

Wallbanger

OR WHATEVER HAPPENED TO CHAS 5?

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Good, that's the last page to type. Can I undo these chains now John and have more than bread and cheese? Oh, after the duplicating's done as well. Oh dear, I was hoping to have finished. How come you always manage to have to go away from home on business when the ish is ready for printing? Coincidence you say? Perhaps.

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PLUS LA CHANGE

Time for a change we thought. The old A4 sideways format was getting to be rather more trouble than it was worth, so let's be original and turn the page through 90°. (Shrinking to quarto as well was a little too much for our poor brains in one step, still next ish maybe). So with a change in shape let's have a change in name. But what could we call it? A thousand heads were scratched and still nothing. Then Boy Wonder Mike Collins came up with Wallbanger and it stuck! So here is GHAS 5 cunningly disguised as Wallbanger 1.

PLUS LA MÈME

A different shape and a different name maybe, but the contents remain the same (well, not quite, the articles are different ones). It's still a middle-of-the-road genzine. Observant readers will have noticed a decline in the sercon content since GHAS first saw the light of day. This was part of a conscious effort towards a more balanced zine and we hope to continue this trend in Wallbanger.

The contents of this issue are Skycon biased with a transcript of Roy Kettle's Fan Guest of Honour interview and Paul Kincaid's con rep. The Kettle item was one of the highlights of Skycon - strange as less than 10% of the con attendees saw it (bit of bad programming there boys). Still we hope that the transcript has captured some of the magic of the event for those who were there and those who weren't.

WE'RE ALL GOING ON A

Enough of Wallbanger for now, what's been happening in the Harvey household since Skycon? Our major event was a fortnight in sunny Majorca with John's sister Alison and her husband Bob - yes the island of fish & chips, bratwurst, high-rise hotels and ash-tray

beaches. We were due to leave on Sunday 30th July from Luton Airport at about 2.30 p.m., right at the height of the French Air Traffic Controllers' dispute - perhaps you can guess the rest. Suffice it to say we eventually got into the air from Birmingham (fog at Luton!) at about 6 p.m. on Monday. Not a good start - you're bloody right. Still, the next day the sun was shining and the booze was cheap so who cared!

The feel of the floor of Luton airport soon vanished and the sand got between our toes (damned uncomfortable that). We were staying at Porto Cristo on the opposite side of the island to Palma - part of our idea of getting away from the tourists (can we hear mutterings of why the hell go to Spain then? Well, you try to find somewhere for the first two weeks in August at short notice!), Watney's Red Barrel and tea-like-mum-makes. It worked quite well too. Porto Cristo isn't exactly a deserted retreat but it's free from most of that which gives Majorca a bad name (and large profits!). That having been said our hotel was hardly The Hilton, more Lill's Boarding House. The rooms were moderate as long as you didn't mind the daily battle with the woodworm and it was bloody hot - but the food (is that what you call it?). Not that it was inedible - no. Just the worst coffee in the world and yesterday's rolls for breakfast and for dinner, well, noodle soup, a variable main course (even had sausage and chips one night) and then pears or water melon for dessert. One night they caught us all by surprise and we got tinned apricots, but no evap. Still the vino tinto was only 50p a bottle and anything tasted good after that.

Lazy days on the beach alternately burning and drowning ourselves (both in the sea and booze) follow. Bought John a new wallet to replace the one he left in a pub just before going on holiday. Well, what do you expect from a Watney's pub. That's the last time we'll ever grace their doorstep just to please Greg - christ what taste, even if they do serve the best Guinness. Back to the important things. We found a jolly little bar where the owner enjoyed making experimental cocktails for us. Eve had to be dragged along the beach, thrown in the surf and generally sobered up before being allowed to go to bed - she can't stand spinning rooms and complained the woodworm were making too much noise. And it was bloody hot.

Life changed on Saturday when our hire car arrived. Due to be delivered at 9 a.m. we eventually got it at midday. Not to worry, at least it's here and it looks nice - can't judge a book by its bloody cover. So off we went - or tried to go - John driving, struggling to stay on the right-hand side of the road, changing gear with the door handle and trying not to operate the windscreen wipers every time the indicators were required. Difficult. To compound it the roads were terrible. We expected to end up in a farmyard any minute and these were their A-roads. The car had seen better days as well. The gear stick operated like a spoon in thick porridge so you can imagine the fun of meeting a large coach coming round a narrow bend when you're on the wrong (right) side of the road and in the wrong gear (if at all). And that was when Eve was

driving and that's scary at the best of times! Then we got lost - well, we'd bought a map but the Spaniards don't believe in road signs.

The first day we decided to drive to Palma, some 50 km away. Not far you might say but far enough on those roads. A little too much for inexperienced drivers, we were somewhat exhausted by it. Especially Eve who had driven the last half scared out of her wits while we all fell asleep - well, it was hot, and as I tried to explain to her at least it meant we felt safe with her driving. Somehow that didn't seem to comfort her. Palma didn't do much for us, especially as the market we had gone to see was closed. So onto El Arenal - imagine Blackpool minus tower but a temperature like a sauna and you've got it. We left that quickly and got lost. Then the oil light came on. At this point John felt like driving the thing until the engine seized, but luckily he'd noticed the absence of AA boxes. So we stopped and let the engine cool down a bit. Check the oil - OK, bloody spanish car hire firms - gnashing of teeth. Start the car again, oil light goes out. Off again and thus in stop/start fashion we made it back. Quite honestly we were all glad to get out of that torture machine and forget it for the rest of the evening, and we had another 4 days to go with it! It certainly was a Fiat worse than death - ask a Gannet to say that out loud and you'll see what we mean. Thoughts of returning it were not developed as this meant chasing back to Palma and we didn't want to complain to the courier because then she might remember we were there and start pestering us to go to 'jolly barbecues' at 'jolly' prices. We persevered and over the next few days beat hell out of the machine and came to terms with the problems of driving a Seat 127 in Majorca. Thus we saw a fair bit of coast, lazed on different beaches each day and did an Egon Ronay tour of the bars.

As the car had been delivered late we decided to make sure we got our full 5 days by seeing the local safari park on the morning it was to be returned. So alarm set for an early start. Where's the camera? In the car. Where's the car? It's gone! Not stolen again surely. And our Olympus Trip (David Bailey - who's he?) was in it too. Frantic phone calls to the courier revealed eventually that the bloody car hire firm had come early in the morning and taken it away - cheek. Where's the camera? Not been found in the car, couldn't have been there you must have left it somewhere else. But we didn't. You must have. The courier was less than helpful - bitch. Now some fans might be thinking that if John Harvey's head were loose he'd have to smother it with Araldite or at least insure it against theft, loss, fire, acts of God and malicious football players. And they'd be right. Suffice it to say the camera didn't reappear and Thompson's insurance had better cough up and we never did get to see the animals!

It's funny how lost you are without a car - we felt quite helpless after the heap had been taken away. We whiled away the remainder of the holiday eating, drinking, swimming, drinking and drinking.

By the time the Sunday of our return arrived we were hoping the planes would still be delayed so that the lost day might be regained. No such luck! 3 hours late that's all - pooh. Still we came home laden with cheapo booze and empty pockets. We had a great time. Don't come flying around to help us with our booze, we've managed quite well on our own thanks, and the Southern Comfort's gone already.

Unfortunately we didn't have a very good homecoming. Arrived back chez nous (getting posh now) to find a letter from John's parents to say his Gran had died while we were away so Monday was taken up with the funeral.

Then nose back to the grindstone for John, and for Eve too with a stack of Seacon work that'd arrived while we were away. Anyone want a high-prestige secretary's job; instant BNF and you get a good collection of foreign stamps. Then, Ohmigod, it's Silicon next week, must get the next ish out Eve! Ball and chains come out of the cupboard and bread and water for poor Eve until it's finished - aahh. But the new typer's good isn't it - not many people can get an **IBM Executive** for £2. She's not ~~even~~ just a pretty face that girl!

Well, that's enough of our reminiscences, let's hear some of Roy's.

DEARLY BELOVED...WE ARE GATHERED HERE
TO JOIN THIS KNIGHT AND HIS LADY
IN HOLY MATRIMONY....AND ABOUT
TIME, I MIGHT ADD....



KETTLE
WITH
THE
LID
OFF



This interview was taped at Skycon, Easter 1978. Leroy Kettle, as fan guest of honour, was being interviewed by Simone Walsh.

SW

Let's begin at the beginning. When did you first become interested in science fiction?

LK

Well, I was about 2 and I started reading H G Wells! The sort of age everyone who's famous starts reading sf. No, I started getting it from a travelling library that came round about every six months. I think the earliest sf book I remember borrowing that was really impressive was the Best of Startling or Thrilling Wonder edited by Sam Mines. There were some remarkably good stories in that, quite adult ones that actually mentioned SEX, which really turned me on. I was only 15 at the time and I hadn't heard about things like that. After that I got into Biggles, Capt W E Johns and all that sort of stuff. Patrick Moore and Kemlo were a real turn on.

