelves; I expect to end up with  
at least 120ft. of new shelving. Inevitably, this took longer than expected. I've  
started to get enquiries like was I gafiating for another 20 years. So I'm  
resuming writing with the shelves uncompleted. Place looks like a wide-screen  
version of the Tower of Babel - after it was cursed.

I mentioned fanzine collecting in the last ish. I have first option on  
3/400 received here recently, with an agreement to sell those not wanted on  
behalf of the principal. I may be able to publish a list in the next NSFN, but  
am also working out a scheme for lending out stuff. It's a proud and lonely  
thing to be a fanzine collector, but I agree 100% with the old quote by Walter  
Willis: "The editors are dedicated to the proposition that fandom should have a  
continuity, historical as well as geographical integration. That, for instance,  
it is a Good Thing and part of the pleasure of fandom that allusions to events 15  
years ago in Los Angeles should be understood in London today..etc.". Time has  
moved on since then, fandom's past has grown, but it still seems to me a valid  
objective. Maybe a fanzine library will further The Cause. We'll see.

(Interior alterations Cont.)

I've been uprooting fanzines from the attic and other places where they've been a cosy haven for spiders and other creepy-crawlies for years - I'm not happy about my rôle of Destruction Personified, but it's Us or Them - and although I've done my best not to fall prey to Nostalgia and re-read stuff, it happened.

Amongst the ~~by~~ memorabilia, most of it dating back to the decade of WHEN YNGVI WAS A LOUSE I came across one of the stencils for the original SCIENCE FANTASY NEWS, and in view of Bob Shaw's hurtful remarks about the cluttered-up look (he said he liked it but) thought it might be of interest to see how the thing had survived. Eyes right. Except for a place or two where the original corflu has hardened into a lump, preventing the ink from coming through, it ain't bad. 'Cluttered'? I haven't much cash now, but then ...every bit of the stencil had to be utilised. "Well packed" is the term I prefer.

You'll notice the main news item was a dig at the organisers for not publicising the Eastercon of that year. Note the enormous attendance fee of 42½p., out of which they expected to have enough to provide party drinks. In the other item mention is made of a proposed nation-wide s-f Society, and it was at this Con. that the present BSFA was born, the most enthusiastic midwives being Dave Newman and Ted Tubb...elected first Chairman and Official Editor respectively. Ted edited the first VECTOR, then cried off due to professional commitments, the job being taken over by Terry Jeeves (Salute). Dave never even made it to the official 1st. publication, gafiating with little warning. Poking around amongst the dust and spiders, I found an OMPazine of mine commemorating(?) the initial meeting at the Con. (headed MY GHOD! THEY DID SOMETHING!!!). It contains transcriptions of a tape sent to me from the meeting (I couldn't make it), including what I can only call a classic account of a First Contact, 1950's style. Dave at the time was a soldier (National Service) stationed at Woolwich. Unknown to him, Technical Sergeant Ron Buckmaster and wife Daphne, both fans, were also there. Here's Dave, from tape:

"I was sitting in a train one night, travelling from Charing Cross to Woolwich, coming back to barracks late at night, about 11 o'clock. I'd just bought off the bookstall in Villiers Street all the current s-f that was (there) - there were three magazines at the time - ASTOUNDING, S-F QUARTERLY and NEW WORLDS. I was leafing through one of these and I saw this couple sitting opposite me, looking at me rather oddly, and I was sort of wondering whether I was properly dressed or not (Laughter), 'cos they were thoroughly staring me out of countenance.

"When I got off the train at Woolwich, this fellow sort of marched up to me and said in a thoroughly aggressive tone of voice "D'you read much of that stuff?" So I, equally aggressive in turn, said "Yes, I do, what of <sup>anything</sup> it? you see?.. And he said "Well, so do we, we read a hell of a lot - er, you doing <sup>anything</sup> in particular just now?" y'see, bearing in mind that this was now a quarter-past-eleven at night.... So I said "No, not really, I want to go to bed" so they said "Well come up and have a cup of tea." So I went up to Ron's Married Quarters, we introduced ourselves on the way up...and I staggered out of Ron's flat carrying a suitcase full of hard-cover s-f I never knew existed, plus the first two years of GALAXY...they suggested I take a trip up to the 'White Horse' to meet the gang...I never missed a (~~weekly~~) meeting for 2½ years when duty permitted...."

NOT SCIENCE FANTASY NEWS No.3 March 1983 is edited and published by A.VINÇ Clarke from 16 Wendover Way, Welling, Kent, UK, DA16 2BN, for Kent Tru Fandom and other friends...anyone know how to get into the innards of an Olivetti Editor 4 typer?

The place stank. A queer mingled stench that only the paper-buried rooms of fans know, compounded of reeking duplicator ink and the heavy span-like stench of yellowing pulp magazines. An overtone of coffee combated the musty smell of old sherry. The acrid odour of Chinese cooking and the sharp, not-unpleasant smell of ozone from two tape-recorders hung in the air. Lingering odours of machine oil contrasted sharply with cigarette smoke. Yet, somehow, through all that reek of fans and their associates - human beings, machines and cooking - came another taint. It was a queer, neck ruffling suggestion of an odour alien among the smells of industry and life. And it came from the thing that lay on the table.....

# SCIENCE NEWS FANTASY NEWS

NO.  
15  
FEBRUARY  
1958

## CYTRICON CONFIDENTIAL

### THE WORD - OF - MOUTH CON

SFN here presents the first public news of the progress of preparations for the 1958 S-F Convention, one of the most closely kept secrets of modern fandom. Only 50 or so fans in personal contact with the Liverpool group know the Facts, but ~~CONF~~ SFN brings you the undercover story NOW:

CYTRICON IV, the fourth Convention at Kettering, Northants, will take place on Apl. 4th-7th at the GEORGE HOTEL, previous venue of these highly successful Cons. There is no programme as such, but fans are expected to be arriving from mid-afternoon on the Easter Friday and departing during Easter Monday.

The subscription is 8/6d for the whole or part of the weekend, which sum, after deductions for postal expenses, etc., will provide hooch for a Saturday night party in the Basket Lounge. Any surplus cash will go to TAFF.

The Hall at the GEORGE will not be booked, and it's suggested that anybody wishing to present an organised 'turn' make arrangements with organiser Dave Newman to hold same in the Basket Lounge, which has been reserved for the weekend.

The whole hotel has now been modernised.  
(Cont. Back Cover)

## PROJECTS, ANYONE?

After devoting their major fannish energies for over a year to the 15th World Con., British fans feel weak but triumphant. They have also had a taste of what really concerted effort can accomplish, and signs are that a number of Projects will soon be under weigh.

In OMPA, discussion is starting on the pros and cons of setting up a new, nationwide s-f society. Readers who have any marked interest in this should get into touch with Vin Clarke for the preliminary details ...for the discussion, not society blueprints!

In London, London Circle members, having heard glowing accounts of the Liverpool Club's quarters and listened to accounts by visiting American Con visitors of their own club-rooms, are discussing with new seriousness the possibility of getting a room. The Winnick-sponsored idea has died due to the breakdown of arrangements and the virtual disappearance of Helen, but new plans are being formulated.

BNFS OF TOMORROW TAKE SFN TODAY

# THE PHOENIX COLUMN

As each year starts you gloomily realise that we're in for another wet lettuce, and by the end of the year we'll all be at least 5 years older. Doubtless 1983 will be that tiny bit worse, like every year, and I sometimes think that we should actually return to the Good Old Days instead of be-wailing them. Why don't we put the calendar into reverse on New Year's Day each year, so that 1983 becomes 1982, und so weiter? After a few Old Year's Days, we'd be able to buy bheer and smokes without taking out a mortgage, and the fun would be that we'd know what was coming (going?) - it wouldn't be so bad the second time. Pity about all those pop-singers dying of young age, but I'd enjoy seeing Arthur Scargill dwindle into a pit-boy.

SID

BIRCHBY

But I digress. One good event last year was the screening of Wagner's 'Ring Cycle' on BBC TV, filmed at Bayreuth in 1980. The version shown was the controversial 1976 one with semi-modern dress and decor, with the Rhine Maidens appearing against a backdrop of power stations churning out the Rhine-gold. To me, it didn't quite come off. All right, we should get away from the hackneyed images of horned bump-caps and muscle-men, but there are some props that have to be retained to preserve the plot, and it doesn't help to have Odin shaking his spear whilst dressed in a Victorian frock-coat and looking like Dr. Cameron from Tannochbrae, or to see Thor raising a storm with his hammer, looking like a Soho poofteh.

I suppose it depends if you think that the up-date enabled the power of the Wagnerian music to come through more forcefully, and on the whole, the answer must be yes. Despite his Dr. Who costume, Donald McIntyre as Odin was superb, and so were his colleagues; they played the Gods in decline, with a War Father being throttled in the struggle against Evil because he must not break his own laws. Gradually, Ragnarok, the death of the Gods approaches, when Good will win, but Odin will die, only to live again in a mystical sense.

When the Ring Cycle was first shown (it took many weeks), I had a sense of familiarity, and soon realised that I had met the basic theme many times before. In 'Star Wars', Good confronts Evil and wins; Odin becomes Ben Okefenokee or something (well, Alec Guinness) who dies but lives on as a voice over. Tolkien's 'Lord of the Rings' describes the final rally of the declining Light-Elves against Sauron's forces. They win the battle, but as a last effort. They withdraw from the world, and even Frodo the Hobbitt follows them. Gandalf is Tolkien's Odin, and he, too, dies and yet lives again in a different manner. You'll be able to think of other examples so



.....(THE PHOENIX COLUMN cont.)

I won't go on, but if Wagner didn't write, or at least, inspire, Science Fantasy on a large scale....!

Some ideas are so basic to the human situation that it's no wonder that authors keep coming back to them, but there are more trivial ones which seem to be kept in circulation by nobody specific. I'm thinking of Vinc's coincidences, such as the shipwrecked men who ate one of their number, one Richard Parker — the name of a youth who suffered a similar fate in an E.A.Poe story, some 40 years earlier. Obviously, cannibalism is hardly trivial, especially to the victim, ...perhaps, when the mariners had introduced themselves (for they were British), someone said "Hmmm, yes...I remember a story about eating Richard Parkers!"

There's more to coincidences than you think. Jung coined the word Synchronicity (coming together at the same time) so you might like to ponder why Vinc and Eric Bentcliffe chose to stir up Fifties Fandom at just the time when the survivors were ready to be stirred up. Look at that roll-call of famous (well, ancient) names!

