

T.A.S.H.

The Amazing Sentient House #12

Science
SF iction

SF gang celebrate peace in the North



Hugh
'Mad Dog'
McHenry

Mark
'Cynical Godfather'
McCann

James
'Tech Ops'
McKee

Tommy
'Political Spokesman'
Ferguson

Editorial

Me

Well, welcome once again to the fanzine we all love to hate at Octocon. I'm sure you will remember the anti-Trekkie diatribe that spewed forth from these pages two years ago and a not very nice article about the ISFA last year. I thought that seeing as this year is 1994 I'd do something a little different. Not that there is anything special about 1994 but, hey, who needs a reason to be different?

As you may be aware, or not, this type of magazine is called a fanzine and, even more specific, a fannish fanzine. This means that the magazine is not really about science fiction, it's more about the people who read sf, the fans themselves and what they get up to. In Belfast we have a thriving sf fannish group, which meets fortnightly and doesn't discuss science fiction, although that genre is our broadest form of reference to each other. This fanzine is about those people.

If you're like me and have already read the zine and are only now getting around to reading the boring introduction bit then you're probably getting a good idea what the zine is about. Some of the people mentioned herein will be attending Octocon, notably your editor (my good self), Eugene Doherty and Joe Nolan. A few of the other stalwarts of Belfast fandom, as witnessed on the cover and inside, are trying to work out a few scams to get loads of money out of the Americans as part of the peace dividend. Hey, can't blame the guys for trying now, can we? I mean if the International Fund for Ireland is willing to throw money away, then I'll promise not to shoot anyone if they throw some of that money my way.

On the other hand if you are very literal minded and read things from the front cover to the back, in that order, then let me tell you what a treat you have in store.

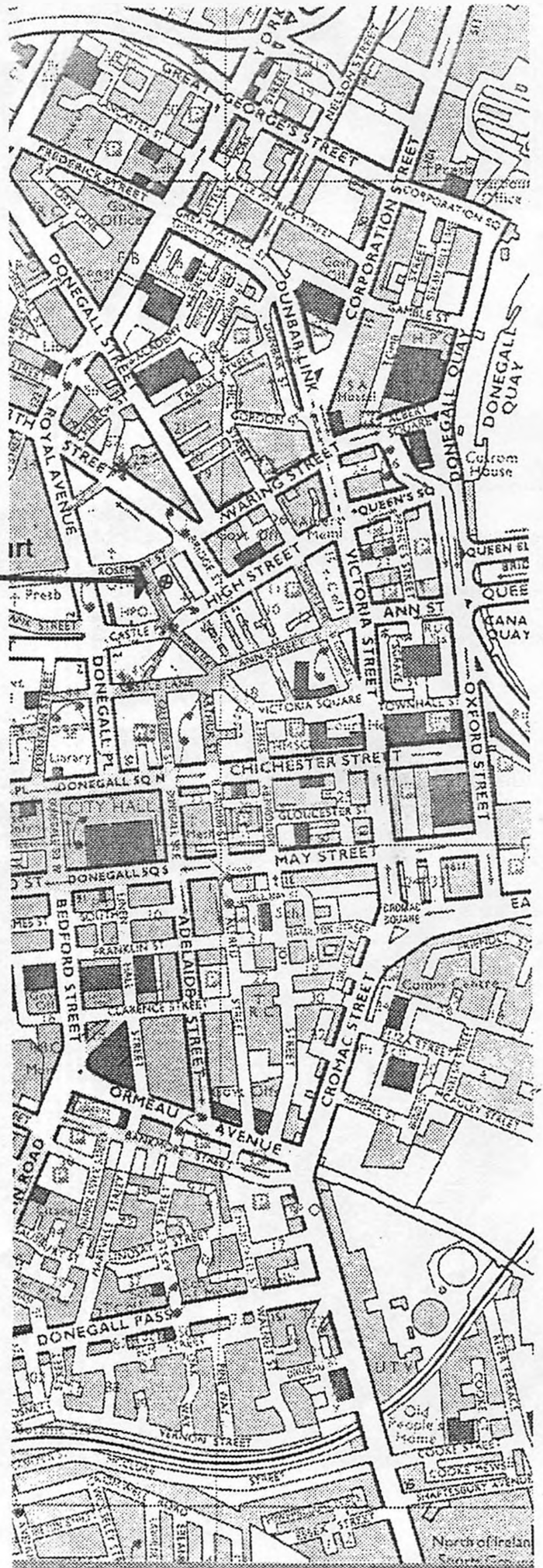
You have a wonderful treat in store.

So, read and enjoy.

Edited by Tommy Ferguson (sortof), who can be contacted at 42 Ava Drive, Belfast BT7 3DW Northern Ireland. Email can be sent via Eugene Doherty: 100410.2200@compuserve.com

Letters of comment gratefully received and there will be another couple of issues out before Worldcon next year. Production & Layout by ever faithful Mark McCann; cover photograph by Lysette McGuinness.

Printed and published by Tommy Ferguson, who assumes all the blame.