SW

How did your interest in sf lead into fandom?

RK

Well, I finally got hold of a copy of New Worlds and in the back of it was one of those ubiquitous adverts about joining the BSFA so I joined. I got a letter from that well-known dwarf, Charlie Winstone,

who said you're very welcome to join and sent me all these fantastic lists - exciting! Through that I got involved in the first con I didn't go to because I had appendicitis. Not going to that con was one of the most exciting times of my life! Really ace. It was at that con that I didn't meet Greg for the first time - it was his first convention - we met later.

SW

What was your first actual contact with fandom?

LK

When I touched Audrey Walton's knee. Audrey Walton was a large lady with a husband who spent all the time laying around not doing anything. I used to go round to see her because she put out a fanzine - Wadezine - and in some obscure way I'd got in touch with her through the BSFA. Every time I went round there we used to talk about science fiction and her husband just used to lie there, not doing anything. I'd look at him, and he'd look at me, and that was it. Audrey and I put out a fanzine that was pretty awful, but I must have enjoyed getting involved in it because I did a lot of stuff for it - pretty rubbishy stuff, but it was my first venture into the field. I think everyone starts off on a low level - Greg for instance with his famous non-existent fanzine New Pembrokeshire Review, which everyone here didn't get a copy of.

GREG PICKERSGILL

I put it out at the convention before the one I first went to.

SW

So at what stage in your career did you decide to go to a convention?

RK

I can't really recall why I wanted to go. It was advertised in the BSFA literature... possibly in the bulletin Archie Mercer did... and I thought it sounded like a good idea but I got appendicitis. When I finally did go I only knew one person...

SW

Audrey?

RK

No, Audrey didn't go. She gave me a pile of fanzines to give out which were so abysmal I just left them in a little heap in a corner and five minutes later they were all gone - that was really bizarre.

SW

Which was your first one?

LK

Oxford 1969.

SW

Which I believe was the first banquet. I think it was John Brunner's idea for his trendy friends.

GREG PICKERSGILL

Well that's a bloody good reason for doing away with that then!

SW

For those who weren't here, Stan was asking eariler when the first banquet was held.

LK

Yea, that was the first time I was ever nauseated by John Brunner - it was the first time I'd met him. He's not here, is he? No, he really did, he got up and ponced around in front of everyone. When he was on a panel with anyone he had this routine with a cigarette lighter so attention was drawn to him, flicking away with it and beaming at people and talking about his own books. If he was introducing someone, say Brian Aldiss, he'd say "here we have Brian Aldiss who is a friend of mine and I'm John Brunner and I wrote this" (holding up a copy of one of his own books) and Brian Aldiss would be sitting there **thinking** "cretin".

SW

Do you recall from that **convention** since it was your first, anything that particularly stuck in your mind as a brand new neo at your first con.?

LK

Yea, it was fucking **incredible** that's all.

SW

Incredibly good or incredibly bad?

LK

Incredibly good. I'd never experienced anything like that before. I'd only taken to drink a year beforehand.

SW

And did you feel the "I want to get into fandom, I wish I was one of those sorts of people", or didn't you even notice there was something called fandom that you could get involved in?

LK

No, there was certainly something different there - there were a lot of cretins and there were only a few people of my age and younger (Greg) but it was nice meeting those people and keeping in touch with them. At that time, however, 80% of the people there were a lot older, middle-aged, about my age now.

SW

Who was the King of Fandom in those days and has the emphasis changed?

LK

Oh, it was Phil Rogers and John Brunner and people like that.

SW

John, as a fan? No he must have been a pro.

LK

No, he was trying to dominate the fannish sort of thing, and people like Phil Rogers - people who haven't got an ounce of wit or sense about them.

PETER NICHOLLS

Were Charles Platt and Peter Weston there?

LK

Charles Platt was there trying to steal the big poster they'd got up for 2001.

GREG PICKERSGILL

He got there before us the bastard.

LK

It's true, Greg and I stole down in the middle of the night...

SW

Gerry Webb stole it surely because he had it stuck on his wall.

LK

Yes, Gerry had it on his wall but I think Charles Platt was the one who stole it.

SW

And do you find cons getting better over the years?

LK

No

SW

You're not enjoying them any more than you did then?

LK

I enjoyed my first convention the most and then there was a big hiatus around Chester and Bristol for some reason, I don't know why. Mancon was quite a low, but this one's a good one at the moment.

SW

Does anyone have any questions they'd like to ask Roy on early conventions? Any scandal from early on?

PETER NICHOLLS

When was your first convention Simone?

SW

Well, before him.

GREG PICKERSCILL

I should point out that when I first met Roy I was very impressed by him because I was under the impression that he was someone called Leroy Tanner who at the time was writing book reviews for Amazing. I was really knocked out to be introduced to this incredibly famous Leroy Tanner.

SW

Right, can we get onto Fanzines now. At what stage did you decide you wanted to start pubbing your own ish?

LK

After I packed up doing one with Greg. Greg had been trying to pub his own ish for some time and I went to see him for a few days, and it was the one occasion actually that I went to see him and neither of us got arrested.

SW

Could you expand on you being arrested with Greg?

LK

I'll expand on that in a minute.

SW

It sounds more interesting than what you're going to say.

LK

No it isn't. We suddenly decided we were going to produce a fanzine and we did it in a weekend. We put out issue No 2 of Foulter. It was a lot of fun, Greg used a lot of stuff he was going to put into his non-existent New Pembrookeshire Review, and it seemed to strike a cord in a lot of fandom of our age. It really irritated a lot of older people, Graham Boak and people like that. He did enjoy it to begin with I think and responded to it but it was something very much of our generation. Greg did virtually all the work on it after the second issue, he made sure Foulter was spelt right and things like that.

SW

And how come your meetings with Greg nearly got you arrested in those early days?

LK

Well, whenever I went down to see him we always got incredibly drunk. On the first occasion we were just walking around and Greg said he knew a woman who lived in a house we were just passing and I said "you know a woman who lives in that house?" We were with another friend of Greg's and so the two of us grabbed hold of him and lifted him up like a battering ram and charged at the door with him. He wasn't particularly happy about that. Just as we reached the door it opened and we all stumbled inside past this woman who was standing there. She said "I know you Greg Edwards". Obviously she didn't. Apparently he'd been going

around molesting her daughter and giving a false name. We stumbled down the steps while she was shouting at us and looked to the right of the street to run away that way and there was a policeman there. So we looked to the left and there was a policeman there - we were surrounded. We had our names put down in their little books and then we went home.

Then the next night we were sitting around next to the canal at 2 in the morning, chatting drunkenly away when this policeman comes up and wants to search us - to make sure we'd got our balls in the right place, you know what policemen are like - and then he put our names down in a little book.

We used to take it in turns to look after each other. One of us would get incredibly drunk and the other guide him. On another night it was Greg's turn to get incredibly drunk and he was lying in the gutter, so I just tapped him in the stomach with my foot to wake him up and he went BLEUGH - just like that - all over the place. Then he stood up, got hold of this bottle, broke it on the wall and held it in my face. I was a bit taken aback by this because I had made him better, I'd made him throw up. For some reason he forgot what he was going to do with the bottle and threw it over this wall. Suddenly a policeman appeared and apparently he'd been leaning against this wall just around the corner, listening to us. He picked Greg for littering, but he didn't say whether it was the bottle or the vomit. He got Greg to walk along the yellow line in the road but it was one of those roads that was all curved and Greg walked an absolutely straight line, totally missing the yellow line and so the policeman said, "Right, you'll have to come back with me". We were both a bit reluctant to go through this routine of police stations and things so I tried to phone a cab to pick us up but I couldn't. Eventually he let us go as long as I'd look after Greg. I took him away and we stumbled homewards. Eventually we stopped outside a machine that sold us milk at exorbitant prices because it was the middle of the night. As we were standing there drinking this milk a police car came screeching to a halt and this policeman said, "You were going to take him home". "We're jushhaving lilldrinkofmilk". "OK" they said and zoomed off again. We got our names in books $3\frac{1}{2}$ times because I got my name in only once. Then finally, the coup de grace was that Greg's name in the final event actually got him in court and fined - front page of the local paper - LOCAL BOY MAKES BAD!

SW

Did you make any other friends in fandom?

LK

I didn't make him, he was created like that! Peter Roberts - I met him at the same time I met Greg and he struck me as rather peculiar - long hair and wearing pyjamas all the time. I remember trying to impress him once by telling him about this famous folk singer who was at university with me. He kept on saying "Are you sure, are you sure?" It turned out that I'd got the name

completely wrong . . . I've forgotten who I was talking about . . . name a famous folk singer, quick, quick . . . PETE SEEGER, RALPH McTELL. . . Ralph McTell . . . actually it was! So I was saying Ralph McTell was at university with me when actually it was some cretin who used to get up and sing in the bar, name was Bert Sponge or something. From then on Peter realised I was a cretin and he's never looked back.