*Sid*

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*Remembrance of the Wagner TV epic has faded somewhat (sorry, Sid), but you raise one or two basic points. Personally, I couldn't bear to look at the thing after seeing that Victorianisation (Jung's not the only one to coin words) of the costumes....I was expecting the Valkyries to roll up any minute on bicycles. Trampling on grimly in my Philistine way, I'll have to take your exposition of 'Lord Of The Rings' on trust, as I haven't yet managed to penetrate more than 1½ chapters into the exotic verbiage of this masterpiece, which gives me the feeling of plunging into a swimming pool full of dough. I should think anyone who has read James Branch Cabell, for instance, would find Tolkien's turgidity heavy going. 'Synchronicity' sounds like a good title for a marital aid book.  
\*\*\*\*\*

EDITORIAL APOLOGY

In one of my fleeting moments of light-heartedness, I regret that I may have given a false impression to readers of NSFN2 when I spoke of reading a London TIMES in between chips. I am a regular reader (all those chips have some effect) and while I can afford it, it'll be My Paper. Not because I agree with the editorial policy, but because it has Miles Kington as resident humorist and because it is a Paper of Record; the quirks of human life are there — and some of them include ...shhhhh..science fiction. Like the report of March 1st., 1983; a Barrister was convicted of burglary by a Crown Court, being told by the Judge "It gives me great pain to see you here".

Said Barrister was convicted of stealing from a flat various items relating to his favourite hobby, science fiction. His eccentricities were described by the Defence. "At the moment I am representing a princess from a far-away planet" said this gentleman, dealing with the defendant's fictionalizing.

The judge asked "Does he do this in Court, when practising at the Bar"?

"No" was the answer.

\*\*\*\*\*

# Letters

As mentioned elsewhere, I've had a few letters wondering out loud what happened to this issue's publication date. One such was from that Good Man DAVE LANGFORD, which is worth sharing:

As I mentioned at the Tun, I dashed off that last postcard to you in some haste and took no carbon. Never again. Doubtless what I wrote (the memory becomes more vague each day) was some mild snatch of semi-literate jollity which you've already cast without a second thought into the pantechicon labelled WAHF. But in the dead of night I find myself racked with pangs of guilt, fearing the postcard must have been

plastered with vile oaths and epithets too despicable to imagine. Why else would you have been so tactful and polite at the Tun? What could have so shocked you that you gave up the fanzine for a while (so the new MICROWAVE just arrived with no NSFN in tow)? What frightful thing could I have said? Sometimes I deliberately torment myself for this imagined offence by reading the works of Lionel Fanthorpe. And because I am a mean bastard at heart I shall share a passage with you,

from THE ALIEN ONES by 'Leo Brett', a Badger Book which was actually reprinted (by Five Star in 1972). Come with me, Vinc, into the dark chambers of my Fannish Inquisition, and listen.

"He suddenly felt that he was the supreme destroyer, the remover, the iconoclast, the nihilist and the anarchist. He was a wrecker, a destructionist, a spoiler, a saboteur, a defacer, an eraser, an assassin. Something of the wildness of the barbarian, the Hun, the Tartar and the vandał raced through his veins. He was the personification of the moth, the worm, rust and erosion — except that he was an accelerated personification of those agents of destruction.

"He was an instant corrosive, he was immediate mildew, lightning blight and instantaneous poison. He was an earthquake, a fire, a flood, a sword; he was gunpowder, dynamite and blasting powder. He was a human torpedo which wasn't human any more —"

(LETTERS Cont.)

Obviously, (I imagine I hear you saying at this point) he was a fanzine reviewer.....

~~Apple top are the same~~

\*\*\*\*\*((You took the words right out of my mouth (kindly return same). What a lovely passage - I haven't read anything to compare with it since the last time I dipped into 'Roget'. I particularly like 'immediate mildew'. As for your other points - have they really got carbon paper for postcards now? Or do they have especially thin PCs in Reading? No, your obscene messages make no difference to me; Mum always taught me to be polite to neofen.))\*\*\*\*\*

Letter from MAL ASHWORTH, on 'Camra' (Campaign for Real Ale) letterhead:

I've got a humdinger of an excuse for not writing earlier this time; I've had a letter to Harry Turner sitting in the typewriter for the past fortnight! There; hows that for an excuse? Pretty nifty, huh? Can't fault that one, can you? Hah. \*\*\*\*\*((Why didn't you buy another typewriter?))\*\*\*\*\*

Mullah Nasruddin has a nice coincidence you could add to your list; isn't it strange how the moon comes out at night to give us light just when it's darkest and we need it most? It's more useful than the sun in that respect.

'A Streetcar Named Bizarre' must be one of Bob's best-ever pieces. It had Hazel hooting helplessly. Such a delicious sense of the ridiculous so graphically put across. Thank you, thank you and thank you again (to quote Lionel Hampton) for that reprint.

Difficult to imagine Chuch Harris with a golf-bag actually containing golf-clubs; I mean, you'd expect a Thompson sub-machine gun at least, maybe even a howitzer (or is it a Wurlitzer? Sheila got me confused over that many years ago and I've never got my sense of confidence back since.) And bearded and non-smoking too? I wonder just how total the transformation is? Hi, there, Hippie Harris! (Ducks rapidly between two thirty-ton lorries just in case). I'm not sure that I can take this, actually; I know things change - hell, I'm the one who preaches it all the time when I talk to yoga groups and whatnot. But I mean to say - Man Mountain Harris. The Masher. The Dagenham Dinosaur. Desperate Dan's Big Brother. There's some kinda hoax going on here. I mean, if Chuck of all people has gone all Barbara Cartland, who's going to eat D.West for breakfast? Still, even in a Mickey Mouse reincarnation it would be just great to see Chuck back in the fannish melee. (You must admit I'm working hard to probe out any remaining vestiges of the Harris of old - the 'Fugghead's Bane' of many a fannish saga) ((\*\*\*\*\*Chuck, remember he's only a lad...))\*\*\*\*\*

James White's lovely line - "wielding the critical scalpel two-handed like a hungover Conan" reminded me that I went to see the film of Conan. This was really rather a cruel thing to say, but knowing James I'm sure he never intended it. He (Conan, not James) did look rather hungover come to think of it (though it could have been my eye-bones; they're usually hungover) though whether 'well hungover' is another matter, despite the film's repetitive attempts to suggest it. The squeaks and grunts of the ladies he bounced up and down on sounded to me rather more like someone who'd dropped their shopping than someone who was having their socks knocked off

but maybe they were just winded by those prominent pectorals. I suppose I could have got used to that as well as the thirty-foot, rather lethargic, grass snakes Conan tried to tickle into some sort of activity (they were, if anything, less responsive than the women), but when Thulsa Doom turned out to be a dead ringer for Louis Armstrong.....

If you think that you can stand the excitement and the ecstasy I will let on that I started to write - especially for your issue on the theme of 'Residence' - a piece about this remote farmhouse I have bought. But the deadline has gone and it isn't done. I calculate it will be in time, however, for your issue No. 23 on 'Transcendental Fish and Chips'. I dare say I can add a final paragraph on to make it seem relevant; something subtle and well thought out like 'There are no transcendental fish and chips within miles of my house.' You reckon? Huh?

\*\*\*\*\*((I think you're making a mockery of the whole thing, that's what. Glad I wrote and said I'd extended the deadline, tho'. Wondering whether your mention of the mighty Wurlitzer would mean anything to the young fen of today (Langford, for instance) I looked for a definition in 2 encyclopedias and 3 dictionaries (all that happened to be in the room at the time - I like to pose as an intellectual) and it wasn't listed. So I'll just define it as an organ that goes up and down in the cinema. Which brings us back to Conan. If someone towed the local Granada to a site opposite my house (and wouldn't the inhabitants of No. 15 Wendover be surprised) I don't think I'd go to see Conan - or practically anything else. I just don't like going out, paying to see advertisements as well as the film, being charged excessively for an orangeade, having to endure cigarette smoke all around me...I could go on. I started to buy STARBURST in lieu of going to the flicks, but even that started concentrating on the sadistic screen, the paranoid pictures, so I gave that up too. I suppose I could always start charging for NSFN and buy a video.....))\*\*\*\*\*

Letter from HARRY WARNER, of Hagerstown ((where else?)), Maryland, USA:

For shame: the suspicion is unworthy of you. There is no truth to your wild assumption that you faced a twenty-year wait for the next letter from me because a few lingering germs from your own hibernation fever (←beg pardon?) have found their way into the letter I received several months ago and never responded to, and had multiplied after successfully swimming up the eyetracks I had left on the letter, and had caused me to gafiate until the Blink of 2000.....I have a new excuse this time (← you been in correspondence with Mal Ashworth?). I've spent the final part of 1982 retiring, and this is an adventure I haven't had any previous practice in. First the decision to retire, then the terror resulting from that decision, after that the endless tasks required to tidy up forty years

'HE'S AN OUT OF WORK  
KTF REVIEWER'





(Harry Warner Cont.)

of journalism have distracted me from most other things. Today, incidentally, is a particularly momentous one because it is my sixtieth birthday and enables me to call myself for the first time a senior citizen by some standards. (← Not by UK usage - I'm fairly sure we use the sixty-fifth birthday to do that re-labelling - and, incidentally, give them a free pass on public transport. Belated happy returns, anyway.→) Starting tomorrow I'll be eligible for small discounts on certain purchases in a few stores and I can apply for membership in such local organisations as the Washington County Senior Citizens' Kitchen Band. I think, though, only those who are 62 or older can choose among pots, pans and washboards; senior citizens junior grade, like me, must take whichever musical instrument is assigned me. (← Out of respect for your age I won't say anything about sinkopated rhythm→)

But this isn't commenting on another splendid issue of NSFN, initials that I keep imagining to be a misprint for a compass dial. Oh to be 59 again, so that I could meet your Dec, 15th. deadline on the topic of residence. But I would have plagiarised myself, anyway, because all I could think about when I read your choice of topic weeks ago was the awful time I've had trying to figure out which of my residences was my genuine home, and I've written about that previously. (← I'm intrigued - but it's too late now→)

Coincidences...yesterday, I received a letter from a friend....he'd grown up in Hagerstown and as a teenager was befriended by a woman somewhat older than himself. They were extremely good friends, nothing more, but he eventually married and moved away...losing track of his friend. More than fifty years later (the lady) now a very old woman was sitting at her TV set with a Hagerstown newspaper on the floor beside her...the man's name caught her eye. I'd mentioned him in a column, probably the first time his name had been published in Hagerstown in decades. There was enough information to enable her to get into touch with him again, he resumed their old friendship and is convinced his prayers were responsible for an unexpected and near-miraculous recovery she has just made from a life-threatening illness.

I read Bob Shaw's article elsewhere and sad experience has taught me the importance of never commenting a second time on reprinted material, because I invariably contradict myself the second time. (← Heresy! A Bob Shaw article is always good.→) Instead, I might say how much I liked the new lights the letter section provided to illuminate the present condition of fabled names out of fandom's past (← Not only illuminate - they get the hot foot too→) as well as its continuing discussion of the differences between fandom then and now. I don't believe that anyone else has mentioned one other difference that I imagine distinguishes fandom today and fandom as it was during your first incarnation; the greater tendency today for fanzine pages to be filled...with controversies borrowed from mundane periodicals. Feminism, nuclear power and its dangers, and rock music are three matters that come to mind at once. Maybe fans today feel more intently about mundane matters and just can't keep them from oozing into their fanzines, or maybe some modern fans can't think of less hackneyed things to argue about; I wouldn't know which.