For those of you not at Octocon or Novacon and who received this zine through the traditional methods (i.e. through the post and late) welcome. Sorry but with the advent of my taking a place on a Masters Degree programme in Irish Studies at Queen's University here in Belfast, this will be the last TASH you will see until Worldcon next year. I do hope that this will enable me to remain on mail lists and should also mean that I will start writing locs again; less time consuming and easier to rattle off at pace. As such it is a bit of a stop-gap production and not quite the "Let's meet Belfast Fandom" issue that I had expected to produce (i.e. I need more time to hassle people and get stuff off them). But I'm quite pleased to have got Eugene Doherty to contribute, one up against entropy, I think. The rest of the guys will no doubts come round in due time.

As usual this is a rush job in time for Octocon, the Irish

SF Con held in Dun Laoghaire (Just outside Dublin) which a lot of youse guys should investigate attending next year as it is really good. Honest. As mentioned above I shall also be around at Octocon, that's me on the cover, though I'll be wearing a tee shirt at the cons mentioned, probably something Irish connection (University/fannish). Say Hi, I may even buy you a drink. See youse all soon.

This is a special edition of TASH for octocon, as it does not contain many and varied letters I received on the last two editions, merely those I've already typed in. the proper edition of TASH 12 will only be sent out in the post (see the back page for all the reasons) and I don't intend to send to anyone who got one of these special editions. Hope you all have a good time at octocon and don't take the ramblings in Cortex to seriously, it's only a bit of fun lads (and lasses).



Fandom, and like that...

Me

I blame Issac Asimov and Brendan Ryder in full and equal measure.

Asimov was one of the first SF authors I read (surprisingly!) and it was the mid 1970s cover of *I, Robot* that got me hooked. I saw it in the local library and it took me nearly two weeks to work up the courage to take it out as it had been placed in the Adult book section and I was still in primary school. What gave me that courage was reading the collected short stories of Jack Williamson in the 'Very Best of...' series. A wonderful collection of amazing stories which, even to this day, stands up to adult scrutiny. But 'OI Isaac really knew how to pull those adolescent strings and push all the right buttons in a young boys mind. For getting young kids hooked, you just can't beat him.

Life continued on apace in my secret little SF world. No one knew about it and I started to visit other libraries around town when I had read all the wonderfully yellow coloured Gollancz SF imprints in my own local. I think it was an advertisement for the 1980 Irish SF Con, post Season and all that, that got me into fandom proper and here's where I blame Brendan.

He was Chairperson (or somesuch) of the ISFA and editor of Stardate, the Association's magazine, and printed extracts from my first (four pages long!) Letter of Comment. It basically said what a good mag it was but it was a pity there was so much stuff about Star Trek in it; fifteen years later I'm still writing letters like that. I got my

first ego boo, found out about other zines and there was no stopping me.

I was never really into the whole organised fandom bit; even though my history would indicate otherwise. I helped to set up the Queen's University SF Society, run the four conventions (NICons) that the society hosted and got people down to the Belfast SF group (a big name for a bunch of guys in a pub). My problem with organised fandom is that, as I get older, I don't want to mix with the young and enthusiastic neos anymore. I know, I know, I was one once - but fanzines make it a more accessible and less personally involved medium of appreciating fandom. There is no immediate face to face contact, you can see if you like people by the tone of their writing and letters and then, and only then, can you decide to meet them. That is what keeps me going in fandom.

I like attending cons, more organised fandom, for this reason. My kind of fandom is about fans, and not necessarily sf - the topic that first bought us all together. In writing about fans I get to know them and eventually to meet them. Cons are perfect for this. There is events, parties and beer and places to meet and exchange gossip and bitch and to meet more new people of like persuasion. You may never see them again after a few days; or you may become good, good friends. Fandom is like that. I'm like that, and that is why you are holding this copy of TASH. Drop me a line if you like what you read (hey, drop me a line if you don't!), I might even send you the next one...



why SCIENCE FICTION?

Eugene Doherty

I am generally most reluctant to set anything down on paper, like certain primitive tribesmen who believe that photographs steal the soul, I have this primeval fear that setting thoughts and feelings out for others to read will weaken them. Beware of staring into the abyss least it stare back, as Nietzsche would have it. But there are always exception to every rule and for this special edition of TASH, an exception was well in order.