SW

To move on again, have you always had this fannish desire to write science fiction?

LK

Yeah, from about 11 I used to sit upstairs in my room writing these tedious science fiction stories that never had an ending. My parents were expecting me to be up there doing homework and would suddenly burst in so I'd cover up the writing, open a book and pretend to be reading it - I had the most crumpled science fiction stories you ever saw in your life - they were pretty bad as well - I'm still writing them, the same ones.

SW

Did you ever submit any stories when you were very young?

LK

Yes, when I was about 16 I sent some handwritten stories out once but I never got them back. I sent three stories out to Keith Roberts when he was editing Impulse that I'd typed on a typewriter that was worked by an elastic band attached to a chair leg. The return carriage mechanism had stopped. The problem was that it didn't work smoothly - you were typing on it and would get through a few letters OK but then suddenly it would jerk and you'd have big gaps in it. It was ludicrous. They were all stupid stories where it turned out that the heroes were Adam and Eve, or a giant sentient potato - all this great avant garde stuff, and they got rejected pretty badly. I didn't submit anything for years after that.

SW

What made you change your style from these Adam and Eve type stories to something that could possibly be saleable.

LK

I grew up.

SW

So you grew up, and did you start writing more successfully?

LK

Oh, I sold half a dozen stories, pretty abysmal stories really but there's so much rubbishy science fiction written that anyone who can put pen to paper and spell can get published - well look at Ron Goulart for christ sake.

SW

Is there any truth in the rumour that any time you have submitted

the people I get on with best are the people of my generation who I've known since they were beginning writing. Like Rob Holdstock and Chris. I've never got on with any well-known writers except Bob Shaw, but everyone gets on with him.

SW

What about, say, people you have just seen at cons but not actually mixed with. Whom do you think has been the most exciting person?

LK

I don't think I've ever actually been excited in that sense. I saw Arthur C Clarke at the One Tun once and everyone was ignoring him. Actually, years before that I was at home and had decided not to go to the Globe when Greg phoned and said "Why aren't you here?" like he does, so I replied "'Cos I'm here" and he said "Arthur C Clarke's here!" and I said "Arthur C Clarke's there! So what" and put the phone down. I thought a bit and put my coat on and zoomed down there, but Greg said "Oh, he's gone". I still don't know whether he was actually there or not that night. But he was there another night and he was standing around but everyone was ignoring him - I think everyone was frightened of him because he's such a big name.

SW

Let's get back to conventions. Which one stands out as being the most enjoyable of all time?

LK

Oxford, my first one.

SW

Oh, you can't say that again.

LK

But I have... OK then, Mancon, that was the best.

SW

That's the next question, which was the worst convention?

LK

I think I disliked Chester more than Mancon because I was sleeping on Rob Holdstock's floor. It wasn't particularly because it was Rob's floor, but when he turned over sideways in bed he kept knocking me on the head. I was in there but the trouble was that we didn't keep the same hours - John Egging was in the same room but he was very quiet. I'd go in to try and sleep but there was a weir outside which would keep me awake. Then suddenly there'd be this incredible noise - it was Rob. There was only one key and he'd given it to me, so to get in he had to climb up on the garage roof, jump from the roof into the window, climb in, knock the wardrobe over - apparently that was part of it, it was very important that - and he'd come bursting in, talking and burbling on. I'd come bursting awake and think, bugger him I might as

well wake completely up and talk to him. When I was properly awake and ready to talk, he'd be fast asleep.

At Chester there were little hotels all over the place and I found it pretty dire actually. It was a dire situation, dire convention and was worse than Mancon as far as I was concerned because I expected Mancon to be bad.

SW

What about embarrassing moments?

LK

No embarrassing moments.

SW

What about the time I introduced you to Janet Shorrocks?

LK

I don't think we'll go into that.

JOHN PIGGOTT

What comments have you to make about the 1970 Novacon, when I was trying to kip down with Peter Roberts?

SW

You couldn't possibly relate that story could you, where everyone was going round the corridors and they found the room that...

LK

What were you doing in that room John?

JOHN PIGGOTT

I was simply trying to sleep on his floor.

GREG PICKERSGILL

That was the only time I've seen Peter Roberts annoyed.

LK

Yes, "Fuck off you bastards he said".

JOHN PIGGOTT

Yes, then he threw me out.

AUDIENCE

Tell us about Worcester.

LK

That wasn't so much embarrassing, more the most nauseating experience at a hotel. I was thrown out with Tom Penman - that wasn't the particularly awful part of it, but he's never spoken to me since. We were both thrown out about 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning and because we couldn't get any water or anything we were both dehydrating from the drink and had splitting headaches etc. It was freezing cold and we were just wandering through the city - we tried to break into the Cathedral for somewhere warm to sleep and a bit of bread and a glass

of wine. Eventually we ended up lighting a fire in the street, miles from anywhere in a derelict area. Suddenly a police car - probably the same one from Greg's - screeched up and a policeman got out. "Hello" he said, "what are you doing?" "Lighting a fire" Then he asked where we came from so we said from the Science Fiction convention and he said "Oh, all right" and drove off. That really sums the whole thing up.

SW

What's your opinion of fannish conventions like Silicon and Fancon?

LK

Well, I've never been to a Fancon and I don't particularly want to because really it's the sort of people that I either don't want to see at all or people I don't mind, as opposed to people I really want to see who go Silicon. I didn't go to the first Silicon because I was on holiday, but the second Silicon I found really enjoyable. You don't have to listen to boring creeps talking about Science Fiction and Organisations in SF.

SW

To a newcomer, going to an Eastercon, one perhaps feels very lost and thinks I'm not going to another one because they're all so unfriendly and cliquey, do you think he'd benefit from going to a Silicon-type con?

LK

Yes, I think he would. There's fewer people who can avoid you. No, you stand more chance of being able to talk to people. It's a more informal atmosphere in a way. At a place this size, there's so many people you could talk to, you really don't know where to start.

SW

How's this poor little neo going to cope with a convention like the Worldcon in Brighton?

LK

OK I think because there'll be a lot of Americans there and they are the sort of people you don't want to meet in railway compartments because they'll just talk to you.

JOHN PIGGOTT

At one time Ritchie Smith used to share a house with you. Have you any anecdotes to relate about that?

LK

Funny you should mention that. I don't know why it is that people I go around with get arrested, but Ritchie was arrested. Was it once or twice? No, just once. I was lying around in bed in the middle of the night and the phone rings. It was the police station asking if I knew someone called Ritchie Smith. I said no but they persuaded me that I might know him. What had happened was that a couple of his friends had come down from Durham and they'd

been drinking wine all weekend. He's got one friend who lives on carrots and wine, it's incredible. He's very pleasant, but small and wiry and just goes about beating people up. Anyway, they all got very pissed and Ritchie apparently went into this pub and beat the shit out of a urinal. There he was, and he really showed it. So they arrested him and I had to give a testimonial for him. I went round to the police station with this friend who lives on wine and carrots and I was saying "Great guy Ritchie, great guy" and his friend he's known for years was going on "Oh christ, he's always doing this sort of thing". Despite that they actually let him loose.

RITCHIE SMITH

Yea, I've got a serious sort of a question. What sort of a person do you think you'd be if you didn't drink?

LK

I'd be the sort of person who did an Organisations in SF panel this morning and felt really awful doing it.

JOHN PIGGOTT

Roy, before you set up residence with Ritchie Smith there was a period when you lived in the same house as John Hall... there was one story about baked beans I recall.

LK

Yes, John had this prediliction for baked beans. He used to live off baded beans, chocolate garibaldis and packet soup. One day he came back really pleased with himself from a Kentucky Fried Chicken shop with an enormous tin of beans. I've never seen as many beans. It was huge. He ripped off the lid and got through about six inches of it and goes "Tummy full" and decided to put it in his cupboard and keep it for a bit. Two weeks later he thought, "Mmm, feel like baked beans again", opens the cupboard and there's this big blue growth. He was thinking "If I scrape it off..." but eventually he threw it out of the window - we were on the fourth floor - and it burst all over the garden. If the landlady had known Bob Rickard who edits Fortean Times she'd have written to him about this fall of baked beans.

At the same time, and I'm going to embarrass him now, he was very clothes conscious and one day he went out and bought this tremendous black outfit - black boots, black trousers, shirt, tie, black fingernails. The problem was he couldn't quite fit into it because he'd got this stomach through eating too many baked beans. So what he did was to get this huge bandage and ask me to wind it round him to hold his stomach in. I spent about an hour winding this bloody crepe bandage round him - I'd wind it round about twice and in between the strands the fat would suddenly squelch out, so I'd push it in and try to carry on winding... We finally got him all settled in, with these huge heels on his boots he looked quite impressive actually. I didn't have to unwind it, luckily.

