



SNORKEL, alias KAMIKAZE (formerly TOGSIN), is a fanzine produced by Harry Bell, 9. Lincoln St., GATESHEAD, Tyne & Wear, NE8 4EE, U.K. with the intention of keeping in touch with that part of fandom which might on occasion wonder what's happened to Harry Bell. Subsequent issues are more likely to be called SNORKEL than anything else. Distribution will be by Whim only but a sharp eye will be kept on those whose response factor is low. Logo above is by me, as is anything else by way of artwork in this issue. This is Grimwab Publication 13, dated May 1980.

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Deep in the subconscious of British fandom is the certain knowledge of how the Perfect Fanzine should look. Joseph Nicholas and Alan Dorey reckon they have a pretty good idea of what it is and Don West almost certainly does, Astral Powers considered. These three, and others besides, have spent considerable time and wordage trying to get across what it is they've discovered about the nature of the Perfect Fanzine but their methods are unsound. Whether or not they really do know what they're talking about (and on the strength of ANOTHER BLOODY FANZINE it appears two of them don't) is irrelevant if, in the course of criticising fanzines in general and in particular, they end up forgetting what they're saying in favour of how they're saying it. This has been the fate of most of the writers of the rock press who, by and large, turn out self-indulgent crap and it would be a pity if fandom failed to break away from such a dangerous trend.

It may already be too late, of course. British fandom has turned in on itself to such an extent that everyone seems to spend so much effort considering how a fanzine should be that it never gets published. The era of the Conceptual Fanzine may be upon us.

Harry Bell is falling into ranks behind the Ayatollah Williams, you might think. He accepts the Williams theory of vigorous iconoclastic young fans being held back by old farts, you might go on to think. Not so. Were I to subscribe to a theory at all, I'd be far more inclined to the view that British fandom reached its peak in the late seventies and now has nowhere else to go. For me, fannishness is the ultimate goal of SF fandom and once it's reached, that's the end of the line. There is no new stage of fandom for the young turks to ascend to, though this does not preclude the possibility of occasional innovation in the manner of David Bridges. What happens now, if anything, is that fannish fandom withers away, we get an interregnum, followed by new fans who create fandom all over again. Seems to me, that's exactly what happened in the late sixties/early seventies.

You want evidence in support of the theory, look at the way the major British fanzines have failed and the current lack of interest in fanac on the part of long-established fans. How long since the last WRINKLED SHREW? When was the last TRUE RAT? When will Greg Pickersgill, Peter Roberts and the Mearae pub their respective ishes again? PDQ says Pickersgill, overturning the theory. But it is only a theory and really I don't give a fuck whether it's proven right or wrong, as long as fandom stays fun and I go on getting my share.

Which brings me to this present fanzine. For a number of reasons, over the last six or seven months I've come nearer to gafiating than at any time since 1968. When I gafiated in 1968 the hardest part of all was the feeling of claustrophobia. I've always been an internationalist, I like to feel part of the world community, and fanzines from abroad are a pretty good, if bizarre, indicator of what goes on in other parts of the world. I'm not much of a letter-writer and for a while, I want to stop doing fanzine artwork, so I have to try a fairly frequent fanzine as a means of maintaining contact with fandom.

Undeterred by PARANOID and encouraged by Alan Bostick's FAST & LOOSE, I've returned to the personalzine format I used for The Grimling BOSCH. SNORKEL will be as flexible as I want it to be, won't cost me an arm and a leg to produce and won't care what people think of it, which is not to say that I don't want to hear how you think it might be improved. But write and tell me, don't make it the subject of another article.

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CAN I GET A WORD IN EDGEWAYS?

An "unofficial communiqué" came from Victoria Wayne recently, entitled "I Have Quite a Lot to Say!" This was in response to a Gary Farber flyer called "Does Anyone Have Anything to Say?" The theme discussed under such lengthy titles is the future of the FAAn Awards, a subject dear to the hearts of almost everyone but fans in the UK.

As a former recipient of a FAAn Award I guess I really ought to throw in my two penn'orth, although to be honest I've always felt that a mention now and again in the Checkpoint Fan Poll was every bit as prestigious as a

wobbly statuette collecting dust on my mantelpiece.