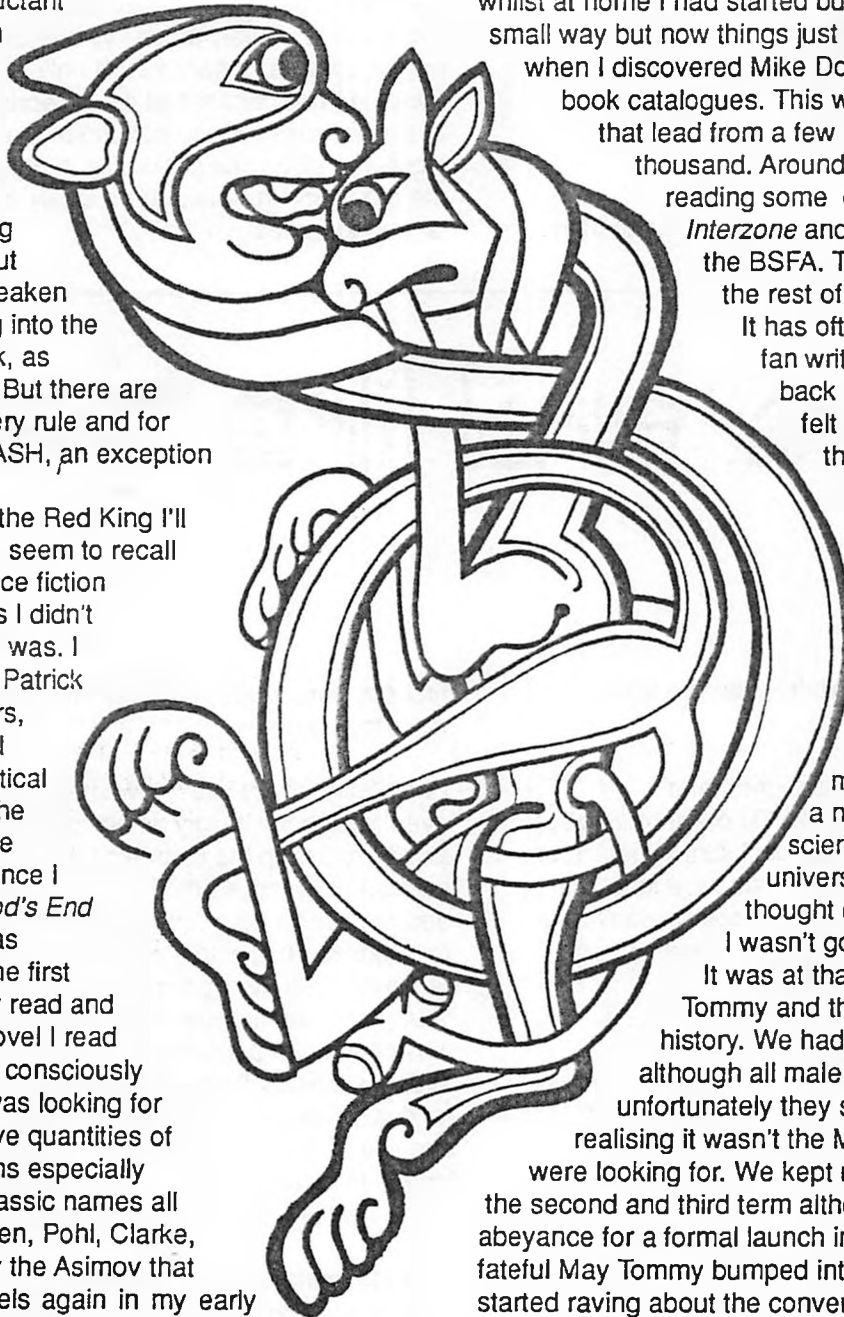
So where to begin, like the Red King I'll start at the beginning. I seem to recall that I always read science fiction although for many years I didn't know that that is what it was. I started with the likes of Patrick Moore and Hugh Walters, although with the latter I was always rather sceptical of the prominence that he gave Britain in the space race! Then quite by chance I read a copy of *Childhood's End* by Arthur C Clarke. I was stunned by this book, the first real novel I had actually read and yet it was the last SF novel I read for a long time. Without consciously realising what it was I was looking for I started reading massive quantities of SF short story collections especially Asimov, although the classic names all turned up, Heinlein, Niven, Pohl, Clarke, etc, etc. It was probably the Asimov that then got me on to novels again in my early teens but there were few surprises in the choices that I read, all meat and potatoes SF. I was helped by the fact that our local library had a good selection of authors and the task was made much easier by the clearly identifiable covers of the ubiquitous Gollancz hardbacks and Panther paperbacks (Chris Foss was Science Fiction illustration for me). As a side line I got into comics and although many fell by the wayside I am still a keen fan of 2000AD even after all these years.

Thus things continued for many years until I went to university. Having exhausted most of the library stocks

whilst at home I had started buying my own books in a small way but now things just got out of hand, especially when I discovered Mike Don and his second hand book catalogues. This was the start of the mania that lead from a few hundred books to a few thousand. Around this time I had started reading some of the magazines including *Interzone* and through it found out about the BSFA. This lead me to discover the rest of fandom sitting out there.

It has oft been the great lament of fan writers (and even pro's) going back decades that they always felt that they were alone in their obsession until they discovered the others around them in their own seclusion. So it was with me until I discovered fanzines. However with these, I was then, as now very passive so that it never proved my metre. I finally broke from my isolation when I spotted a notice for the start up of a science fiction society at the university, something which I had thought definitely lacking but which I wasn't going to do anything about.