DAVE LANGFORD

There's an excellent placard on the wall there entitled "The Wit of Roy Kettle", are they your favourites, and if so, what do you think

is funny?

LK

I'm very impressed with my writing actually.

DAVE LANGFORD

You rat.

LK

No, seriously, I spend a lot of time on it and I read through it. The bits I like I like a lot and I can't deny it. But there's a lot of stuff I write that I'm very disappointed with even though I do spend a fair amount of time on it. I like other people's comments on it. Greg's someone I particularly like to comment on it to give me a bit of security.

JOHN PIGGOTT

I think sometimes you're more cruel than witty.

LK

Piss off.

JOHN PIGGOTT

An example there is the Ian Williams comment.

LK

Yes, I suppose it is.

JOHN PIGGOTT

Even given the fact that it's Ian Williams you're talking about. My favourite there are the bits about Gladys Hack the Lady Barbarian, which is getting at Rob Holdstock and the Biggles Saga. You didn't mention the Tesco Big Book of Fairy Games.

LK

This is getting ludicrous actually. I can't really talk about my writing.

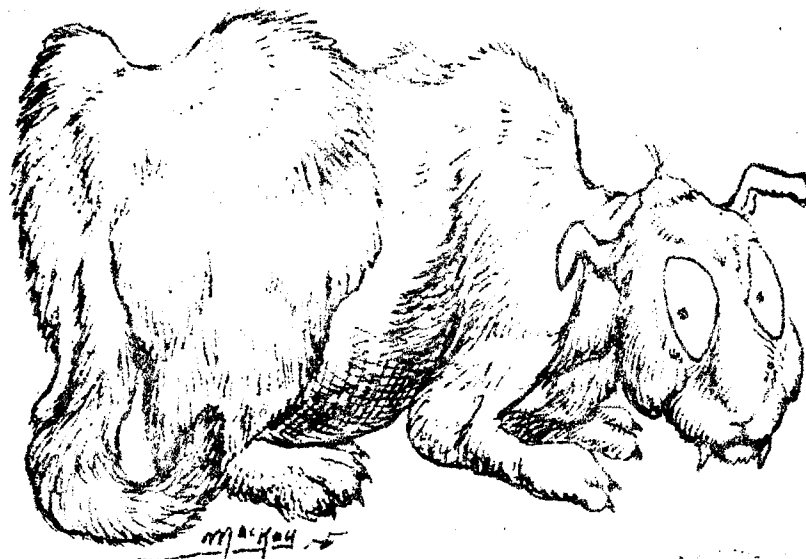
SW

Well, we'll thank our Fan Guest of Honour for being such a nice FGoH and we want you all to go feeling happy and not bored thinking "God, why don't they finish", so thank you Leroy Kettle.

oooooooooooo

At this point the meeting fell into utter chaos, to be resumed in the bar to resuscitate Roy who, on finding out that his pearls of wisdom had been taped replied "Ohmegod, why didn't someone tell me?"

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Paul Kincaid

In which the author recounts his vast experience of SKYCON in the hope that it may prove salutary to the uninitiated.

Eventually you run out of excuses. When you've scraped the barrel and actually read the Programme Book, twice; when there is no immediate and urgent need to stare out of the window or perform some other such deed of daring-do, you finally have to admit defeat and begin writing. Such is the sad state into which conrep writers sink; though older and wiser heads than mine have fallen into the trap, I can but warn of the dangers. In particular I advise sobriety at Silicon, at least that way you stand a fighting chance of avoiding promising one of these things to someone disreputable enough to take you up on it, like John and Evel. (Thus it is written, on her Convention badge: Evel yn Harvey - the middle bit, I suppose, indicates Welsh ancestry, as if we don't have enough of 'em already).

John and Eve are a formidable pair, comparing their stubbornness to mules must libel the poor mule. I finally gave up the unequal struggle of trying to squirm out of this at about 2.45 on Friday. Driven by motives of self-abasement that I shall pass over in decent silence, I had subjected myself to the Chairman's Welcome and the Introduction of Celebrities. John happened to be sitting next to me, so with naive desperation I said: "How can I write a conrep, I've been here an hour and nothing's happened?"

"What a great idea," he replied, bubbling with nauseating enthusiasm. "'Nothing happening, so I go to the bar. Later I look around but there's still nothing happening, so back to the bar.' Make a great report."

"Ah well," I quipped, "there's not much point in me writing it now, you've just done it for me."

With his usual mastery of repartee and the bon mot, John responded with stony silence. A few moments later I got some slight satisfaction, a sadistic laugh as the Harveys were introduced and had to stand up to take an embarrassed bow. But it wasn't enough.

I took his advice, though, and paid a visit to the two or three tables that made up the conbar in a small room downstairs. I should have known better. On the train down to London I had been reading scare stories in GANNETSCRAPBOOK 4 about lager in London costing 50p a pint, and on arrival at the Heathrow Hotel I sampled one of their meals so I had experience of their prices. Even so, 60p for fifth rate lager. I needed that first pint just to recover from the shock.

Alright, we go to cons to get drunk with friends. But if this is the shape of cons to come, then for anyone who would prefer to end a con without a visit to the bankruptcy court all I can suggest is that they either give up drinking, or give up eating. Preferably both, since that might just about leave them with enough for the room. For myself, I occasionally managed to persuade someone that they owed me a drink, otherwise it was my soberest con, and the only one since my first that I've been clear-eyed and clear-headed on the Saturday and Sunday mornings. Not necessarily a good thing considering the sight presented by some of my wealthier friends on those mornings.

Only one question remained: how in hell was I going to survive the weekend without the necessary dulling of the senses that alcohol imposes? Fear not, gentle reader, for help was at hand. A whisper reached me that an inn just across the road served the life-preserving beverage at something approaching civilized prices. That evening an expedition consisting of Boris Lawrence, Mike Scantlebury and myself set out to investigate this rumour.

I confess, maybe desperation made us a bit eager. Anyway, the hostelry was still closed when we got there. So we wandered along the road in the hope that we might find another pub that was open. We didn't, but we did find a bowling alley. About ten years ago I did bowl once or twice, Mike and Boris, so they say, have never bowled. I mention that only to explain how come, assuming our erratic scoring system to be correct, I won. And to prove that the universe operates a system of checks and balances, I then went on to demonstrate my total inability to master the intricacies of a pin-ball machine and a three-handed effort at one of those blip-blip-blip TV games.

Eventually we got to the pub where they served pizzas and Kronenberg and played 'Denis' repeatedly on the jukebox, to Boris' evident delight. "Ooh that Deborah Harry," he drooled. I think we were on our second pint when Jan Finder led in a colonial delegation. Jan had apparently prepared a glossary of British terms in

an attempt to educate American fans in the proper use of the language in preparation for '79. Unfortunately he had omitted to give the definitions of the words listed, so Boris took it upon himself to fill the gap for Bobbi Armbruster (she threatened to bust our arms if we mispronounced it, so I won't, honest).

Funny thing about Boris, he of the "creamy, yielding flesh" as Dave Langford would have us believe; it turns out he's shy. (Ahhh. . .) No, I didn't believe it either. But whenever we came to one of those good old English words like 'bum', 'bugger' or 'crumpet', I had to supply the definitions. Of course, it could simply be that he's illiterate.

The Heathrow Hotel obviously had our best interests very much at heart. Not only did they encourage moderation in alcoholic consumption, but when they locked the toilets at night they realised that this might cause problems and thoughtfully closed the bar at one o'clock also. They must also have been keenly aware of the many valuable fanzines and photographs that festooned the fanroom, for, with security very much in mind, they had locked this also. It seemed that only the guardian of this princely collection, Ian Maule, was empowered to open it once more. However Ian, for reasons only known to himself, had elected to lock himself away in his room with Janice.

Now rumour had it that this self-same Maule was due to bring a great wealth of booze into the fanroom where a party was due to take place. Consequently a modest gathering of the more knowledgeable fans was filling the corridor in anticipation of the event. Of course he didn't appear, so Greg Pickersgill somehow managed to get himself locked in the fanroom along with the cleaners.

Now we all know what a strange and wonderful place the fanroom is, and what **weird** attraction it holds for all trufen, and I will not begin to guess at what arcane practices Greg performed with the cleaners behind that locked door. But whatever it was, I swear that when that door was again opened some time later more people emerged than had ever entered. Among them our mighty chairman, Kev Smith, making a noble if futile effort to look like he had the faintest idea what he was doing.