Simon Ounseley's letter is a very reasonable exposition of his reasons for harshness(← Yes, he means well, unlike some...→)....I'm also surprised that nobody

(Harry Warner Contd.)

seems to have questioned the precept that "it's pointless to produce a fanzine if you don't do your very best" as a standard on which to base reviews. How in the deuce can a reviewer judge if this or that fanzine editor is doing his best? Does a reviewer take the time and trouble to contact the fanzine editor's former teachers to determine his capabilities in the classroom, to apply to the editor's bank for information on how capable he is of financing a more expensively produced fanzine, to hire a psychiatrist for a judgement on whether the editor's fanzines are suffering from any hampering engrams or repressions? There's also the consideration that this precept, if followed to its logical conclusion, could rate each fanzine editor on the basis of how severely he eventually suffered from Nydahl's Disease.

\*\*\*\*\* (← So you must have been just under 16 years old when you produced the first SPACEWAYS in Nov. '38; no wonder there was that youthful boast in No.2 (Jan. '39) "Just as predicted last issue, this second SPACEWAYS makes its appearance on the dot — in fact, it is being mailed a little ahead of time....". (Don't worry, the Ghods clobbered him and No. 4 was late). Thanks, Harry, for encouragement and also those two points above — the 'mundane creeps in' and the 'pointless if' bit above. I'll leave comment on the latter to someone else, but on the non-fannish discussion this is something which has occurred at various times before, surely...see Pohl's THE WAY THE FUTURE WAS, 4e's VOM, Evan's TIMEBINDER, etc etc? Of course, the ills of the world press more heavily on everyone than they've done since WW2, so I suppose it's only natural that the light, escapist type fanzine is scarce.) \*\*\*\*\*

Letter from EUNICE PEARSON, of Birmingham:

"I've just recently entered the fanac world. Oh, I've been a member of the BSFA since 1980, but I've only actually done something fannish this year. What have I done? Well, I was a member of Novacon 12 committee (registrations), I've been roped in to Novacon 13 (publications), produced a genzine (CALABAN) and I'm working on the first issue of my personalzine, BRIGANTE. So I have no great fannish "racial memory". And that's why I liked your 'zine so much. Plenty of harking-back but not too much. I get the impression that despite what you said... about the present state of fandom you are quite forward looking and optimistic. To a young fan that is very reassuring. There's nothing worse than just beginning to read and produce 'zines and being told that Trufandom is dead (or at least, dying). \*\*\* (← Eunice goes on to complain about Chuck Harris having access to a copier at his office and only contemplating putting out a fanzine. Well, don't forget that Chuck is a very old fan, dear, and awfully tired. (That should ensure a red-hot reply.) No, I think that Trufandom is perking up in a remarkable way during these last few months, and a few more people around like your good self should get the revival going nicely. Thanks for the compliments...I am trying to keep the 'zine intelligible to everyone, but have no hesitation in asking or complaining. Which reminds me that I left an odd phrase dangling above — "Nydahl's Disease."

\*\*\* Harry Warner Jnr. (yes, him above) has an absolutely marvellous story about Joel Nydahl in his A WEALTH OF FABLE Vol.1 (pp61 et seq.). Joel was a 13-year old US fan who started to put out a monthly fanzine, VEGA ("He meant to name his fanzine SIRIUS, but did not know how to spell such a title. While hunting for it on a star map he ran across 'Vega' and decided he liked it better..."). Each monthly issue got better and better — by No 8, contributors included Harlan Ellison,

(LETTERS cont.)

then a fan, and the annish was approaching - one year since Joel started publishing. He wrote to dozens of fans for contributions, determined to make the annish bigger and better than anything that had gone before. After five months work he produced 103 pages, with pieces from Bob Tucker, Bob Bloch, Silverberg, Walt Willis and other prominent fans of the day. Reaction was tremendous - he was getting 13 letters a day over one period. "The rest was silence, as far as fandom was concerned. Less than a year later, nobody was sure where Nydahl was, because he was completely out of fandom, burned out." Thus 'Nydahls Disease'...otherwise known as 'Vaulting ambition, which o'er-leaps itself' (Bill Shakespeare). WEALTH OF FABLE (Vols. 1, 2 & 3) is a fantastic, marvellous exposition of a decade of Fan History; my admiration for Harry's scholarship is total.)\*\*\*\*\*

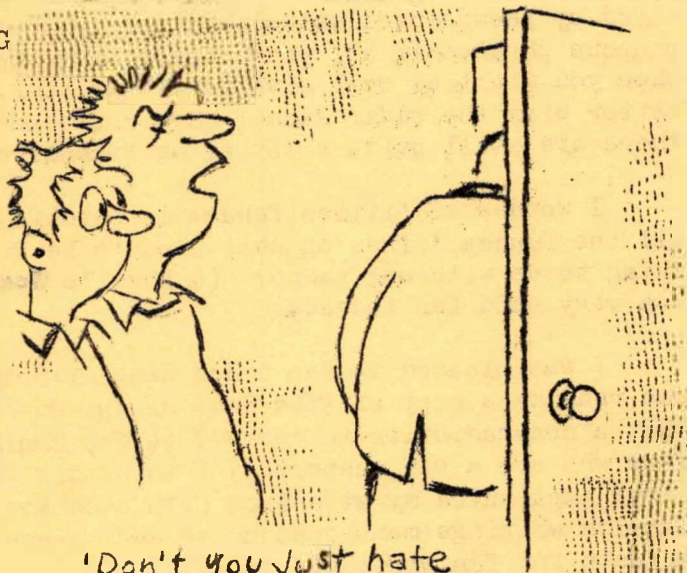
Letter from TERRY JEEVES of Sheffield:

...I'm not on geriatric pep pills...but after my asthma of some 15 years ago, I take a regular dose of Intal to keep me breathing (← That's a beautifully neutral name; could be anything from a fanzine to a new stainless steel alloy)...and I don't have foxes in the garden, but by sheer coincidence only this morning I had to remove a dead squirrely...oops squirrel (← I prefer squirrely) from the front garden and give it a decent funeral by heaving it over the back garden into the woods. (←?) As I write this a friendly robin (who took up residence two days ago) keeps landing on the window-ledge beside me and watching me type. I made the mistake of encouraging it by chirping at it, must have hit the mating note as it twice tried to jump in through the window ...admittedly, I am wearing a red pullover...maybe it's a bit short sighted? (← More probably homicidal - didn't it occur to you to wonder how the squirrel died?) Enough of this nature note...on to Sniff.

H'm fancy sending a theme zine to all BSFA neos..you get cruel in your old age, Vinc. (← Yeah, like I'm cutting out two paras. of anagrams on RESIDENCE) I was in Arizona in August ( a month similar to August) and could have got you a copy of ARIZONA HIGHWAYS (← Thanks or something—I have stopped collecting them due to lack of space)

In your plea for REQUIEM FOR ASTOUNDING by Rogers..surely that wasn't a fanzine.. but a series in a fanzine...Bill Donaho's VIPER or somesuch...HOWEVER the series was rewritten and published in hardcover by ADVENT in 1964...my copy is autographed by both Rogers and Bill Donaho...and I ain't disposing of that...its RESIDENCE is in my bookcase. (←Other people can be cruel - I was just using shorthand in classifying it as a fanzine...I've seen Terry Hill's copy; have now one lined up for self, so there)

The robin's back again..it has designs on my pullover (← How did it make them?) Nice to see (bits) of Chuch Harris again... he is right that in the beginning the word was Aardvark...the full quotation was "Aardvark and no play makes Jack a dull boy" (← Talking of lousy puns, there is a van



'Don't you just hate these uppity old faans!'

man

(Terry Jeeves cont.)

running about - oh, all right, it's on wheels - which is owned by a sausage manufacturer, and on its side it has the legend PORKY AND BEST. Not good by Bob Shaw-type standards - no connection between sausages and Gershwin operas - but interesting as they expect people to recognise the allusion. I don't wish to appear snobbish, but→)

I see that Kevin Rattan asks "What is wrong with a fiction 'zine..or a poetry 'zine"...a very perceptive question and it deserves a carefully thought out answer... trouble is, I can't think of one...there just isn't one to a question like that...I can't afford that much paper (← Best answer I've ever come across is the old SPACE TIMES, which ran one amateur story an issue which was adjudged by a small professional panel. I feel that there should be an amateur fiction 'zine to give people a chance to try out their techniques —but not run by me, sez he hastily→) Aha - you refer to once doing a pantomime...SCROOGE ON ICE...do I get the uranium plated dog biscuit? (← Such is fame - a mere 29 years ago and you forget. Try FANDERELLA→)

Oh well, I must wrap up and do something about getting dinner...now, what can we have...aha the very thing...I reckon we'll have fried robin....

I really enjoyed Sniff..it has all the old joie-de-vivre without any of the modern nastiness...keep 'em coming.

\*\*\*\*\* (← Why not vegetables as well? All together - FRIED ROBIN AND CHEEPS! →)\*\*\*\*\*

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Letter from MOIRA SHEARMAN of Dundee.

I must admit to liking the friendly, relaxed style which, although it seems to characterise the fifties fan, can also be found in many 'zines of lesser (or greater) ancestry. (← True, and I'm somewhat annoyed that I missed a lot of good people during my absence from the field, especially as I suspect that the bully-boys of the early '70's scared away some friendly-fan types→) I am not so much intimidated, as bored by pseudointellectual writing. I can't see the point of using flashy words and pompous phrases; if all your reader is going to do is to put it down to 'showing off', then you might as well give up and go home. I have found that I seem to get on better with the older fans I have corresponded with, but, as I am sure you have found, there are still quite a lot of us friendlies about in fandom....

I wonder if fifties fandom is catching? Do you think the fact that we produce all the Dundee 'zines on what used to be Ethel Lindsay's duplicator might have something to do with our taste? (← Ethel's 'Scottish' was completely characteristic of her —a very good fan indeed→)

I was pleased to see a Bob Shaw article, as my first taste of real fannish writing was reading a copy of 'The Best of the Bushel' before I even saw a real fanzine (or is that a contradiction in terms?) (← No, fanzines are as solid as Bob Shaw...it's the fans who are a bit suspect.→) I think his (Bob Shaw's) EasterCon speeches were what first captivated my attention (I'm a sucker for puns), from there I moved onto the fannish writings mentioned above and thence to his pro writing. On the way developing a taste for fan writing.

\*\*\*\*\* (← So welcome....there's a piece by Bob in WHEN YNGVI WAS A LOUSE..see ad. last ish→)

Letter from DAVE ROWLEY of Stoke on Trent

....I liked the conrep on Page 2, but does this mean that you actually attend programme items (← Touchè→)....Sorry, Bob, 'A Streetcar Called Bizarre' is only entertaining; I didn't split my sides or cease to breathe for 30 seconds at all. ((How about the earth moving under you→))....