It was at that first meeting that I met Tommy and the rest as they say is history. We had a reasonable turnout although all male until two girls came along, unfortunately they sat for ten minutes before realising it wasn't the Marxist society that they were looking for. We kept up contact for the rest of the second and third term although the society went into abeyance for a formal launch in the new year. Then one fateful May Tommy bumped into me in the street and started raving about the convention he had just been at in Liverpool an the upshot was that he suggested we run our own con. Yeah I thought why not? One quick visit to XIICON in Glasgow to see how they did things there and we had Nicon '86 the first of four cons that we ran over the next few years. Even with conventioning, and fanzines though, SF is still the backbone, the thread that runs through all the interests which are my obsessions. Of late this has been taking me down many diverse roads some of which would not always be called straight SF (yeah, what is that anyway?) but even when the passion in straight SF wanes it always returns with a new book, a



different film or video. Some as knows me might wonder about the antipathy I feel towards fantasy and say but isn't that just another aspect of sci-fi. I always say for me at least no, because what counts for me is the human condition and fantasy seems to have too many cop-outs, too much pushing of magic buttons and cashing of plot coupons. Even when science fiction tries to pull a fast one with a jargon attack, great SF still needs the human touch. This is why I wander down strange paths in comics, roleplaying games, forteana and gonzo/mondo/

net cutting edge stuff, but still think myself an SF fan first, last and always for what I want is something that reflects and expands on the human condition. Perhaps Haldane put it best when he said: "it is my suspicion that the universe is not only queerer than we think it is queerer than we can think," and in my book that's because "there's nowt so queer as folk".



OUT OF THE SILENT DITCH

Mark McCann

I've never really been comfortable with active fandom and I think this might have a lot to do with the fact that for my first eighteen years I lived in a village five miles from the nearest library and forty miles from the nearest bookshop. My sole contact with science fiction was via a two foot high mound of Sphere SF paperbacks that lay unread by anyone else at the back of the mobile library van which parked once a month on the main street of our village. (I knew no one else read them because every once in a while would I check the date stamps on the inside covers of the books in a vain attempt to discover if there was other intelligent life in South Derry. But invariably mine were the only issue dates on the books.)

For those years I thought my interest in sf was some kind of bizarre adolescent urge that was all rather embarrassing but was something which I was sure to grow out of given lots of healthy sporting activities and a generous number of cold showers. It was not to be.

It never occurred to me that anyone else might be reading A.E. Van Vogt's *Voyage of the Space Beagle* or Jack Williamson's *Legion of Time* and enjoying them as much as myself. Mention Heinlein to anyone and all I got were blank stares. Heck, I didn't know anyone else who even read *at all* for pleasure.

But then to University and surely the delights of fan solidarity? Well, not quite. For some reason I never seemed to fall into the same orbit as the Queen's SF group -started by the ever industrious Tommy around 1986. Perhaps it was the fact that I didn't drink much then or maybe it was due to the fact that the meetings were held in a room next to the live folk nights. There was an open doorway between the two venues and the level of volume from the bands made it impossible to hear what anyone in the group was saying. Even the various NiCons were hit and miss affairs for me.

But at least I now knew there were a few other fans knocking about and access to a number of book shops in

Belfast introduced me to more modern sf. I spent the good part of a year hunting down and reading everything Philip K Dick ever produced starting as a fresher with *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* and ending gloriously on a drunken summer weekend with *Valis* and *Ubik*.

Moorcock, Aldiss and Delany followed but, although both they and Dick fulfilled the demand for a more intelligent and literate approach to sf, they never provided the necessary 'sensawonder' fix that the adult fan craves from childhood but can never recapture. (I've come close- Dan Simmons' *Hyperion* novels and Bruce Sterling's *Schismatrix* in recent years.) However, really all that's left is the memory. SF readers have to look elsewhere in the fan world for a substitute fix. For me it's fanzines.



"You know, I blame it on all those violent cave-painting I watched when I was a kid"

What you might call my 'active' period in fandom only began after I left Queen's and was employed as an information officer for a Belfast charity.

For hours on end I was required sit in an office next to a Mac DTP system and a high quality photocopier. The temptations were too great and rather than spend all my time producing a boring in-house newspaper I could see the potential for producing a rather nifty fanzine.

I contacted Tommy- my only link with the fan world- through an address in the BSFA and from there things degenerated rapidly with the result that several bargain buckets of Kentucky Fried Chicken and a few bottles of vodka and Creme de Menthe later we had our first copy of *Götterdämmerung*.

But even so, still not much in the way of active 'eyeball-to-eyeball' fandom. I suppose by stretching the definition of the word 'active' somewhat I could mention the regular crawl down to the Monico Bar in Lombard Street where the Belfast Science Fiction Group meets. But this event consists mainly of drinking Guinness, eating hot tortilla chips dipped in a deeply suspicious yogurt concocted by Eugene Doherty and discussing anything under the sun with the sole exception of science fiction. (Recent topics have included computers, computers, modems, laser printers and computers- oh, and the importance of the T-54 tank in winning the second world war.) The same