If you're lucky the programme doesn't intrude too much upon your con. Nevertheless, once or twice, it does pay to put your head around the door of the convention hall- and there is one item when such a potentially lethal position is almost de rigeur. In fact, careful to reserve myself a seat for Mr Shaw, I even risked the latter part of the preceding panel. A lacklustre effort I must say, missing on the fireworks because Greg Pickersgill was sitting at one end of the row, and he wasn't speaking! But then, maybe it was my non-hungover state, since even Bob Shaw seemed less sparkling than usual. With his World Con commitments coming up next year, perhaps he should be allowed a rest next Easter.

At lunchtime that Saturday Rob Hansen, Joseph Nicholas, Gra Poole and I decided to favour the Air Hostess once more. I'll re-phrase that, we decided to have lunch at the pub across the road. It was, perhaps, a mistake. The place was practically empty, and Rob had no trouble getting his beer and two pizzas, the last the pub had. Only then the barman wandered off to serve another bar leaving us standing there, empty handed. Rob took himself off to a corner table where he could stuff himself and have a good laugh at our expense. Somehow Gra got served and joined Rob, but it was half an hour after we got there before Joe and I got our pints of lager and put in an order for toasted cheese sandwiches. These, of course, didn't appear. We made a couple more trips to the bar, propped it up a while longer, and finally, finally, after waiting for an hour or more, we got to eat. Naturally one of my sandwiches turned out to be cheese and onion. I hate onion.

And through it all Gra was scribbling industriously away in a huge notebook. I must admit, hard though it is to believe, that there are a few perverts, masochists all, who actually enjoy writing these things. Dave Langford is another. His deafness is caused by the curious phenomenon of everybody falling silent whenever he comes within range, just to be on the safe side. But the disability does have its advantages; I've long suspected that it is a convenient excuse for carrying around a miniature tape recorder disguised as a hearing aid, one specially tuned to pick up only indiscretions. Well, it saves all that tedious note-taking. Myself, I make no notes during a con, hoping I might not remember enough to make a conrep. It works, this is all fiction.

But I digress. At one point, while I was at the table nursing my lager and Joe was standing guard at the bar I saw him talking with Dave Wingrove. Recently Dave Wingrove has taken to bombarding me with free books, and I thought that if I went to the expense of maybe buying him a half of something it might encourage him in this desirable activity. But the next time I looked round he'd disappeared and, naturally, I didn't see him again that weekend. The Heathrow Hotel seems to be a great place for not finding people. Steve and Helen Walker are good friends of mine, and we had arranged to meet as early as possible at the con. Well I saw Steve for about a minute at the foot of the lifts as I arrived on the Friday, after that I couldn't find either of them until the showing of YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN on Saturday evening.

That, of course, was after the GoH's speech, my own totally uninspiring appearance on a panel in the Fan Room (Fannish Brain's Trust, would you credit it?) suitably interrupted by a false fire alarm, and dinner at a Chinese restaurant with a girl who revealed incredibly detailed knowledge of the laws relating to exposure and peeping toms. Funny things, cons.

The film was followed by the Fancy Dress parade wherein a large number of people clambered unsteadily onto chairs to obtain the best view possible of the usual collection of girls intent on displaying their wares. (God bless 'em). And then there was Brian Burgess.

Did you ever . . . (No, I must restrain myself, hysteria can't be good for you. Ha, ha, ho ho, he he, guffaw guffaw . . .)

Somewhat recovered, I then went up to my room to watch MASH on television. Well, even at a con we're allowed some enjoyment.

When I rejoined the festivities it was to find the disco in full swing. Just outside the con hall a small group that consisted at various times, and among others, of Hazel Langford, Janice Maule, Gra Poole, Ian Williams, Mike Scantlebury, Joe Nicholas and myself were having what, considering the time and the location, was a reasonably sane discussion. Suddenly Joe Nicholas thrust his ballooning finger towards the ceiling and declared, ringingly: "I'm going to dance with Helen McCarthy!" Remembering the abortive escapade of last Eastercon it was generally agreed that this would be an event not to be missed. So we all bustled into the con hall and found a spot near the small dancefloor. The floor was quite crowded, there wasn't even room for Malcolm Edwards to do his usual backwards run, and it took us some while to spot our quarry. During this interval I do believe that Joe was having second thoughts.

"There she is."

"Ah, she's dancing with someone."

"Then break in."

"Oh, what a pity, the music's stopped."

"Now's your chance, then."

"But she's talking to someone."

"They're not dancing, though. And the music's started."

"I've lost her."

"She's over there."

"Ow, my finger's hurting again."

"That doesn't stop you dancing."

By main force Gra Poole and I had pushed him so far forward that one foot actually touched the wooden floor, but that was as far as we got before the disco shut down at 11.30. Joe took a very deep breath. This time he can't complain of the dangers produced by his plan leaking out - they didn't leak and there was no danger. So Novacon. . .

Cons are great places for revealing things about people. For instance I've known Mike Scantlebury virtually since I entered fandom, and I was vaguely aware that he had been involved with fandom before that. Now, as people began drifting out of the con hall, 'Captain' Greg Pickersgill and Simone Walsh wandered by. "Good grief," quoth Simone, spotting Mike, "It's Dufe (Doof?) Scantlebury from Bristol." Dufe? "Because he'd do fer anything," Simone supplied. They then wandered off into unintelligible reminiscences, and I was reduced to trying to emulate 'Head Boy' Roy Kettle's feat with used flash cubes. He would bounce a cube off his biceps and (try to) catch it again. The floor soon became rather crunchy under foot, so we withdrew.

That night a party in the fan room did materialise, though if there was any of that famed fannish punch available, I didn't get any. As

soon as we got into the fanroom Joe Nicholas and Helen Eling withdrew into the darkest corner and locked themselves into a kiss that must have broken all records. Some time later Stan Eling came in, noticed the couple in the clinch, and settled down on the other side of the room. Ten minutes or so later, since they still showed no sign of coming up for air, he wandered out again. Meanwhile someone had put a tape on, and the interrupted dancing started up again.

I had no sooner got through the door of the Heathrow Hotel on Friday afternoon than Rob Hansen accosted me and thrust into my hand Roy Kettle's NOT TRUE RAT TEN. That night I kept Mike Scantlebury awake by reading the thing, and laughing out loud. This night he got his revenge, he snored. What is the world coming to? Who can you trust when the fresh young innocent who wouldn't say boo to a goose who you agree to share your room with to save money turns out to be a jaded long-time fan who snores?

Strangely the greater part of Sunday seems to be murky and unclear to me now. I remember getting up very early because this was the day THE FRONT was supposed to be shown on the television and I wanted to see it. But when I turned the set on they were still showing BRANNIGAN from the previous day, so I went back to bed. Later I learnt that THE FRONT was shown after all, and I missed it!!

I remember hurrying away from the bidding session with Boris once the Leeds bid was secured for '79 in order not to miss BARBARELLA. Only to have to wait an hour before they started showing it. We knew the timing had been changed, but the committee didn't do a particularly good job of advertising the revised times.

I remember Steve Walker surrendering Helen into my tender care to go swimming. She wore a bikini. I take my glasses off to go swimming. Doesn't it always work that way.

I remember the book auction with Chuck Partington bidding indiscriminately for everything he didn't want, until nobody bid against him for one item. And the Call My Bluff with Roy Kettle proving himself the best liar in fandom, and the pros demonstrating that they know nothing about sf.

We ate at the airport, half a dozen of us; then returned to catch the aptly named DANGER: DIABOLIK while the wealthy banqueted.

The Doc Weir Award is traditionally an occasion for getting the fix in. This time the fix worked. I was next to Greg, leaning against the wall at the back of the hall, when it was announced he'd won. He turned his head a little to one side, smiled that tiny, shy, retiring smile known and loved by us all. Well, all right . . . but he didn't exactly jump up and down and scream and shout either. The problem is, the obvious choice for next year would be Simone, but I don't think she'd stand for two years cleaning the damned cup.

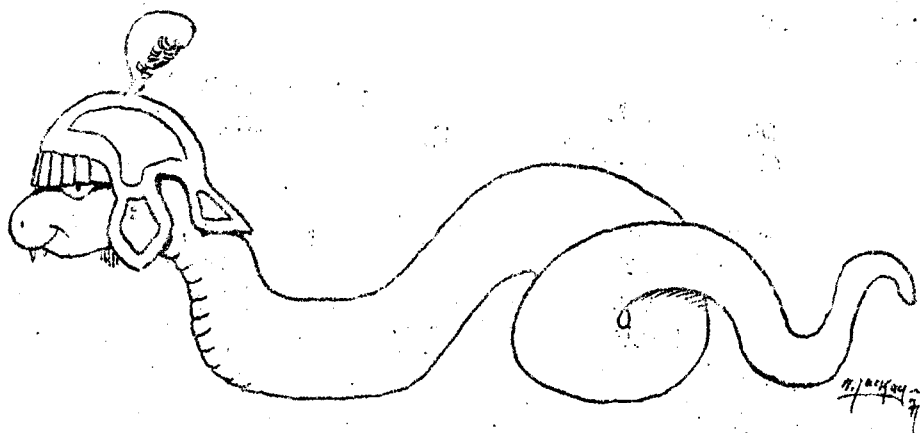
After that came THE announcement. Now, for the first time, there

is proof that concons are human, that they do have some spark of decency about them. "Free drinks," said Kev Smith. Free drinks, the only time I could afford the bar prices. We sauntered slowly downstairs at a stately, dignified pace; waited patiently for our glass of lager; and retired yet again to the fanroom. A strange thing that the fanroom was at its most crowded at precisely those times when Ian Maule, fanroom generalissimo and well-known wishy washy person, was not trying to attract business.