....I think I ought to own up. I don't really like butting in halfway through conversations. This is how loccols leave me. I feel as though I may have missed some relevant point, and make a fool of myself. (Not doing too badly am I). Maybe the feeling of inadequacy can be dispelled by perseverance or joining an APA, and charging in at bars and saying 'Hi there'. HELP. The first 8 pages really seemed to be going places (does that make sense) and then I hit the loccol. Ouch. If the articles get fewer, how about changing titles to Not Science Fantasy Locs?

\*\*\*\*\* (← Dave, if it helps at all, most of the nimble-fingered natterers around you have felt the same at some time — see some feelings of my own in the answer to Simon Ounseley's letter in NSFN2. Yes, good letter columns ought to be like a group of friends conversing — in a bar, if you like. At least, in my favourite type of fanzine they are. But don't imagine yourself as an outsider waiting to break in. Imagine yourself as being up there, clutching a glass of your tippie, part of the circle but not yet ready to speak. Then, if something is of particular interest, or you have a point to make, speak out. This is where the analogy breaks down; in the bar conversation, you're running the risk of being drowned out by some fast-talking Mal Ashworth or Dave Langford. But when you write to a fanzine your voice is just as loud as theirs — it's the amount of interest value as judged by the editor that gets through to the fanzine itself. And that editor...if he's an editor at all he'll stop you doing anything foolish if you're new to the scene. I've run very few letters so far that haven't been cut and cleaned up — usually because of shortage of time and space; Lee Hoffman made some remarks in the last ish. about printing everything she received, but that was long ago in a different country...and I, for one, haven't got the youthful enthusiasm of a Hoffman or a Nydahl in making every issue bigger. Please write again→)\*\*\*\*\*



Letter from WALT WILLIS, Donaghadee, N.I.

...your editorial in NSFN Oct. '82 rang a bell in the distant corridors of memory. At some time in the mid-seventies, when I was as far from fandom as you can get, I saw one day the whole body of my fan writing like a Mary Rose hulk, quite remote from me and raised eerily for inspection. In the whole mass of flotsam only one sentence appeared to me to be of any value, and that was a passing reference in a HYPHEN editorial, describing the effects in a low budget TV s-f serial. It was something like "The stars shone on the velvet of space like a handful of Ted Tubb stories scattered carelessly across an agent's desk." (← I thought that old Ted Tubb cliché would get a bite from someone, but this is like putting in a bit of dried ants egg and seeing 'Jaws' appear. The context of your heretical vision is unclear — were you coming out of anaesthesia or was it a mood of pessimistic introspection? →)

SFN NoT as you persist in calling it was pure joy from startlement to finesse.

(Walt Willis Cont.)

The intro was one of your best and I wish I could do one of them. (Feel free)  
I liked the bit about the geriatric pep pill, the chains and everything. What do you call the stuff? (The real stuff is 'Tinolol', the pills which are supposed to counter-effect the energyless feeling are 'Dyazide! I've stopped them for the time being - I've got a lot to do.)

Chuck's letters were lovely - I know how difficult it can be to prise these gems from their settings. (I'd have said fangs from the jaws; nice to get him on record in a British fanzine again - all together: FANGS FOR THE MEMORY.....)

I liked the bit about bakelite switches. Do you know Bob once suggested "Many hands make light work" as a motto for the Electricians Union? (Funny you should mention that in the context of your opening para...through many years one pun of yours has stuck in my mind, from Willis Discovers America - you were being offered rubber gloves to deal with a faulty switch, and you said coldly "I didn't come here to be insulated." Anyone else have some crack indelibly stuck in their mind over many years?)\*\*\*\*\*

Letter from ROELOF GOUDRIAAN, Postbus 589, 8200 AN Lelystad, The Netherlands

I'd sampled some fanthologies, but WHEN YNGVI WAS A LOUSE finally made me start looking back...I now am the proud possessor of all fifties fanzines I've been able to trace in the Netherlands. SPACE DIVERSIONS 11, to sum up this collection, is a good zine...it didn't exactly appease the appetite I had, though.

\*\*\*\*\* (Yes, the Netherlands wasn't exactly swarming with fans, even in the old days. The gist of Rolf's letter, besides the fact that he publishes A FOREIGN FANZINE, a lithoed 'zine in impeccable English, is that he is publishing in the next ish. a discussion of CENSORSHIP, and is interested in reprinting from foreign fanzines. Oddly enough, I can't recall anything (from the fifties) on this with the exception of some postal restrictions on s-f in Australia, but I've inserted Rolf's full address, should anyone wish to get into touch.)\*\*\*\*\*

Letter from DAVE WOOD, 1 Friary Close, Marine Hill, Clevedon, Avon.

I've got this theory. There's something rather strange going on. Not like a conspiracy - more of a gestalt, a drawing in of tenuous threads into a greater whole. Maybe it's a sort of lifting of an embargo on certain activities of the fifties. Perhaps it's the drawing nigh of 1984, a special time for all fans from

WANTS  
LIST

FANCYCLOPAEDIA No. 2  
FANHISTORICA No 1  
MORE ISSUES AT HAND (Atheling/Blish)  
Fanzines by Tom Perry, George Charters.  
HYPHENS from No. 28 onwards.

Vine

(Dave Wood Cont.)

days of yore.

Let me explain.

About 6 months ago I met my milkman outside our local Co-op. I was standing, surrounded by shopping and dogs, patiently waiting for my loved one. My milkman hove into sight, but this particular encounter proved to be of the first kind. You see, he was carrying a cardboard box; the box was open and, perched on the top, was a book. Or, at least, the top left hand corner was in view. It said AMAZ. Yes, AMAZ. Partially obliterating the rest was FANTAS,, and ANAL (no, not a medical treatise.)

"What are those?" I asked him. He looked sheepish and muttered about "Just something I'm reading." I'd clearly embarrassed him, but I pressed my advantage home.

"They're science fiction magazines, aren't they?" "Errr - yes."

"Do you like that sort of thing?"

"Yes, why not? I've always liked s-f!"

So I, on that street corner, amongst a flurry of Saturday shoppers, admitted the same. He relaxed. "I've got a collection of them." "Oh yes, what sort?" Well, it appears that he'd been collecting mags since the war years and had a long run of Astoundings, Galaxy, Fantastic, Amazing, etc etc. I was stunned. I thought I was alone in Clevedon with my particular vice.

(← It turned out that the milkman's nephew, recently moved to Clevedon, was also a collector, and the milkman was on his way to the local market bookstall to dispose of the nephew's stuff. "I went all ashen and cold" says Dave. He couldn't strike a separate deal with the milkman, but went along with him and had first pick. Amongst the numerous 'zines was a paper advertising a Con in Cardiff, which he eventually attended. But, the acquisition of the 'zines had revived Dave's collecting instincts. He wrote to Ken Slater at FANTAST MEDWAY. He received an ANALOG. In the ANALOG was a letter from Terry Jeeves, asking about photographing magazine covers. He wrote to Terry. Terry sent him ERG. On page 14 - 'Vinç Clarke, HYPHEN, Bosh, ATom, Harry Turner...all mentioned!')

"Don't you see, Vinç, it's all fate. It's a big scheme devised by the Milk Marketing Board to bring together as many '50's has-beens as possible! It's a New Dawn.....!"

\*\*\* (← And for those who are wondering; well, exactly 5 days before I got this letter I was in the ONE TUN and was meeting Peter Pinto of 'Interstellar Master Traders' of Lancaster for the first time. "Lancaster?" says I. "There used to be two really enthusiastic young fans in Lancaster in the '50s, Ken Potter and Dave Wood. They started off with hand-written fanzines in the early '50's; they formed the JUNIOR FANATICS ...John Brunner was a member." "John Brunner?" "Yeah, he was pretty young at the time. Dave and Kurly Ken...I wonder what happened to them?" Five days later 50% of that question was answered. Welcome back, Dave!" →)\*\*\*\*\*

From TED TUBB, of London S.E.23

Deep in the forest something stirred; a leaf drifting to touch a flower, a bird alighting on a branch, a molecule turning in slumbering repose to nestle against another of its kind. A tiny whisper of sound which swelled by conductive effect into a crashing paen which shook the very foundations of the world and caused those within earshot to stare at each other in wild-eyed surmise.

"Can it be —" The young fan broke off, too stunned by the possibility to put it into words. Yet the thought could not be deried. "Can it be Himself, awaking?"

The old fan smiled and shook his head. "No, lad," he said kindly. "It isn't that." The Great Prophet still slumbered and the eternal summer his waking would bring, together with a ceaseless supply of free bheer, was yet to come.

"Then —" The young fan gulped. "Can it be that the Enchanted Duplicator has been found?"

"No, lad." And this time it was the old fan who felt the gnawing fangs of regret — how long, oh Ghod, how long must he wait before that great day when the Enchanted Duplicator would once more be restored to the world of fen? When golden pages would stream like a beneficent rain from the bright chasms of space, where the stars shone like a double handful of jewels scattered on black velvet? Yet he must be patient and brave and remember that, while it was good to be proud, he must also be humble. And the lad, shaken by the rising paen, needed help, guidance, and a friendly hand.

"Think!" he urged, and held the fan with his eye. "Think and do not be afraid! It's...."

"I have it!" The young fan beamed in relief. "It's not Himself awakening. It's not the Enchanted Duplicator. It's just —

NOT SCIENCE FANTASY NEWS !!

\*\*\*\*\* (← During the fifties, Ted was co-editor of the largest fanzine ever to appear in that decade — I mean it was 160 pages plus. He does tend to let his enthusiasm run away with him.....) \*\*



Letter from Eric Bentcliffe of Holmes Chapel, Cheshire:

With the second NoTSFN I feel you are really getting back into your stride, despite your Doctor's aversion to fanac (I don't suppose his name is Hammett, perchance?)...it reads almost as though you haven't been away...it isn't the BoSH article, excellent tho' it is, but the overall ambience of the thing....

\*\*\*\*\* (← Eric's ref. would have been obscure even 30 years ago, I think. Hammett was a Doc. who read s-f in the days when prozines ran fanzine reviews (how Joseph would have loved that!) Hammett wrote a letter to Walt Willis saying he'd scoured the Maltese newstands for SLANT...and thereby achieved a small fannish immortality. He



(Letters Cont.)

subsequently came over here, attended the '54 SuperManCon, ran some wild parties in London, and the last I heard of him was a half-page news item in NEWS OF THE WORLD, Britain's premier scandal sheet at that time: it was alleged that he'd been dishing out more than cough medicine. I don't know whether to be pleased or insulted when people tell me I haven't changed, but I think I'll alter the name of the 'zine to all together FOREVER AMPIENCE!)\*\*\*\*\*

Letter from KEVIN RATTAN (On Bolton & District S-F Group notepaper yet):

...Me? Fling the acid about? Just isn't my self image...I must have reacted in trying to create friendship in fandom...by being vitriolic...doomed to fail. (← Depends on the number of masochists you meet→) Surprisingly, perhaps, I must agree largely with Dave Langford rather than your estimable self, on reviewing. Had it not been for some fairly severe criticism of my first effort from Dave, my fanzines would have been of a lesser standard than they are (Though what standard they are depends upon the varying attitudes of loccers.) Some criticism is, I feel, necessary to make the act of creation worthwhile, and therefore fun, as long as it is constructive.