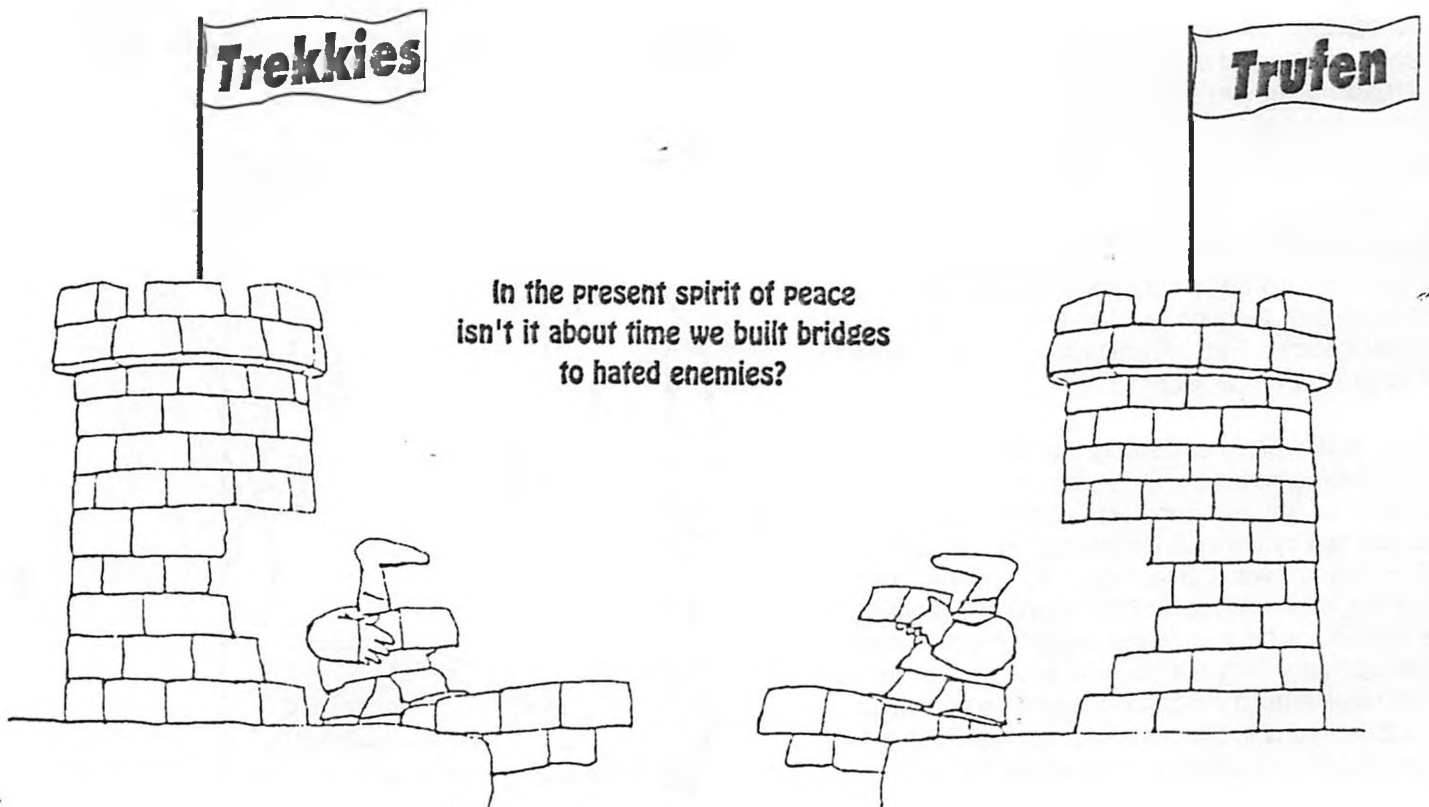
crowd trudge down every fortnight, myself included, so I suppose there must be a sense of fan solidarity there somewhere...

For me, real fandom is synonymous with fanzines. There's nothing quite like the enjoyment of producing a bundle of duplicated twaddle and sending it to all corners of the globe and in return receiving a similar glimpse into other people's lives, prejudices and obsessions.

Science Fiction originated out of the written word and the one thing fans have in common (I'm probably being a mite optimistic here) is a degree of literacy and love of the written word (no matter how badly written) which the fanzine is the proper expression of. All else, while undoubtedly being a great deal of fun, is beside the point.

So you can keep yer conventions, manga tapes, and stick-on Mr. Spock ears. Give me a inky copy of *Slubbergullion* and a battered edition of the *Best of A.E. Van Vogt*, with a blooming great big Chris Foss spaceship on the front, and that's enough sf fandom for me.

Finally, I'm sorry Tommy but I was unable to work the line: 'the short satisfying splash of a well sphinctered stool' anywhere into the general flow of this article. Maybe next time.



JOE'S WORLD

Joe Nolan

Joe Nolan, 71, retired, oldest Science Fiction fan in Ireland.