In exchange for a promise of a floor to sleep on at Silicon, I had agreed to let Ritchie Smith and Annie Mullins sleep on the floor of our room that night. However when, in the not-so-early hours of Monday morning, we finally completed the route march down all those miles of corridors it turned out that Mike hadn't yet decided to retire. So Ritchie and Annie took his bed, and Mike was left with the floor. That'll teach him to snore. It didn't stop me extracting his full share of the room rate, either.

Reality has been getting rather a nasty habit of intruding into the back end of cons this last year or so. At Coventry John and Eve had their car pinched. This year a dozen or so of us went to Terminal 3 for lunch on Monday. We'd just about finished when there was a scream and I looked around to see Chris Atkinson clutching something to her and staggering a little backwards. "We get all sorts," said the waiter, and winked. It turned out someone had rifled her bag, taking money and keys. Like I said, nasty.

Apart from that, though, John had it pretty near right. Nothing happened, so I went to the bar, only the beer was so expensive I couldn't even drink. Which is the big problem about getting saddled with a job like this - what on earth do you write about?



BACKS TO THE WALL

Chris Priest, 1 Ortygia House, 6 Lower Road, Harrow

Just a line to acknowledge GHAS with thanks... and to echo Bob Shaw's remark about the problems of writing LoCs. There's not much point starting one unless you've got something to say... and more often than not, I THINK OF SOMETHING, only to forget what it was by the time I've finished the entire fnz. So I'm dashing this off while the thing's still fresh in my mind... because I want to answer Ritchie Smith's letter.

The panel he's talking about was at Novacon in '76 (I think), so it's a long time ago, and I can't remember what it was supposed to be 'about'. But what I do remember clearly was that it came on the Sunday, following Dave Kyle's GOH speech, which Rob Holdstock and I had listened to. What we heard was a slightly elderly gentleman talking rather narrow-mindedly about what he described as "sense of wonder". What it amounted to was that he wanted to get back to what he was describing as the "traditional values" of science fiction; in other words, lots of heroism and adventure and big-scale ideas, at the expense of dropping all the sex and dirty words and defeatism that have marked a lot of modern sf. OK, fair enough, but Rob and I felt the panel the next day was a good opportunity for us to set right what we saw as the balance.

What we were trying to say on that panel was that heroism and adventure and big-scale ideas alone do not constitute "sense of wonder". We (or perhaps I should say "I", since I'm writing this letter without consulting Rob), I am all for "sense of wonder", but as a writer sitting at a desk and trying to get a book done, it isn't possible to just stir up "sense of wonder" out of nothing. Sometimes, the actual book or story you're doing doesn't lend itself to the sort of scene that gets the Dave Kyles of this world gasping with excitement; in which case, one accepts that one isn't writing that sort of story. However, sometimes the chance arises and again, as a writer, you have to find ways of doing it. What Dave Kyle was saying proved conclusively that he has never actually sat down himself and tried to do it. It simply isn't the best way to do it, to start using colourful adjectives and huge dimensions to convey "wonder"... it has to come naturally out of the story and the characters and the situations. If I may offer a personal example: there's one scene in INVERTED WORLD near the middle of the book, where I got huge great dollops of what I recognized as "good old-fashioned sense of wonder", and got it as I was writing it. To

judge by the various responses to the book I've had, I think a good number of readers have also experienced the same. But that particular scene comes at the end of a longish sequence of events (and would be meaningless on its own), and in that sequence there's a lot of vomiting and swearing and fucking, every single instance of which is absolutely crucial to what it is building up towards. Yet Dave Kyle would presumably have me branded as a dirty-minded old sod, working to destroy "sense of wonder" and the "traditions" of sf.

Anyway, to descend from the particular to the general, on that panel we were trying in our humble way to put this sort of thing across, but you know what panels are like - you can never quite say just what you want to, and there are always churls like Andrew Stephenson who do go on disagreeing with you - and it came out a bit garbled. So to answer Ritchie, no, I don't loathe the concept of "sense of wonder"; what pisses me off about so much modern sf is that there isn't enough "sense of wonder"... or if there is, it's the wrong sort. Once upon a time it was all right for Doc Smith to say something like: "the ethership zipped across a trillion light-years while they made a cup of tea"... but what does that mean? I believe modern sf is or should be by definition "better" than the old stuff, and I think the modern reader - who on the whole is intelligent, articulate and well-educated - expects slightly more. If we must write books about etherships zipping across a trillion lightyears, I think we must at least attempt to convey what that might feel like.

And Ritchie's final point, that we don't have to write sf... who said we did? Most writers just write the best book they can, and let someone else do the labelling. That panel we slugged through on a hungover Sunday morning wasn't intended as a complaint against sf as such; for me at least it was an opportunity to argue against what I saw as a narrow definition of sf, and one that would not only fail to find many stories which would fit into the definition, but which would also exclude a hell of a lot of good writing. Still, Dave is busy writing his reference-books of science fiction, so I guess he's well on his way to becoming an Authority.



Billy Hall, 111 Hylton Lane, Townendfarm Est, Sunderland

It's only until recently I began thinking about the books I choose to read. Usually browsing through a bookshelf what had influenced me to buy was the cover illustration. I think Carol Gregory failed to point out in her article, that paperbacks are the most important medium in publicising SF Art - overall it's bad publicity! I've often wondered if most British publishers put little or no thought into covering their merchandise, rarely does it deserve merit, usually it does not even depict anything in the book. I realise that methods of producing fine artwork on such a small scale must be very expensive. The American market, where the money is available, produces some beautiful covers, 'The Dragon

completely dead. The plot of Close Encounters of the Third Kind is stronger than one would expect, it's true, but even then the last half hour of the movie, the actual confrontation with the aliens, depends on special effects for its success, and those effects are sufficient to overwhelm one's memory of the preceding two hours. They were certainly sufficient to overwhelm mine - it wasn't until the next day that I remembered what the opening sequence actually was, whereas I'd been "remembering" the landing of the mother ship and the playing of the music for the rest of the evening. I could remember the opening of Star Wars with no trouble, however; spaceships zapping each other with laser cannons are something out of every SF fan's youth, whereas finding some long-lost torpedo bombers in the Mexican desert isn't. But then that's probably something unique to Science Fiction fans, which is why I, being a fan, remember it. I'd be interested to know the reactions of the average mundane cinema-goer to those two very different opening sequences; but then we're not likely to get their reactions in a fanzine like Ghas (or any fanzine at all, for that matter).

Thirdly - and following on from my second point - people see the same movies over and over again purely because of their visual appeal (or because of the standard of acting, or because they like the director's work regardless, or whatever), not because of the plot. I've seen Star Wars three times now, and I enjoy it because of its enormous visual appeal - giant spaceships thundering through the void, a crowd of aliens in a raunchy spaceport saloon, the tatty-looking MILLENIUM FALCON, the robots and the Star Troopers, the taken-for-granted colossal size of the Death Star - not because of its simple-minded theme of Ultimate Externalised Good versus Ultimate Externalised Evil. And I suspect that when I see Close Encounters again, I shall be seeing it for exactly the same reasons - the UFOs being chased along the Indiana roads by the police cars, the "invasion" of Melinda Dillon's house, the descent of the mother ship at Devil's Peak - and not because I'm interested in the idea of people who see UFOs having some sort of vision that compels them to build models in their living rooms and break through police cordons and eventually get taken away by the aliens themselves.

But then here I'm citing two SF movies, which are doubtless special cases - I could always wriggle out of it by saying that we're supposed to be discussing SF movies in any case, but then there are other movies that I've seen many times for reasons other than their plots. I've seen Sweet Charity several times because I happen to like Shirley MacLaine; I watch all the Robert Altman movies I can because I happen to like Altman's work; I like "classic" spaghetti westerns such as The Good, The Bad And the Ugly and Once Upon A Time In The West because of their romanticised primitivism; I like Tales of Beatrix Potter because of the actors' animal costumes (and because I could remember and recite the whole of The Tale Of Peter Rabbit back when I was but a lad of three or four); and so on and so forth.