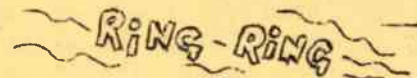
\*\*\*\*\* (← There you are - masochistic! Seriously, I imagine Dave would give you a lot better advice than most - his reputation rests on more than being a critic.→)\*\*\*\*\*

Letter from PETER PINTO of Lancaster and INTERSTELLAR MASTER TRADERS (plug)

.....re your intro, or is it your reintro, i understood it was generally agreed that FIJAGWOL....i have the enchanted duplicator - in swedish, i think.....

\*\*\*\*\* (← No, I can't go on picking bits out of small green and red pages from someone who was frightened by e e cummings as a youth...Peter has got a rather wild talent which I'd like to publish some day...meanwhile, he's selling books and magazines from 45 Blades Street, Lancaster, LA1 1TS →)\*\*\*\*\*

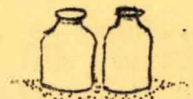
Another letter from DAVE WOOD of Avon:



.....You mention Peter Pinto, of whom I know nothing hut! that address... Good Ghod Almighty...here's a coincidence...45 Blades St. is back-to-back with 72 Dallas Road, where '50's fandom flourished in Lancaster...even Mal Ashworth ~~blept~~ drank at 72 Dallas Rd.....

\*\*\*\*\* (← But he did that everywhere.→)\*\*\*\*\*

Another letter from PETER PINTO:



i've had a minor catastrophe (the ceiling falling in).....

\*\*\*\*\* (←!→)\*\*\*\*\*

"About Ben Adham's name probably led all the rest because the angel's scroll listed names alphabetically " BOGGS (Reprinted from HYPHEN)

Letter from JOSEPH NICHOLAS, Pimlico, SW1:

(A4)

(← I've had a very closely argued  $3\frac{1}{2}$  pages, from Joseph...about 2300 words, practically all of it a well-reasoned criticism of views that I've expressed in NSFN's 1 & 2. It puts me in a dilemma, because I'd like to publish all of it, and yet I don't think I've the time to transcribe it (I am working on my own, I'm living on my own - no one to help with the house etc.) and judging from the lack of comment on the practically-full-length Simon Ounseley screed in the last ish. the fans judge a 'zine on its contents and not on the philosophy behind it. One of these pages holds about 500 words; Joseph's letter would therefore take  $4\frac{1}{2}$  pages (Q7c) plus whatever I replied. It is too many. What I'll do is to give a condensation below, in J's own words if possible; if anyone wants to borrow the original I'll pay postage both ways. If this is still not considered proper, I'll do the whole mss. in the 'zine, but at some future date when hopefully I've more time.→)

You said in the first issue that you'd like to "turn out something which would hark back to the fifties for camaraderie but still be attractive to the modern fan" ... Superficially, 'being attractive' etc. means Doing Something about your layout which is too cramped...unlike Bob Shaw I don't find it endearing (← Yes, I do agree that my old fifties habit of cramming isn't overcome...then I was trying to save money, now I'm trying to save time, and I've always had the sneaking feeling that contents are far more important than layout...will Try To Improve→)

A deeper and more considered response concerns the nature of the camaraderie ...which is all very laudable...(but) something of a lost cause...because of the social climate...which is very different from the fifties. (Those) fans were drawn together by a sense of kinship...(now) SF is no longer the despised minority literature...it is no longer a proud and lonely thing to be a fan. (They) don't feel so alienated. (← Are you defining a 'fan' as simply a science-fiction reader?→)

...The fandom of today is significantly different...increased size, (a) greater degree of social interaction...we see each other so often and so regularly that our fanzines are not, as you put it "semi-public letters to friends"...If we want to write letters to friends we do..if we want to chat over a beer we do that too. None of us are just 'paper personalities' that dominated British fandom some twenty-odd years ago (American fans, of course, have no social knowledge of us and have to rely solely on our writings to glean an impression of what we're like as people - which means, in some cases, that they have absolutely no idea at all of what we're like.. ..(eg.) those who seek to interpret my motives and goals on the basis of the KTF fanzine reviews I wrote some years ago usually arrive at conclusions which are (laughably) off target.) (← You forgot to add that the possession of cars make fans more mobile than they were, tho' living in the middle of London as you do this may not affect you so much. But - so what -there are scattered fans. Some fans like to write, to see themselves in print.→)

...There is a sense of camaraderie about modern fandom, albeit (different) from the fifties, which tends to manifest itself in the social sphere (more than) the written one. When personal relationships (are) discussed in fanzines, they are rather on the abstract level...reticent about talking about ourselves (← you're kidding→) we instead talk about things that interest us, and why... this might account for the generally harder-edged tone of today's fan writing - we can be rude about each other (and there was more of that in the seventies than there is now) knowing that there is only a remote possibility of causing a painful wound. Either

(Joseph Nicholas Cont.)

that or we've all got thicker skins than you lot had...arguments rarely bleed over into personal attacks on participants...we do respect each other, however grudgingly or minutely - well, (I do), whether they respect me is another matter. (← Funny you should say that - only yesterday I received fake Bob Shaw's anti-Albacon bit). This respect, I think, stems directly from our personal knowledge of each other, and acts to preserve peace... (This is something American fans don't seem to appreciate, as witness Patrick Nielsen Hayden's remark in IZZARD 3 -(how) we can violently disagree with each other yet go down to the pub for a drink afterwards.) The genuine personal enmities that exist between certain British fans have no fannish or fannish related reasons behind them.)

Which means...that you have very little chance of recreating in print the camaraderie of the fifties; to do so would entail recalling everything that's gone down in the past twenty-odd years and turning us all back into hermits. (← A very questionable conclusion from a city-centre'd fan.)

...Anyone would think I was taking up fanzine reviewing again, despite a promise to all and sundry a couple of years ago that this was it...but who knows, one of these days I may return, and cancel you all out...but in a mode very different from that in which I'm supposed to have made my name. Why? ...the KTF fanzine reviewing that you find so repellent (and in some respects seem rather frightened of) has had its day...belonging to a different era, arising from a different set of perceptions than those which obtain now...and is unlikely to pass this way again. But just because you despise KTF reviewing ...is no reason for you to reject fanzine reviewing in general; and although it will no doubt sound 'typically' condemnatory of me to say so, I think you're being rather philistine and anti-intellectual about the whole thing. (← Don't want to break up text too much - see end of letter.)

...Criticism...improves things...applied to books, films painting and whatever you this proposition is open to doubt, but applied to the microcosm of fanzine fandom it is truth itself...there is a continuous feedback process..in which the comments of all serve to affect the whole. Criticism ..purveyed by Simon Ounsley, Martyn Taylor and others has, because of its public, more formal nature, a greater impact on the whole than individual comments in private letters - all can read it, all may learn from it, all may act on it. Particularly the editors...criticism offered in a private letter they can ignore, but criticism offered in a public column they can't, or at least without making it obvious. And if the criticism on offer is genuinely constructive...they'll have very little reason for ignoring it at all. Not that editors should be forced into adopting a course of action they don't wish to, naturally (← Oh, naturally...) but at least they'll have a clearer idea of whether the course they've adopted is likely to succeed or fail ...and thus, one way or the other, does fanzine criticism work its improvements....

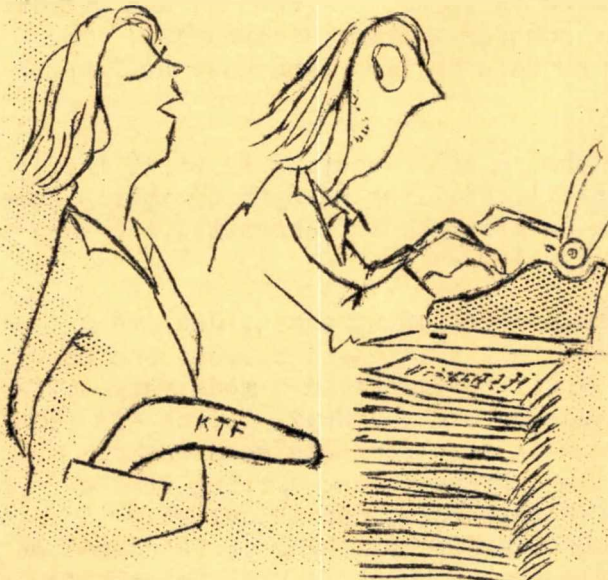
Simon Ounsely...didn't even hint...that(criticism) enables those who do not practice the art...in this case, those who do not edit fanzines...to learn more about it...not just how, why and where things succeed or fail and whether and how they may be improved...but whether (they) will teach us anything new about ourselves, fandom and the world in general...and how each individual fanzine measures up against the standards applied to the whole. The last is..the most important point and at root the raison d'être of all criticism, for without some sort of yardstick (however crude) as an end product there is no point to the exercise at all;

(Joseph Nicholas Cont.)

'Is it your Novel, or another  
hoc, Joseph?'

and it is in its discussion of standards - that criticism validates itself. It acts both as a goad and a carrot, on the one hand prodding lesser fanzines towards better things and on the other beckoning the greater ones on to more glorious goals.

Without criticism there is but a wasteland, in which nobody has any idea of what they're doing and no hope whatever of making any kind of progress....Admittedly, my KTF stuff never lived up to any of these strictures, and looking back on it I find that I don't care much for it at all (← join the club) but your suggestion of a mere list of titles is no alternative whatever...even if Matrix were to concentrate on providing a 'buyers guide' there would have to be some commentary on the contents of each fanzine, to give prospective 'buyers' some idea of what they were being offered...the formation of any comment at all, no matter how subjective or reflexive, is in itself an act of criticism (your remark that Warhoon 28 is 'the best fanzine in history' for



example). You can't get away from it no matter how hard you try—and you're trying pretty damned hard, I'll give you that. But to no avail, really; the times have moved on and the lengthy critical essays and the arguments over fannish ideology are here to stay, and to oppose them on the ground that some KTF reviewer might wound your ego is, I'm afraid, to reveal a rather deficient understanding of modern fandom.....

\*\*\*\*\* (← I'm not sure that the space saving was worth it, after all...that was the toughest editing I've ever done. Well, thanks, Joseph - it certainly goes some way to delineating the parameters of the gulf between us, and my only difficulty is to condense my reply to a decent size, to edit me. I think, because you touch my pride a little, that I'll start with the suggestions that I might be frightened of KTF reviewing.