I'm pleased in a way that Farber and Vayne are stirring up discussion on the Awards, if only because it would be nice to have a more accurate reflection of the best in world fandom than the Fan Hugos provide (Nice but not essential). The Checkpoint Fan Poll still seems an adequate model on which to base it, but I suppose the breadth of fanac covered by a world poll requires a little more organisation than Peter Roberts and a typewriter.

What it doesn't require, of course, is a voting fee. The voting fee has been the downfall of the Awards right from the start, particularly in Britain. I mean, it just isn't on to ask a British fan to hand over the price of a pint for the dubious honour of giving someone named Hanke-Woods a block of wood. Not on at all, boss.

And it's the trophy which costs the money. The trophy is too big, ungainly, and badly designed. My little beer-can figure with the propeller beamie regularly falls on his face from the top of his enchanted duplicator. Two years after I got it, it was still sticky. I was told that, as soon as money became available, there would be a brass plaque to go on the front of the wooden plinth. It has yet to arrive and I have maintained ever since that until I get the brass plaque I have no intention of paying for other fans to get bits of their Awards. This would only lead, as at SEACON, to the fiasco of presenting people with blocks of wood (although considering some of the winners, blocks of wood may not have been inappropriate).

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A Harry Bell fanzine would hardly seem like the real thing without the remnants of a letter-column left over from a fanzine with a completely different name. My outward justification for this has always been that letters seem to stir up a disproportionate response compared to the editorial content, but the real reason is simply that I regard all of these differently-titled zines as manifestations of the same fanzine. One day I suppose I'll grow tired of title changes and will go back to calling it GRIMMAB, renumbering all the ones with the wrong names. But enough of this introverted speculation. What KAMIKAZE produced in the way of letters of varying literary quality was stuff from Jon Gustafson, Terry Hughes, Jim Meadows III, Brian Earl Brown, Mary Long, Paul Kincaid, Kevin Easthope, Henry P. Pijohn, Joseph Nicholas, Hris Priest, Mike Glicksohn, Harry Turner, Terry Jeeves, Pamela Boal and Dave Rowe. Due to the vagaries of Whim some of these may not get copies of SNORKEL; I cheerfully acknowledge the unfairness of this situation and hope that one day we may all discover that wondrous land of fields and unicorns where the WANF column doesn't even exist.

Revealed in KAMIKAZE was the secret ritual enacted at conventions by Chris Priest and myself, in which, in exchange for a "Hello, Chris" I am given a similar greeting, and this tends to be the sole content of our conversations. The truth behind this mystic intercourse can now be explained. Read on....

CHRISTOPHER PRIEST Your vicious attack on my integrity cannot go unanswered, and nor shall it. I myself have many happy memories of our brief, elliptical conversations, charged with hidden meanings, richly endowed with things left unsaid, and now you have made our secret relationship public with all the attendant shame that will follow.

Actually, it's caused by two things. In the first place (as Roy Kettle likes to say), I have a very bad memory for names. Secondly, like many people in fandom, I am naturally reclusive and get to know most friends through the medium of the printed word. At cons, when there are faces in all directions, I flounder with my dodgy memory, trying to fit things together. I usually walk around cons with a myopic stare, trying to read people's name-badges. I know most people as "mate", until I can get a squint at the furry, curling thing on their lapels. This is why I stare at boobs a lot; it's nothing to do with mammary obsession (he says, lying in his teeth). Am I the only fan in the world who wishes that con committees would print the names on name-badges BIGGER? Two or three years ago I met a fellow-spirit at a con...Seacon '75, I think. I was in the bar and I met someone whose face was very familiar. He hailed me: "Hi there, mate!" I responded instantly: "Hi, mate...good to see you again." I saw him squint at my name-badge, but this was the Saturday and mine was all curled up; I squinted at his, but it was a funny colour and was half-hidden by his jacket. "What are you drinking, mate?" he said. "Whisky and soda, mate," said I, mentally riffling through a card-index. No good. This friendly, baffled conversation went on for about ten minutes before I remembered that the last time I'd seen him he'd been with Brian Aldiss. That helped, and it suddenly twigged that I was talking to Harry Harrison. Tentatively, I called him "Harry". He leaned forward, uncurled my name-badge, and called me "Chris". It was then that we discovered that we were both afflicted with the same problem. Now I pass Harry in hotel corridors and say "Hello Harry". He always says "Hello mate."