And that heightened critical judgement required for the appreciation

of Science Fiction movies that I mentioned earlier. Well, I nodded in its direction at about the same time I mentioned it, but even so... As SF fans, we must therefore be harsh when a filmic example of the literature does not come up to our expectations of it. We must be harsh and demanding- brutal, if necessary, in order to convey just how bad it is. And, no matter how good an example of SF it may be, we must still subject it to our withering opprobrium if it fails as a movie. The two criteria must be fused, become as one... and thus Star Wars and Close Encounters get booted into second place and third place by yours truly, with all the other stuff finishing light years down the table. The only Science Fiction movie made so far, that succeeds as both Science Fiction and as a movie, is Kubrick's 2001; all else is as nothing beside it.

OOOOOOOOOOOO

Right on Jo, except for that last bit. Taking your two criteria together I feel 2001 falls down on the SF side. Now don't get me wrong, I too think that not only is it the best thing since sliced bread, but jam doughnuts as well. However most of this is from the visual side and screenwork and falls far short of the original short story on the SF side. OK the spaceship was probably one of the most realistic for that type of journey, OK the dialogue was good (but with so little there's less chance of putting some of those cringey catch-phrases in) but did you actually get what was going on the first time without reading the story? No, the film is the greatest of all time because Kubrick has produced a marvellous movie and very little of its greatness is due to the science fiction content. . . . it is more a vehicle for using techniques that could not be used on any other type of film.

Hope you find Phil Strick's views on Star Wars in the next article of interest from what you've said above, I have a feeling your ideas are in synch somewhat.

Eve

OOOOOOOOOOOO

Mike Glicksohn, 141 High Park Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Eve's comments on the nature and size of conventions raise some very old and much-discussed issues. Ignoring the fact that about the only way to keep a con small is to make it essentially invitational (such "closed" cons exist over here) there's still the basic question as to whether the large national cons are totally bad. While I happen to agree with Eve and prefer a smaller, less formal con, I also think the larger gatherings serve a purpose and are useful. Which is why I still go to every worldcon. It's only at the really big cons that one can see so many of one's friends all at once, and even though the meetings are naturally shorter and less intense, that's a pleasant way to spend one weekend a year. The larger cons also have the clout and the finances to arrange special events small relaxacons couldn't afford. And for many people the sheer diversity of a big con is a better way to get a feel for fandom than the narrower and sharper focus of a Silicon type weekend, where everyone seems

to already know everyone else. So let's keep both types, eh?

OOOOOOOOOO

Perhaps you're right Mike. It could be that I've a rather jaded viewpoint since the last three Eastercons over here have been rather a disappointment in one way or another and it's so easy to lay the blame on size. Mind you, over here everyone has less travelling to do to get to cons than you in the States and Canada, so we don't have the problem of seeing all our friends at one time. In fact although not everyone goes to Silicon the majority do - perhaps I've been lucky in that all those people who are not going are people I see quite frequently anyway.

Do you really have "closed" cons over there - god how awful. Admittedly Silicon is an invitational gathering to a certain extent, but that is only in that people who are known to be likely to go are given first opportunity to book a room. This is quite important when using small hotels with limited accommodation, but I'm sure that no-one would be turned away because he wasn't invited. That's one of the most uncivilized ideas I've heard yet!

Eve

OOOOOOOOOO

Chris Armitage - Somewhere up in the barren wastes of the North

I may be a neofan (& a part-time Trekkie) but this rings a bit untrue.. New traditions? Only but whence? Small cons are fine but, it's regrettable to say, such economies of scale as there are, are lost. The professional fen and the rich ditto will be able to afford. For the rest of us it will be a case of toss a coin to select which to attend and hope there's someone there you either know or you find out is worth talking to. At least with the one big con syndrome there is the good chance of finding people.

OOOOOOOOOO

But can't you see Chris, if we did away with the massive Eastercon you could afford to go to several cons instead of the one big one. And what do you mean by 'economies of scale' there are none. The major difference I have found is that for an Eastercon you need such a large hotel that the room and booze prices rise exorbitantly. Just look at the difference between Silicon and the Heathrow - At the Heathrow what was the room rate? £12 per person I think, and I'm not too sure about the food prices but we did have breakfast in the snack bar there once and that cost us £3 (and it wasn't much more than a continental breakfast anyway). At Silicon however the room rates are £9.50 for a double room and you can get a 3-course lunch for £1.75 or bar snacks in the region of 80p. You can bet that John and I are not taking our usual suitcase full of food to keep us over the weekend.

Eve

OOOOOOOOOO

Or am I crying in the wilderness? Do people actually want to set things so that we have "regional" cons with the minority able to get to more than two? And as for splinter groups, I wouldn't press the point too hard, chere editeuse, them splinters can hurt when you

lean on them. It's noticeable that the splinters are feeding fresh blood into fandom which is then, to use a neutral word, helped into a greater view of the pan-galactic whole. Or is it that the splinters might become too successful and start introducing fen on the fringe of the hard-core to some of the strange and exotic delights on the fairway of the Cosmic Circus?

OOOOOOOOOO

Christ Chris, talk about emotive writing! No, I'm not afraid of the competition as you seem to imply without actually saying it. I'm not afraid of splinter groups at all. What annoys me so much is when these splinter groups (who have conventions of their own I add) try to take over general non-specific conventions and thus ruin my enjoyment. That's the trouble with the Trekkies - they impinge on my enjoyment and I think that's wrong. Why can't they keep to their own conventions, or else don't try to dominate ours.

Eve

OOOOOOOOOO

John Owen, 22 Coniston Way, Bletchley, Milton Keynes

I didn't quite know what Eve was getting at with her "spiel" on cons and acceptance of neo-fans into the ranks etc. But, as I'm not a gregarious personage and am never (in the foreseeable future) likely to attend a con, then my views are probably both ill-founded and pointless, but little things like that have never stopped anyone from stating opinions before have they? I did feel, after reading the piece, that there was almost a paradox in operation. On the one hand there was the worry over neofans at big conventions not knowing what the hell's going on; and on the other there is the conviction that "if he/she/it is worth his/her/its salt then he (she/it?)'d find out and join 'The good guys' at the right convention". This surely implies "clique-formation" which had been knocked elsewhere. Where do you want fandom to be Eve? Small, intimate circles with a limited number of people involved, shutting out all of the "undesirables". There is always the danger that you might end up on the wrong side of the fence that way!

OOOOOOOO

As usual it looks as though I've made myself as clear as mud. It's not only my fault, though, trying to decide actually what alternative would be best for conventions is a pretty tricky thing. It's no wonder you found a paradox - the whole thing is one big paradox - on the one hand I want cons small enough that they lose their impersonality, on the other, however, I don't want them to become closed "cliques". How are you supposed to stop these small intimate cons growing into large Eastercons? I'm damned if I know. It's all a matter of degree, really, cons not too small or too big. I don't know the answer does anyone else?

Eve

OOOOOOOOOO

On the business of fanzine publishing, the idea of faneds either handing out stick, (in the form of harsh and unrelenting criticism) or accepting it with a shrug (or folding the 'zine for fear of further attacks), I feel that there is always another course open to a zine editor. By accepting that a 'zine will never please everybody, the editor can automatically shut out the criticism coming from people he judges

will never agree with him at any time, and tailor his publication for those he can communicate with constructively. Speaking for myself, there are areas, (bloody whacking great areas too!) where I will never, ever, agree with, say, Joseph Nicholas. Sometimes I can use that to the advantage of The Crystal Ship, (see next issue - *ed. note, since this was written on 2nd May, that may be "see last issue") but otherwise I prefer to either ignore Joseph, or knowingly bait him to produce good copy for the loccol. But I'm damned if Joseph will change my own views on literature of any kind, especially SF, although we do converse quite happily about folk music, where we are nearer accord. One of the basic tenets of fanzine publishing should be "do as you wish," not "do as you're told". Accepting advice is one thing; giving in to criticism against your own judgement is another. After all, what else has a faned got going for him but his own judgement? Be a damned poor scene if everybody's zine conformed to a "Nicholas Norm", wouldn't it?

○○○○○○○○○○

Yes you've got to be true to yourself in anything you do, not the least being fanzine production. Other fans can view your creation from a different position, however, so their opinions must be of some value. The thing is to look at all adverse criticism objectively, think about what people are saying, try to use it constructively. If it helps you achieve your objectives then follow the advice, otherwise trying to please everybody can be just destructive. It sure would be terrible, and boring, if everyone loved everyone else's zine! John ○○○○○○○○○○○

Edgar Belka, 43 Court Farm Road, Northolt, Middx

Actually I enjoyed your fanzine a great deal, finding only one real bone of contention. Do you consider yourself a fanzine reviewer (cf Terry Jeeves and reviews on sf books) or are you a fanzine critic. I do find that many fanzines have 'reviews' which seem to be doing no more than a 'dust jacket service'. Although it would be unfair of me to judge you on Ghas 4 - extenuating circumstances and such like - but I'd be keen to hear your views on this subject. Should fanzines be judged critically, or is that taking the whole thing too far?