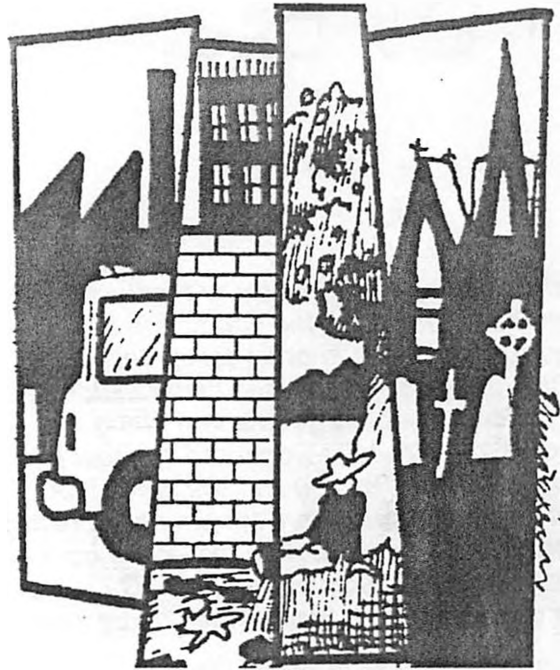
Began reading penny comic *Funny Wonder* aged 8 in 1932 graduated to *The Wizard*, in 1934, and swapped for *The Rover*, *Magnet*, *Gem*, *Flash Gordon*, etc. Moved house in 1936, joined a new library in 1937 and broke through into The Golden Age of Science Fiction in the same year.

My older brother ordered me to leave him alone until he had read a magazine with a high impact cover called *Thrilling Wonder Stories*; naturally when he went to the cinema I found it, read it and was 'lost' forever ("Hooked," they now say).

In the following ten years I got my Science Fiction via the pulp magazines which came to Smithfield Market in Belfast via the North Atlantic routes (used as ballast in empty freighters) from London, Bristol, Liverpool or Glasgow. It contained all those famous names of hallowed memory (bought for six old pence each!): *Astounding Stories*, *Flying Aces*, *G-8*, *Texas Rangers*, *Fantastic Adventures*, *Weird tales*, *True Detective*, *Doc Savage* and lots more whose names I no longer remember. With memory beginning to let me down I also have trouble remembering the names because the litany of the famous is so long, John W. Campbell, Isaac Asimov, Heinlein, Bob Howard to name but a few.

When trying to name particular stories, one is up against the same problem, the data retrieval system is faulty and intermittent. But from the early days of the Pulp magazines I do recall one called *The Dreaming Jewels*. Why do I recall it? Because I was never able to find the issue containing the fourth, and final, instalment! Then came the era of paperbacks. It killed the *Hard Backed Science Fiction Bookclub*, with books in silver like *The Midwich Cuckoos* or, *Lest Darkness Fall*; hundreds of authors, thousands of stories. I could never find them all or read them all. How glad I am I found those that I did.

One thing about Science Fiction, you time travel, you go places, meet people see things, hear too! Be it the soundtrack of a star going nova or the growl of a Tyrannosaurus Rex. You can stand on Calvary, be it in Palestine or on Mars; look over the shoulder of the last man alive on Earth as he watches our sun die; or swap ships with Extraterrestrials as in *First Contact*. It has its funny side as when, once, it was (erroneously) reported that the ship's dog had exploded in space due to gravity effects, or the shock factor as in *Lifeboat* where only the



baby was alive, healthy and sane.

About films. Most films made are klunkers. There are a few exceptions, not many, like the first *King Kong*; and one called *The Tunnel* (under the Atlantic - not the Chunnel). Then *Forbidden Planet*, *War of the Worlds* and *It Came From Outer Space*. 2001 I'd argue about. The soundtrack was fine, but-? Television is another horse with a different colour, one I would not back - even though I did watch all the episodes of the first *Star Trek* series, it was a good mediocre grade B movie scenario. In case you have not noticed it yet all T.V. Science Fiction scenarios are pre - 1935. You wanna argue? Okay go ahead! I like arguments. Unless this magazine can find in its membership someone who outranks me, then I speak here for Boskone.

In 1976 I learned about the Irish Science Fiction Association (ISFA) since when I have been to all their annual conventions, including those of the first incarnation; I've also been to the last few NiCons run by the Queen's University, Belfast Science Fiction Society. A pity they stopped with UNiCon, their fourth! Through the annual cons I have met real life authors, like Anne McCafferty, Harry Harrison, Bob Shaw and our own James White; as well as the Octocon guests of the past few years. My last long read was by Poul Anderson, *Orion Shall Rise* and for me the disease is terminal, I try to write Science Fiction poetry, and some leaked into Phase IV 94. I suppose that means I must risk being totally shunned by all attending Octocon 1994. Oh well! Poets are said to be without honour in their own country. An ay shin ceart?

I have had a good life, thank God, and SF has made it a lot more enjoyable, since 'Classical Literature' holds one grounded to planet Earth and (gawd helpus) - Neighbours et all



A wonderful postbag this time, many thanks for all your letters and cards, plus the odd stamp and pint which I must say are well in order folks. This time round things are going to be done in chronological order, so the earlier replies get the first airing out. Not one to sit idly by whilst wonderful suggestions fly past, my comments as you can see are in this wonderful type font which Mark McCann has created specifically for this purpose. Also the letters have been severely edited in some cases because one or two faults of TASH 10 & 11 were picked up by everybody.