\*\*\*I was active fanning between 1947 and 1960, and during that time I did almost everything in the semi-pro and fan field that it was possible to do. I spent a hell of a lot of time and money on a hobby I loved, and I strived during that time to build up an active British fandom, along with others of a similar mind. When I came back to it a year or so ago I found - no APA, a monthly (instead of a weekly) meeting in London, a trickle of fanzines, very few of which seemed 'friendly' and several of which could only be classified as 'Vomit Fandom', and warnings from some of my old friends that 'bovver boys' had reduced fandom to a loveless wasteland...to borrow half a phrase of yours. I was under the impression that KTF reviewers still dominated British fandom (we have, at present, a BSFA Chairman who characterised a fanzine as being 'too friendly'), and if you believe that I would then start a fanzine if I was frightened of KTF reviewers, you're less clever than I thought.

(Lesters Cont.)

You more-or-less renounce your own KTF activities in particular and that of other reviewers in general without any specific reason why you think that this contemptible branch of criticism has failed. You still cling to the notion that if private letters of 'constructive criticism' fail, then public strictures will bully the erring editor into improving his fanzine towards some abstract 'ideal'. Nowhere does the thought strike you that fans are individualists, that talents vary, that in a free-and-easy field such as ours the attempt to impose a monolithic structure is doomed to fail if enough fans get up and give it the fingers - hence the publication of NSFN, MICROWAVE, Chuck Connor's 'zines, etc.

I seem to have missed - I've been rather busy - any mention of the actual ultimate goal, the Utopian perfect 'zine that all these criticisms are supposed to produce at some unspecified date. Will it be some tiny NEWS OF THE WORLD, replete with revelations on drug taking, an OMNI without the illos., the TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT for amateurs? I reiterate my viewpoint as expressed in the last NSFN - if someone wants to put out a 'zine...it's his money, his time, his work. You don't have to read it, subscribe to it, exchange with it.

Sure, there are different qualities of fanzine. I've just received from the US a semi-literate, boring little 'zine which is almost painful to read - I would almost hesitate to add it to the collection. But I don't see that this diminishes in the slightest my appreciation of the field as a whole, or my love of a limited number of 'zines in particular. What makes you think that criticism can alter the personality and talent of a fan? I've read many criticisms of your own style of writing, the convoluted eloquence, the series of gavottes around the nub of the argument. Has it changed your way of writing? Going by the present mss., I think not. But I wouldn't like to change it. It's you.

If there were to be a fire here, I'd grab Lady-the-Poodle first and WARHOON 28 second, but this doesn't mean that I don't appreciate MICROWAVE and TAPPEN and ANSIBLE and BOONFARK and RAFFLES and many others - they all march to different drums. The attempted imposition of standards on our diverse field says more about the imposers than I'd care to have said about me.)\*\*\*\*\*

Letter from JOYCE HIBBERT:

...You mention the idea of letting a number of fans have editorial control over one sheet and then stapling them together. In one way this has already been done, with a number of fans writing so many words each, and then the next fan taking over. This was done with the 'Gonad the Barbrain' trilogy. (← I didn't mean a continuous narrative - I meant complete and separate editorial control. I didn't know of 'Gonad...' (sounds interesting) but the idea of a multi-authored piece goes back a loong way...including a little one-shot put out by self, Bob Shaw and a couple of other fans many years ago in which each paragraph was written by a different person, and the whole thing was pushed out in an hour. It was titled, naturally, "Our Zine".....)

I suppose definitions of KTF differ, but I would certainly disagree with Rob that there's no more of it about. Unfortunately, I always forget where I've read things, but I seem to remember a more recent one than NABU 10. Or perhaps



(Joyce Hibbert Cont.)

I remember NABU 10 as being more recent than it is. Time seems to have kaleidoscoped since I entered fandom. It seems ridiculous that things could have happened that long ago. (← Ah, the cry of the Trufan!→)

Go on, tell me who the Morlocks would be? (← Look out, one of 'em's just behind you.→)

Kevin is getting quite vicious these days. Perhaps the postal slanging match he had with Joe Nicholas a while ago has affected him. I think Steve Green put fannish feuds in perspective when he said something like "When I pack to go to a Con., I don't want to think that I'm going to the front line."

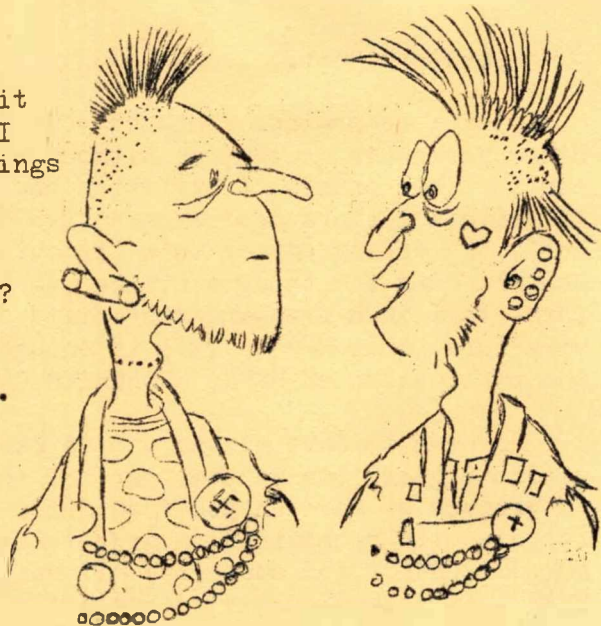
About the poem - have you considered entering it in the Vogon poetry competition at Faircon (Unless there's one at the Albacon)? Wonder what's in those pills, try and get some more, make fandom happier. (← I did think of starting one about the Albacon..."There's gore in the gutters of Glasgow, The sporrans are rigid with rage..." but I thought it heartless to mock the afflicted.→)

Eria's letter- I think it would be fairer to say that people have money or free time, not money and free time. (← My money is mostly in 15½p. stamps, and I don't know what you mean by 'free time'.→)

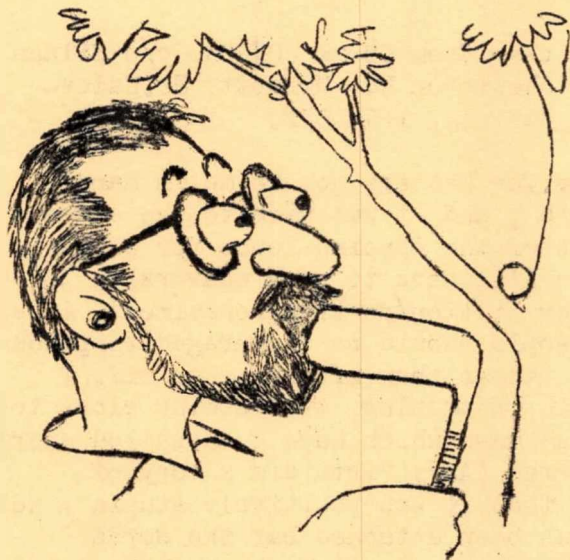
I agree with Simon Owsley's idealistic view of fanzine reviewing, even tho' he did move house and my LoC to him was sent back "Not Known Here." However, fanzine reviews are not like that. One could mention the 'zine that was not read at all because the BSFA reviewer didn't like the way it was reproduced. When it was produced (next ish.) in a way he did like, it was described as something like 'best new fanzine' (← I've been thinking of sending Martyn Taylor a couple of my blood-pressre pills taped inside each NSFN, but I don't think Postal Regulations allow.→) You mentioned a time when Convention organisers were not fanzine fans. I think some of the nastiness in the reviewing is caused by the BSFA reviewer being part of the fannish establishment, which has what amounts to a 'party line' about a lot of things. However, I don't like your suggestion of just listing faned's names and addresses. A brief suggestion of the fanzine (fannish, comics, etc.), perhaps a mention of the main articles, what it's available for, and an explanation of this, is the minimum information. (← True - I'll confess I only put in my minimum out of sheer boyish mischievousness, but the only reaction I had from Simon (whom I do respect) was a polite little note declining my offer to loan him WARHOON 28.→)

Can you get someone to do a list of numbered fandoms and what year they represent?

\*\*\*\*\*(← Many thanks for a real comment-provocative letter. Harry Warner, the Historian, doesn't approve of numbered fandoms, but I might dredge up some information next ish.→)



'Have you got a costume for the Con fancy Dress?'



#### EXTRACTS of CHUCK HARRIS:

...."And having got this far down the page you needn't expect some grovelling apology because I didn't write earlier...searching unsuccessfully for your previous letter I find a letter from Walt dated November that I haven't answered yet. He mentioned 'Wanda Rabbitt...a name to be conjured with..' and of course that started me off with 'Chuck Saway'...the ancient aviator', and Hans Neesen Boomzerdazee the Dutch bopster and lots more too humourous to mention...so I've put that one on top of the telly along with the final demand for the water rate - the real soon now file....amnd, no thanks, I have not turned into a Conservative - or,

for that matter, a werewolf or a Seventh Day Actuarist. I might vote for Shirl the Girl next time though.

Although we've been here for 10 years now, I can't really say I like the Midlands or the people, altho the scenery is better and the golf cheaper...I'm convinced that \*\*\*\*s are a sort of sub-species. They are thick. This is not racial prejudice - altho I wouldn't want my daughter to marry one - but demonstrable. Most of the town is led by the Southerners...the small minority who came here from Essex like we did...the Council, the PTA, etc. etc. while the \*\*\*\*s play Bingo in the Working Man's Club and go to watch their football team on Saturdays. It is no accident that there has never been a \*\*\*\* Trufan....and if Shirl wants to build ovens I'll help her. But I'm not prejudiced. Ho no. The 18-stone slob and his nasty little sidekick that I have the misfortune to work for (Fatman and Ronnie) will be first through the gate —and I'll get a lot of simple pleasure from turning the Regulo.

Why! Only last year we took on two \*\*\*\* ladies to work as packers in Despatch. We fired them one month later because they were running an on-site brothel. They were most indignant and screaming Victimisation!!!! and get-the-shop-steward etc. "We was," they said self-righteously, "only doing It in our lunch hours."

Like I said, Thick.

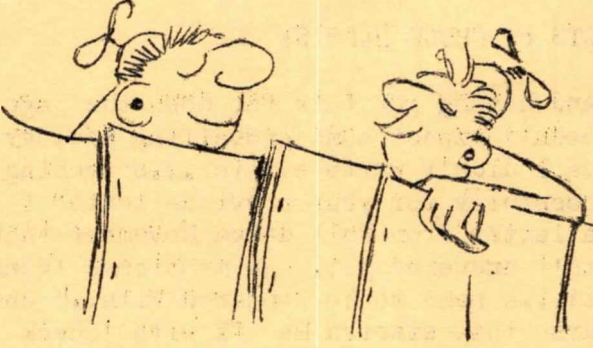
(( Only a small piece of Harrisiana this time - he's not the only one who can lose letters. The \*\*\*\*s are a small editorial 'G'-string, because, unknown to Mr. Harris, there are fans in \*\*\*\*.))