Which brings me to the point. The very fact that you and I can hello-harry and hello-chris each other is a symbol of undying friendship, as far as I'm concerned.

...I liked Mike Glicksohn's observation that aircraft are the "inconveniences which stand between us and conventions". What different worlds we live in! I always thought that what stood between me and conventions was the M.I.

KEVIN J. EASTHOPE Joseph Nicholas never ceases to amaze me. This time he's moaning because of the itchy-bitsy precautions the German security people took just after the attempted highjacking of an airliner; "...the entire contents of even the smallest handbag, examining tubes of lipstick with something akin to fearful awe." He'd probably hold very different opinions if the lack of those some precautions resulted in his being lined up in an impromptu tarmac firing squad. A slight delay due to a security check is rarely fatal, but having your brains blown out invariably is. Anyhow, I hope he got his handbag and lipstick back.

PAUL KINCAID Northern Ireland really is a breeding ground for paranoia. Yet living there, as I did for three years, gives a strange attitude to the violence. Looking back I find it hard to comprehend my attitude. In Manchester, every time I faced another trip over to Ireland, I was terrified. Yet once I landed it bothered me not at all, despite the soldiers everywhere, the security, the town centres closed to traffic. I took my final exams during the Protestant workers strike, studying Kant by candlelight. During one exam a bomb went off in Coleraine, about a mile and a half from the University, rattling the windows. I think two people were killed. That evening I went with some friends to a cinema less than 100 yards from where the bomb exploded. Familiarity breeds contempt -- when it's all around you, you grow blasé. From a distance you can be sickened; up close it's never like that, you have to cut a bit out of yourself and just hope it grows back later.

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Gritty stuff, eh?

It's been two years since I wrote any fanzine material and this is something of a "finding-my-feet-again" issue. Like The Grimling BOSCH, I rather hope that SNORKEL will concentrate mainly on what's been happening to me, instead of the more abstract subjects of this issue.

I had high hopes of Greg and Linda's Spring Bank Holiday Party providing items of juicy and tasteless gossip but it was not to be. The weather remained mainly dull and reinforced the apathy already prevalent so that, apart from a trip to Acton Fair to witness Greg's failure once more to shoot out the Red Star, we just stayed at home and had fun. It was left to the more idiosyncratic Rob and Coral Jackson, at their concurrent First and Last Party Ever on the New Carpet, to render up strange morsels.

There are seven or eight boxes of cereal in the Jacksons' well-appointed kitchen, each with its own number writ large. Once this has been noticed, of course, it is very difficult for someone not to say to the good doctor: "Er...Rob...why has each of your seven or eight boxes of cereal got its own number writ large?"

"So that we know which one to open first," answers Rob.

I cannot resist the temptation to point out that boxes of cereal do not go off until they have been opened.

"I know," says Rob in his best, slightly exasperated manner, "that's why we put the numbers on."

Bloody hell, as someone once said.

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"Huff, puff and grunt," said Little Ian on our way to be whisked at 125 mph back to Newcastle.

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"Would you care to elaborate?" I said, recognising even then that I really ought to know better.

"Heavy book..this Berni Wrightson collection..in my bag. Must weigh it.. when I...get home."

"Oh yeah" Noncommittal. I could see this conversation getting out of hand. You get to recognise the warning signs after ten years in Gannetfandom.

After an hour's desultory conversation on the train we fell to discussing the weekend's purchases or, in my present negative mood, the lack of them.

"Even if I'd bought nothing else," said Little Ian, "I'd be pleased with the Berni Wrightson collection. It's so heavy!"

"Oh yeah." But he persisted. Leaning over, he poked around in his bag, finally producing a brown paper parcel which might, just conceivably, have contained a Berni Wrightson collection. I held it in my hand, hefted it a little, carefully considering my next words. I settled on: "Certainly is heavy, Ian."

"Yes, I must weigh it when I get home."

At Newcastle Central we ^{went} our separate ways, Ian leaving me with the news that he was gonna rush right on home and weigh that book. Well, I've got to admit it certainly was a heavy book. Wonder what the pictures were like?

Anyway, I've got two ounces of D.G.Compton to get through and then it's:

Lights out.

Sack time.

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