So, once more into the breach dear friends (and Eugene):

Steve Synded: Ta for TASH 10/11. (Cunning ploy to have no address in 11, so anyone who didn't get ten is knackered). Basically, RAEBNC - items either too personal to respond to without getting off on a lot of personalia, which is too weary to do, or into areas where it is like Joad's "Man of strong opinions weakly held" to raise energy to put own views down, & so on. (Donegal reminded me of one of the local radio station DJs who has a mania for Van Morrison's *Coney Island* where they fuel up on mussels - wonder if New York island is named for that). The literals in Harry Turner's articles (and abrupt end of first) gave a wartime air to them - and I loved your DTP turned bitter lake into striking poem - he definitely should put 'em all in a book.

Right, first up: Apart from the chronology of the articles (which I personally think doesn't matter a whit) the problems in Harry's articles were as a result of dodgy OCR scanning/wordprocessor conversion errors. BUT. I should have spotted them. Mea culpa. It seems that most of you still enjoyed them, which is the whole idea. As for the address No one who got ten didn't get eleven, that was the whole idea: both went out in the same envelope.

Terry Jeeves: Loved the Escher and Turner covers. It is annoying how Harry turns 'em out. I also enjoyed his Indian reminiscences although I hate the 'continious present' style - I come in, I sit down, I say 'hello'. Yeuch. I gather from various dues - his landing in India coinciding with the Lebanon election and his repatriation in 1946 that he was in India for less than a year. Lucky blighter, I was there for three and a half years (Feb '42 - Nov '45) there and in the Cocos islands. Nice fanzine reviews and excellent LOCs - why does Pam Boal write long LOCs to everyone else but only sends one or two sentences to me? And one of them asking what happened to the last

issue. Catholics VS Protestants seems a mug's game. Heck we're all people. I never considered what religion a person has unless they try to ram it down my throat. I'm an atheist and live and let live is my motto. Why on Earth people kill each other in the name of religion is beyond me. Actually I suspect 'religion' is just an excuse to cover the chance to terrorize, extort, commit violence and generally be yobbish, among the opposing factions in Ireland. Oh well, two good issues.

Well, Tel. As to Pam Boal's Lopping habits, I'd hate to state the obvious. Your insights into our situation are amazing; "Hey guys stopping shooting each other - 'it's a mug's game'" I bet that's what someone said to Gerry and the boys...

Jacqui Disler: (*Amongst a load of other stuff*): the zine looks great and I wish you all the luck on Terra. Perhaps America will join the EEC and we can use the Ecu.

Is this woman entirely serious, or is just because she's American?

Bernard Earp, first apologised for leaving his name and address and other identifying remarks from his last letter (see *The Crack* in issue ten) and then goes on, like every single other correspondent, to outline the problems with Harry's articles. Okay, okay, I know.

You could of course run a competition for the best completion of that line, my entry being: "Have a thugge bound in at the window and using his scarf throttle one to death." Throw in the info that the entire memoirs are dictated to a spirit medium and that time passes at a different rate in the spirit world thus explaining the out of sequence articles neatly and we are, with the exception for the poor dead Harry, laughing.

Re John F. Haines in *The Crack*: the different way other fandoms regard fanzines was graphically illustrated a couple of years ago when a friend of mine had a chat with a Trek group. They were bemoaning their group's poor finances, and to raise money they were going to put out a fanzine. Tommy, in your wildest dreams have you EVER thought of fanzines as a possible money spinner?

On to 11 and Lounge. I still come up short against your automatic assumption that your older brother couldn't possibly be the father... part and parcel of the same cultural blind spot that rules out considering your parents

sexual beings. Certainly family life chez Earp has always been far calmer even laid back level than yours sounds like. Having a couple of Aunties within walking distance even just past the toddling stage has always been a good safety valve. And our religion has always been on a loose "High Days and Holidays" basis.

I, as someone who is also working class in predominantly middle class fandom, would disagree with your assumption that an all male gathering would classically end in a fight, in fact would need to clear the system. With the latter mention of furniture being lobbed across the room you seem to live in a situation where you look upon violence as a natural part of social interaction. Well if that's how you see like where you stand then fine, I don't doubt you, but don't label every member of the working class with the same attitudes. Some of us can hope to attend social gatherings without having to unload on others.

Just a bald "...and Nyree said no," with no hint of how it left you; heart broken, stoic, going to try again...

*That whole fanzines for money thing has always appalled me and is one my main defintions of "real" fanzines. Ego boo, communications, meeting people yes; making money, quite the opposite I'll have you know. * That cultural blind spot thing is spot on. When I was young the people in my family simply ceased to exist when they weren't around. They didn't have lives of their own in my perspective and the only things that really mattered in their lives were what I saw them doing. It is not that I was totally egocentric, simply that I wasn't aware of the whole big world out there and how other people interacted with it; until university that is, then it was whack, hi tommy this is the real world (sortof), in your face...*

I could be completely blasé about the incidence of violence in my life and how it clouds my perspective, but that is just shite. It's true that a lot of social gatherings weddings, funerals and the like (not nights down the pub which it appears is the impression you've got) have an inherent undertone of violence to them especially when it is my family around. Only once in a while is anything actually done about it, but the tension is still there.