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Letter from: ELDA WHEELER, Maidstone, Kent:

..."A Streetcar Named Bizarre struck a chord with me, not so much his desire to dress like the stars but the embarrassing situation he got himself into on the tram. I cringe totally when I read things like that. This particular story reminded me of the time I tried to shut a window on a 'bus and I got my necklace caught on the catch. The embarrassment of half strangling yourself in front of twenty or so people has to be believed! I wasn't comforted by some adorable child piping up "Mummy, is she from Oakwood?" That's the local looney bin. I have digressed - I think it's called lateral thinking .

\*\*\*\*(( Don't worry - we are the soul of digression around here. Welcome to NSEB ))\*\*



Letter from CHUCK CONNOR, c/o Sildan House, Chediston Rd, Wissett, Mr. Halesworth, Suffolk, IP19 0NF.

...The letters got to me in many respects, and it was nice to see someone on my side of the fanzine fence for a change (though I'll have to do a conversion job on you over fiction/poetry/prosezines), namely that people should be encouraged to produce 'zines rather than killing them off. I

find some of the 'reviews' produced by others to be amusing, even coming close to the edge of hysterical at times. I've read about mags which have been pulled apart for using xerox, or that the pages aren't numbered (Andy Firth did a copy of FLEDGELING with binary numbering, and was told that it was positively stupid - hell, no one else has done it), in fact everything has been attacked bar the words themselves (and in some cases these were never mentioned). (← Yeah, know what you mean - Wouldn't mind holding a small contest for an example of the most meaningless 'review' - Martyn Taylor's review of NSFN 1 being barred. How about:

"Only slightly better are 'X' and 'Y'; actually, I suspect I could quite like these if only I could manage to stick with them for any length of time. Despite barely more layout control than (a previously mentioned fanzine), they actually look quite attractive, and Jeff seems to have a keen mind and lucid arguments. However, I would hazard a guess that he types straight on to stencils without the benefit of correcting fluid, thus creating a mish-mash of errors and discontinuities; besides that, his spelling is extremely-err- imaginative, for example (three spelling errors listed) Nonetheless, I believe that with a little more care, (it) can become a pretty good zine." →)

No, KTF is better off dead, for although it cleared the air in some respects it has led to more problems. Kev Rattan points this up by saying that although he wanted to use the Topic idea, you've laid down in print that you're going to do something along the same lines. 5 will get you 10 that if you produce topic-zines then someone will get labelled for copying someone else's idea...the 'nothing is original' crowd have something but they take it to almost fanatical, parrot-like extremes.

So you were after wild ideas, eh? The idea of a combazine was out in 1980, under the guise of RANDOM FANDOM, which was planned as a giant one-shot APA thing in the States. I know nothing about this one (ask the incredible Harrys about it - Andruschak and Warner Jnr., that is), but the idea is becoming more and more appealing to me. You'd have to standardize the page size (nothing looks worse than mixing quarto, A4 and foolscap - no cheating with any A5 stuff, thank you very much) and a set number of copies would have to be decided on beforehand so that a print run could be worked on. If anyone is interested in turning this idea into a sketch project, and from there into a set piece, one-shot at best (unless the idea takes off) then let me know. Postage would be the biggestcrippler of the thing but I would propose an unlimited page count at first (only limited to 2pp. per contributor) and take it from there. I'm pretty sure that given a little jabbing in the appropriate areas, you could get something to beat WARHOON 28's page count. Wild? It's bloody crazy. Still, who knows, it might just catch on.



(Chuck Connor Cont)

\*\*\*\*\*(← As an oold fan and tired I love the way your enthusiasm mounts sentence by sentence, Chuck,,.the Birth of a Notion ...my original idea was that if faneds could get together to produce a sort of sampler 'zine for newcomers, it would save hassle about biassed reviewing...what fandom (or, at least, this part of it) desperately needs is a plain-paper copier...you could just pick a few pages you thought were typical of your 'zine, no trouble about new material...unfortunately, the cheapest pp copiers I've come across have been £500+. I suppose the job could be done with a photo-stencil reproduction..... Anyway, I'm ready to join in your scheme, tho' I doubt whether you'll find 306 - sorry, 305 other fans as readily (WARHOON 28 has 613 pages, and if you're limiting contributions to 2pp per fan...))\*

The Bob Shaw piece was amusing, and certainly well received. I've always enjoyed his writings and transcripts slightly better than a 'live' Shaw. Don't know why. Perhaps memories are better kept that way. (← Dick Bergeron picked on my remark in the last NSFN concerning the fact that I thought a fanzine was an inferior substitute to actually meeting other fans, and went to considerable lengths to disagree...personally, having Bob in person, straight faced, coming out with some incredible purs adds to the enjoyment for me, but I can see the case for preserving same in print and returning to them at leisure. I suppose Video is the answer....that's about £1000 you've made me spend on this half-page alone....))

Rich Coad (of SPACE JUNK fame in the States) has taken to reprinting old material from 'way back when', though I haven't seen anything from him for well over a year now. One of the few Americans with an almost Brit-styled 'zine, and a good one at that. (← I'll try and get details for next ish.))

COINCIDENCE INCIDENT. I've always enjoyed reading about them, but never made a collection of them. Mind you, I've got this little thing for odd facts and slips; like a local Council report for the yearly pest control. Towards the end it read: "....37 voles, 19 cockroaches, and 2,761 ants...." I still get mental pictures of these blokes from the council walking around in full protective gear, either killing off ants one by one, or else walking around with tweezers....

"Hey, Charlie! 'Phone for some backup from SWAT! We got two dozen ants cornered down at No. 45 Beddington Crescent. And for God's sake, man, tell 'em to hurry!"

\*\*\*\*\*(← At the time of stencilling this, Chuck is out in the Falklands, so it's a little difficult to iron out the arithmetical problem above, but love the letter — Chuck is one of the most prolific letter writers (and fanzine publishers) in current fandom, and a shining example of how what I would regard as the true fannish spirit lives on in spite of the snipers.))\*\*\*\*\*

Letter from JON WALLACE, Dundee

I can sympathise to a certain extent with your problem of lethargy. Being a hay-fever sufferer, I spend most of the summer doped up to the eyelids with anti-histamines. A side effect of this is to make me drowsy most of the time, and so my fannish and other activities are frantically compressed into the months between October and April.....

\*\*\*\*\*(← Sympathies, Jon, and thanks for the article, etc etc. The older I get the more people I seem to meet who suffer (or have suffered) from some illness which

(LETTERS Cont.)

at some time in the past would have meant curtains (such as you, nose and eyes all streaming, meeting a Sabre-tooth tiger some June.) Thinking about Darwin's survival-of-the-fittest unaccountably failing to provide us with perfect bodies...I know I would only be annoying Mr Nicholas from the woody confines of an ouija board if it wasn't for the skills of certain surgeons - it seems to me that the one sure, certain profession to go into today is the medical.....)

Letter from TED WHITE, of Falls Church, VA, USA:

....As someone who has been a fan since the early fifties, I find myself both agreeing and disagreeing with both sides of the current argument, and I must say you bring a welcome perspective to the 'battle of the generations' and NSFN seems to have created some fresh dialogue on the subject. I'd like to see the 'Sixth Fandom Fandom nonsense of some callow US fans replaced by the discussion here. (← I was trying to instil a wider view into what seemed a dismally restricted outlook. I was getting comments after NSFN 1 such as "I can't help but wonder why we have hatred in fandom where we are all supposed to share certain interests" and, from a different person, "when they (young neos) get into fandom they realise there are people who don't want them there..." plus some trenchant views from older fans→)

I think you've idealised fifties fandom somewhat (ironically, the same charge has been levelled at me); the 'characteristic flavour' of 'sheer wonder and pleasure at communicating with and meeting others of that rare sub-species, the s-f fan' seems to me to have worn off during the fifties, perhaps because it was inspired by the rarity of the experience, and when fans and contact with fans is no longer rare in one's life, the wonder begins to disappear. (← Agreed - if someone has been a first-rank fan (and pro.) for as long as you have, the infinite variety would become a little stale...I suppose. I guess I'm lucky in that the potential in a fan has always intrigued me, and even now sometimes inspires wonder.→) I well recall the activities of 'Inchmery Fandom' of which you were a participant, and I the occasional and unhappy butt. There was damned little of that "sheer wonder" to be found in the pages of APE, but a good deal of snideness, much of which had no firmer base than the desire to bully other fans.

(← Don't say things like that...you're destroying the image I'm building up of a kindly old fan in his dotage...I can see my chances of being fandom's first pensioner being conflated....Actually, I can't remember why, when and how the group criticised you...I don't think it was <sup>for</sup> pushing the merits of LSD and other drugs in fandom, that was some other pushful New Yorker; whatever it was, it doesn't seem actually to have banished you to the Outer Darkness, as you're still alive and kicking 20-odd years later. If any injustice was done I'll give you a somewhat late apology→)

Under the circumstances it's hard to understand your antipathy to KTF reviewers. (← You mean the 1958/9 circumstances? I really must go up into the attic and sort out those APEs.→) Frankly, I'm not sure who <sup>you</sup> really mean, since the only one you identify by name is Alan Dorey, whose review I haven't seen. Joseph Nicholas used to be associated with such reviews but hasn't done any for more than two years now ...as he keeps reminding us...the Pickersgill reviews I've seen were outspoken but far kinder and more constructive than hearsay had led me to expect. But from your comments here I'm wondering if you are not simply attacking criticism per se when applied to fanzines.

(TED WHITE Cont.)

It's certainly true that fanzines are essentially a hobby activity, and as such basically done for the enjoyment of the editor/publisher, but if they existed solely for that the putative editor could produce one copy and lock it away in a drawer, his needs completely satisfied. But of course, no fan editor does that. He wants egoboo. He wants feedback. Good criticism - informed, intelligent, thoughtful - is the very best feedback an editor can get; it is the ultimate in egoboo because it shows that one's work has been thoughtfully examined, correctly perceived and fruitfully commented upon ...and very often it will open the editor's eyes to directions and possibilities to be explored.

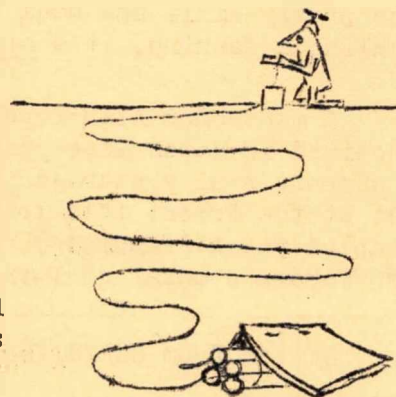
It is 'shop talk' of the highest level. Praise from someone you regard as perceptive and whose judgment you respect will always count for more than praise from someone who praises everything irrespective of its merit.

I think most of us who do write fanzine criticism recognise that not all fanzines have the same aims or goals, that there is little point in kicking a dead horse (thus, the few critical reviews of Keith Walker's abysmal fanzines) etc etc. and reserve our most detailed critiques for the most ambitious fanzines, whose editors clearly have aimed at the highest and deserve that kind of feedback.