Then again, maybe it is just me ascribing personal family and other situations to the wrong causes. Hmmm...

Nyree & I. Well you've read soem shite from me in these pages over the last few issues. This one is a whole sewage works that is still getting shifted into something more akin to fertilizer than simple raw fecal matter. Maybe more later.

Paul Vincent again mentions all the pedantic points (his words) before going on:

Harry Turner's articles were excellent bits of writing - experience of wartime conscripts is almost as alien to us

as anything in a skiffy novel, and Harry caught the flavour of the endless noise and tedium perfectly (well, vividly anyway: of course, I wasn't even born then, so how'd I know if he captured it 'perfectly,' or otherwise? Perhaps a better word would be 'convincingly').

Regarding your fanzine reviews in 10: you mention Simon Ounsley's references to M.E. and P.V.S. in Lagoon 3-D. Just to fill in the gaps, M.E. stands for Myalgic Encephalomyelitis, and P.V.S. stands for Postviral Syndrome (or, more properly, Postviral Fatigue Syndrome). All these are terms/models/theories used to explain (or label, anyway) the conglomeration of symptoms which comprise the illness which Simon has been suffering endlessly from, these past 10 or 12 years.

The highlight of the zines, for me, was your piece about last New Year in Donegal. Weekends away with groups of friends are always some of the more memorable (for good and bad reasons) occasions in many people's lives, but capturing the ebb and flow of such a weekend without making it come across as a disjointed trivia diary is no mean feat. You managed to spin all the little incidents into a very neat piece of 'slice of life' writing. Good one - you should write more stuff in this vein. Sorry to hear the answer was no.

Paul was a little more critical than this but again it was production problems and not material problems which I promise to rectify this issue (crosses fingers). Many thanks for the nice comments and now to:

Martin Gittins: (on a side note, which I just had to print Boyanna is indeed my girlfriend's real name, as she is half Yugoslavian. And I like it, so fuck you. Maybe Nyree is a common name in Ireland, but it sure ain't over here. It sounds like a nuclear waste disposal company. See, I can be insulting, too. Nice one!)

Andy Sawyer: I enjoyed Harry's reminiscences. I remember sailing on a troopship through the Suez canal. It was the other way around from Harry, about a dozen years later, and I was only seven at the time, but his description reminded me of the experience. The image which comes to mind is of a group of gesticulating arabs on the canal side, who were presumably absuing the British and no doubt with good reason. I also remember being fascinated by the flying fish, cutting out of the water, gliding along, and re-entering. Now most people travel by air, a lot of the experience of travelling abroad is lost, it seems. My last plane journey might as well have taken place in a coach: it was cramped, stuffy and there was a choice of crap videos to take your mind of it.

Mind, travel by sea had its moments of tedium. You were often hot, sometimes seasick and (when you were a child) there were moments of sheer incomprehension. One of my most vivid memories comes from the outward journey to Malaya. Someone (I can now tell from hindsight) had organised games for the children on the deck. All that I can remember is running around following the big kids, and that moment of terror when it dawned

on me what we were actually doing was playing a game but everyone else knew the rules except me! The second epiphany could loosely be translated as "And you've got this for the rest of your life, son." Sometimes I still wonder if someone will ever explain the rules...

Yeah, Andy, that feeling has never left me.

Carolyn Horn: I loved those covers, and the illustrations in both issues give the zines a bit of lift. Especially as you experiment with design so that the reader never gets time to be bored with it. Loved the down to earth "Angel" figure on page 12 of issue 11; did she come with the software?

Just One of Those Days was fascinating, as you say, Harry's writing is "quirky and individualistic" - and I like it.

I enjoyed Lounge excessively. It was one of those reads that starts gathering speed right at the start and ends on a fine, frenetic rant. You even managed to get the meaning of Lounge in there somewhere! I was chuckling uncontrollably by the time I got to the words of wisdom at the end. See, I've been a student. A student who's been drunk. And puked up in someone else's house.

I got slightly confused with Benedict's talk on cannabis; he says in one paragraph that he'd be concerned if it were made legal (because of the difficulty of proving that the driver is stoned), and in the next paragraph that he believes the day it can be made legal will be a cause for celebration. One is left with the questions: does he mean, "if it became possible to detect as in drink drivers"?

*The production and layout, as always, by Mark McCann (see the cover). As always he does an amazing job and he sort of scanned/made up the angel figure. * Benedict's piece left me with a few more questions than that. Was he stoned when he wrote it, was the first one. Some verbal reactions to the piece even I couldn't print here.*

As mentioned in the Introduction, this is a fannish fanzine. This means that a) there is no cost, b) you only get one issue unless you respond, c) I will trade my zine for your zine, d) contribute an article/illustration (write first), e) buy me a pint. The idea is to get response and feedback and encourage communications; also to have some fun. A stamped self addressed envelope also works wonders. I look forward to getting a few more of you fans "hocked" as we now say.