Reading Simon Ounsley's letter reminds me that while I have heard PONG was reviewed in MATRIX, I've never seen a copy, which strikes me as a betrayal of a basic fan-ethic that says you send reviews to those reviewed. But apparently the BSFA operates in a different universe, immune to such ethical considerations. (← There you go again...how's your blood-pressure?→)

Despite the seriousness of most of this letter, I very much enjoyed the 'zine. It had a comfortable, warm feeling to it, evocative of what I liked best about fifties fanzines from the Irish-English group of which you were once part. And I definitely enjoy the sight of some of the more fondly-remembered participants in that fifties fandom re-emerging, like Mal Ashworth. I hope NSFEN will act as a stimulant on current British fandom, which seems to be in another doldrums just now. It's time to break down the generational barriers which seem to have become established (both there and here) in the seventies. We're all fans, right? Right.

\*\*\*\*\*Especial thanks for those last few paragraphs, Ted, but your whole exposition is brilliant. I think the whole crux of the matter rests in your "He wants feedback....good criticism is the very best feedback an editor can get..." Well, yes, I totally agree if said editor is trying to put out a miniature prozine, stories which are begging for constructive comments, serious articles on...nuclear disarmament, the feminist position, etc. But I'm not really interested in that...I'm interested in communication, an open letter..."look who's turned up now"...'here's a funny effort from 'X' which I'd like you to share..." "I think this/that aspect of fandom needs examining" ..."have you heard about - gossip,gossip"..."dip into this jumble of personalities and talent and pull out something interesting." And very much etcetera. When I came back into fandom, it seemed that every other fan-



(LETTERS)

'zine I read was in an uneasy state of fidgety attention, like a soldier on parade wondering whether his flies were undone. At the time I put this down to fear of the KTF dinosaur, and gave it a light kick in the crotch in passing (NSFN1); I'm now told in soothing tones that the monster is dead, was dying indeed as I rejoined fandom - we seem to be a bit short of funeral orations tho', considering that the leading lights of British fandom apparently subscribed to its upkeep for several years.

So the apprehensive rigidity of fanzines was <sup>due to</sup> the fear of being goosed by some magisterial reviewer who wouldn't recognise a relaxed tone if it came up and yelled a bad pun in his ear. Another manifestation of this attitude was a 'fan' at a fanzine panel at the Eastercon '82, asking why a new fanzine had appeared, or words to that effect. Probably the same gent. would look at a baby and remark that it was pretty small and weak for a proper human being. To me, if a fan wants to publish a fanzine, it's his money, his time....oh, you've heard that before.

I mentioned Alan Dorey as it was a 'zine of his called ACTIVATED SLUDGE received in March last year, plus observations at the aforementioned Con. which I suppose really started this 'zine on its contentious career. I'd cite AS here, but at the moment it's lost in the chaos of transporting several thousand loosely-stapled pages (fanzines) from 4 or 5 resting places here to the dignity of their own separate metal shelving in one room. ↵) \*\*\*\*\*

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Letter from CHRISTINA LAKE, Chislehurst, Kent:

...I found the debate on fanzine reviewing between you and Simon Ounsley rather interesting, because I agree with your comments on the spirit in which fanzines should be taken, but not the conclusion you came to: that fanzine reviews should not exist at all. I don't like to see gratuitous demolitions of 'zines because they don't happen to accord with the reviewers taste, but I definitely think there's a place for constructive fanzine criticism. It can communicate enthusiasm (if your reviewer isn't too cynical or world weary) and generate the feeling that there's some point in being ambitious.

Of course, letter writers can do this to a certain extent, but reviewer's opinions go beyond the circle of people who already receive the fanzine (but maybe that's what you object to - judgment by proxy). I like seeing my fanzines considered in the context of other fanzines around and would be disappointed if the BSFA stopped providing a reviewing service.

I wonder what you'll think of my review column, which admittedly wasn't done very seriously?

\*\*\*\*\* (↵ Thus not only slipping in the blade, but twisting it on the way out, as she liked NSFN. I'm handicapped in replying, as I have had the first page of a LoC to you and Lilian hanging around (out of the typewriter, Mal) for a couple of months. Ummm - I don't know what you mean by 'in the context of other fanzines' as they vary like people. If you mean that if a reviewer likes your 'zine, then you can trust his opinions on others, I take your point. (Ouch). ↵) \*\*\*\*\*

SADLY MISSING FROM ANY OF TODAY'S 'ZINES ARE BACOVER QUOTES, ORIGINATED BY HYPHEN. THESE ARE PERTINENT PHRASES EXTRACTED FROM LETTERS, OVERHEARD, SENT IN BY PEOPLE. Thus... WELL, IF FANDOM ISN'T A WAY OF LIFE, WHAT IS?... NEVER FEED A DRUNK COFFEE - ALL YOU GET IS A WIDE-AWAKE DRUNK... IF GHOD HAD MEANT US TO BE NUDISTS WE'D HAVE BEEN BORN WITHOUT CLOTHES... INFINITESIMAL - AT LEAST!..... Wanna try it?.....

Letter from ARNOLD C. AKIEN, of Tyne & Wear (Condensed from 8 hand written pp.)

...this coincidence nonsense can all be dealt with by the application of Akien's Law of Universal Paranoia which states that 'Life is easy to understand once you realise that everyone is out to get you.' Of course you pick up copies of ancient fanzines produced by that little known APA the Arizona State Highways Board (an odd name for an APA I'll agree —but then, aren't they all?)...you do this because They plant such things in the hope of driving you mad. Of course if you wait long enough in Times Square or Piccadilly, or where ver, everyone you know will come up and ask for directions...they do this because they are still following you around and you have driven them mad with frustration by standing on the same spot for days — anything to get you to move. (← I knew I shouldn't have started to type out this letter.→)

Whilst we are on the subject of standing still, I can't take violent exception to any of the views expressed in NSF2 on fanzine criticism. (← You needn't be violent — just sneer at people who don't agree with your kindly editor→)....let me put it in my own way and try to incorporate the various attitudes expressed without going into the oft-repeated argument pattern that quotes remarks made by fans years before on the assumption that these remarks must ever and aye ..be the sum of their philosophy — people do alter, after all, change their opinions even in the course of a few months...

...The first fanzine I ever actually read was Dave Langford's Twll Du and it was a revelation. "This bloke is an amateur writer?" I muttered to myself (yes, I know that he's a pro too, but I wasn't to know that then, was I?) and I confidentially expected that whilst naturally not all fanzines would be as well written, or as well produced, at least the general standard must be fairly high. I was wrong. (← Naturally; 'zines are written by fans, not robots.→) Alas the T.D.s and the Tappens and the...well, I could name a few more..are rarities — rare examples of how well it can be done. It is true that a fan can publish a decent fanzine (of decent quality) in the absence of any talent for creative writing by pubbing a genzine and devoting his energies to it, but there isn't much of it around — creative writing, that is.....

Fanzine fandom can be roughly divided into two camps that merge thinly at their peripheries..those who are ambitious to improve the quality of their writing (or artwork) and see fanzines as a way of doing it, and those who see fmz. as a letter substitute....Alas, the lit. lot. think the pen-pals type should be more ambitious, on the other hand the pp's think the lit lot should be less pretentious, and by their very nature the lit. lot is better equipped. to criticize — they have longer literary teeth and sharper metaphorical claws than the pp's. The trouble is that the lits. went through a period of good old-fashioned protestant evangelism (← The Church of St. Gregory..?→)...the foremost spokesman became enthralled by the notion that a dose of two of hell-fire and brimstone preaching would be good for the souls of the ungodly.

What has been lost in the bickering is balance, we need some means of assessing worth, of raising standards, what we don't need is gratuitous cruelty — any criticism is hard to bear...a surgeon doesn't plunge his knife into his patient and twist it repeatedly, indifferent to the blood he sheds — that is indicative of a certain lack of skill. It is surely better to heal than to kill.

You said 'Hope you like it Arnold'...and yes, I do; I quite like your fanzine too...with reservations....if you stick with the mid-fifties style, where are you

(Arnold Akien Cont.)

going to get mid-fifties style writers from - apart that is from creating your own (Oh, what a vision that conjures up - down to the graveyard Igor - bring your bucket and spade). Maybe I'm wrong, but I reckon that either you'll be forced to raid the archives for '50's stuff ,,, or you will be forced to change and evolve NSFN...certainly fanzine fandom is overdue for dynamic movement in some direction but not, I think, backwards in time. Nor do I believe that you want or expect that this should be so...it will be interesting to see what you do next..

\*\*\*\*\*(← A thoughtful exposition which it's taking me more time to comment upon than other more one-sided screeds e.g. J. Nicholas....I think, in view of the odd late-winter /early spring flowers now pushing their way into the light (except in my garden, I hasten to ~~add~~)...you, and many others, see fandom as a small plant, ready to grow, putting out leaves which might be criticised, evolving towards some unknown flowering apotheosis, needing fertiliser or pruning to come to that state. You're interested in the buds and the flowers, less concerned with the roots. What you see, here, now, is what fandom is.

\*\*\*\*\*My view.....and I'm not involving other oldtime fans in this...is of a large tree, still growing, with a number of simians playing in it. Down towards the main trunk are the old, grey (or balding) apes like myself; we're conscious of the youngsters playing about in the upper boughs, their view restricted in most cases by their immediate surroundings; there's scratching and biting and games going on, and the oldsters are likely to swipe at the young monkeys who are bullying others, disputing amongst those higher, greener extrusions which are the latest growths of the old tree. But whatever the height at which the apes and monkeys are playing, they can't destroy the tree....fandom, the structure on which we live.)\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\* I ALSO HEARD FROM : Harry Turner, Syd Bounds, Pamela Boal, Arthur (ATom) Thomson, Chuck Harris...who?...."Glasses? Yes, the progressive lenses are great. Bloody marvellous! Worth every penny. I don't know how I'd manage without them. I see marvellously again; distinguish an 'A' cup from a 'B' cup at 200 yards once more....." and various scribbled messages on the margins of various fanzines.... Gentlemen...leave yourself a bit of space:

THEME - a fanzine, will be published from this address immediately the duplicating ink dries on this ish. of NSFN. Then MICROWAVE. Then the next NSFN (probably June) Letters concerning Fried Robins, Criticism, Wagner, Combozines etc etc. welcome.

THANKS TO ARTHUR (ATom) THOMSON FOR ILLOS. IN THE INIMITABLE MANNER ( and straight on to already typed stencils) and SID BIRCHBY, AN OOLD FAN STILL LENDING A HAND...

FORTUNATELY, HYPOCHONDRIA IS THE ONE DISEASE I HAVEN'T GOT.....I'M STILL HOOKED ON CONVENTIONS AND HAVE BEGUN TO WORRY ABOUT BEING A CASE OF RETARDED DEVELOPMENT.....I REFUSE TO HAVE EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENTS TO PIECES OF GROUND - AT ONE END OF THE SCALE IT'S KNOWN AS PATRIOTISM AND AT THE OTHER AS GARDENING.....