○○○○○○○○○○

Now I've got to decide what the difference is between 'reviews' and 'criticisms' - you nuisance Belka. Really, I think that's a bit academic and academicism (is that really a word, I've just made it up?) is the last thing you want in fandom (isn't it?). So let's just say I try to review fanzines with a critical eye and if it turns out like a 'dust jacket service' then that's my fault. Yes, fanzines should be judged critically, it would be demeaning the value of fanzines to say it doesn't matter it's only a fanzine (as I'm sure a few editors do of their own brain childs!) Surely, fanzines should be treated with just as much criticism as anything that is read - always remembering that they are read, and usually written, for pleasure. Thus the criteria are different from those applied in literary criticism, but they should be just as strenuously applied.

John

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David Lewis, 8 Aldis Avenue, Stowmarket, Suffolk

Rubbin at the Nubbin:

I must get right to the nub with this Nickerless fellow as it seems he wishes to mudsling over a long-gone incident at last year's Eastercon. In the way of his obscene kind he wishes to besmirch the pristine name of Lewis by accusing me of the very crimes he is guilty of. The true facts must be restated: I was in a rare state for me of being fighting drunk & seeing the perpetrator of silly scrawls on the fanroom wall impugning my good name I made a bee-line for him with the intention of GBH. He being the little worm that he is scurried off in a state of extreme terror to some noisome hole in the woodwork clutching the remains of some iffeminate beverage he is want to consume. I saw no more of it & assumed he spent the remainder of the con in a blue funk there till he thought it was safe to emerge once more. I rest my case.

As to my Fanac this is always done with tongue in cheek and when it comes down to it I don't give a shit what Nickerless or anyone else thinks of me cos I am secure in the knowledge that I am held in high regard by top management which is far more likely to bring material rewards than anything else. Also I know that only 3 people in Suffolk in my profession are earning more than me & they are my bosses! Which ties in a bit with what you were saying around page 5 about criticism. The best thing to do if it is not constructive is to ignore it. Cos the people doling it out are probably insecure little shits who will never amount to much outside the very private universe of fandom anyway.

OOOOOOOOOO

Just shows that the older generation aren't the only ones who can have feuds. Boy, I've never seen anyone spend some much time and effort and waste so much paper and typewriter ribbon saying he didn't care and was going to ignore it! And this is a summary - yes, there was more of this! Come on David, admit it, you do care or else why didn't you take your own advice and ignore it - we're not particularly interested in your salary.

Eve

OOOOOOOOOO

Getting back to the self-proclaimed Guru of fandom JN I thought the illo on page 14 was a great spoof of him/it. I do like baiting people likethis cos they don't realize what is going down and rise every time. Anyone that drinks dry martinis must be a poofta.

OOOOOOOOOO

Watch out Dave, your obsessions are showing. Hard luck but that wasn't Nicholas, you must have him on the brain. It was an illo Hansen did for an article I was going to write about Chris Priest and The Space Machine. Unfortunately the article was still-born, especially since around that time Chris started reminding me of John Brunner with his attitude and stuffiness, so it wasn't even 'coming real soon now'. You should also check your facts, if I remember it right, Jo drinks Cinzano, not dry martini - and who's a poofta, I drink it too! OK you say, that shows he's a poofta cos he drinks the same as a woman, but I also drink beer - what does

does that make you ducky?

Eve
OOOOOOOOOO

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

Well that's it for this issue, hope you enjoyed our selection of Locs. We would also like to thank the following:

WAHF

Graham Ashley, 86 St James Rd, Mitcham, Surrey

"Actually I must admit to having enjoyed GHAS very much, mainly because of the way you have a nice balance in the selection of your articles"

OOOOOOOOOO

Well, we're allowed a little ego-boo aren't we?

OOOOOOOOOO

Paul Kincaid, 20 Sherbourne Rd, Middleton, Manchester

"Your arguments are convincing, or at least persuasive."

OOOOOOOOOO

OK Paul, we'll let go of your arm now and take the gerbil off your trail.

OOOOOOOOOO

Terry Jeeves, 230 Bannerdale Rd, Sheffield

"The horizontal format, and two column layout make it a much more interesting proposition"

OOOOOOOOOO

Oh dear, that's going to be one unhappy customer - still Terry, it's supposed to be what's between the pages that's important.

OOOOOOOOOO

And finally a plea, does anyone out there know the present address of Chris Armitage? He did give it to Eve but with her usual efficiency she's lost it and the twit didn't put it at the top of his letter (or even at the bottom or in the middle for that matter).

PHILIP STRICK INTERVIEW:
EXTRACT FROM, STAR WARS: WAS IT WORTH IT?

Transcribed by Carol Gregory

Q

Do you think that STAR WARS will have a beneficial effect on sf in the movies?

PS

No, I don't really think it will, I think that Star Wars is really the result of the beneficial effect on movies that were made in the 60's, and perhaps at the end of the 70's. As I see it, it's coming at the end of a movement in the cinema which is represented by productions like Towering Inferno, Earthquake, and to some extent Jaws which is really an sf movie, and the Star Wars phenomena is a kind of breakaway from that. It's a recognition of it, and also a breakaway from it inasmuch as to say, "Look, we can no longer stand watching disasters happen in various guises even though we acknowledge the fact that they may be there. We're going to turn them all into Darth Vader - the shark in Jaws in fact becomes Darth Vader, the menace that won't go away - and we're going to turn them all into an evil we can cope with. Then we're going to use such modern technology as we can, such as the laser which is today's magic beam, to combat this phenomenon, and when it gets too much for us, as it still might, we'll use this non-technological device called the Force and we'll be able to compete with that because Good is always going to win over Evil". As I said, I see that as a kind of counterbalance to the non-combattable menace of Jaws and The Deep, and at the same time of course, Star Wars goes deliberately back to a period in the 30's when that kind of stuff was much more simply presented anyway.

As Lucas himself has said, it's a film that captures the kind of movies he would have liked to have seen as a kid. Knowing the age of Lucas, however, it would be stretching the imagination somewhat if it actually does go back much further than that. He himself, to be fair, though he's also inaccurate, has seen it back to a story written in 1905. I say he's inaccurate because he always gets the name of it wrong, but it's a novel called Lieutenant Gulliver's trip to Mars - there, I'm sure I got it wrong too - and he bases some of the concepts in Star Wars on that. For that sort of reason though, there are many others, SW is a very ancient film - in SF terms I mean. It's old hat. For the general public it isn't, it's new and something exciting, it's something fun and it's something they haven't had the chance to watch before. For that reason, I think a lot of the people who've not really been tuned into SF - and of course many hundreds and thousands of people have always proudly said, "Well, I don't read SF - terribly improper, SF", - these people will rethink their attitude because of Star Wars. And immediately assume that it confirms their worst fears, that SF is all trivial, as silly and forgettable as Star Wars. Therefore, they won't be drawn into an understanding of the heavier side of SF, if

you like, the more serious side.

Star Wars is too easy to like, it's too expendable, and the fact that it's going to be turned like Planet of the Apes into umpteen sequels, television series and the like, mean that it will be banalised like that excellent original Planet of the Apes.. I don't really think that Star Wars will itself end up other than with a complete frittering away of the one or two nice things in it which of course make it attractive to those of us who do enjoy science fiction and who go along because it's a film that we've been waiting for for far too long. Though why a film like this hasn't been made before defeats me. If one reads the Burroughs stories of the adventures on Mars one can see where all the Star Wars ideas came from, were repeated, played out and rewritten ad infinitum in the 30's, 40's and 50's.

Q

What do you think of the American attitude which sees SW as a semi-religious movie?

PS

Yes, of course all SF is semi-religious anyway. The advantage of dealing with something which vaguely evokes the Roman Empire is that you've got a heathen versus Christian type basis, before you've even really begun to build a story on it. But then all the SF novels that have made an impact during the last 20 years, the really big ones, have had exactly the same sort of charge in them. Stranger in a Strange Land, of course, is built on religion, and Dune too certainly. It's almost as though you have to have a bit of extra philosophy, however cheap and easy it may be, stuffed into a film, for people to say "Oh, it's got real depth, you know,". Even Bernard Levin accepts that it's got real depth, because it's got this religious aspect to it. It's more than that of course. The basic trappings of Star Wars - the swords, the uniforms, the big set battles, - all these do come out of mythology, just as the Sword and Sorcery in SF come out of mythology. They go back way into the Odyssey, monsters and all, and it's fun. One recognises that Lucas has read his background and has enjoyed it, and is just restaging these good, always potent ideas over again.

On a cinematic level it also seems that it's the perfectly designed commercial film, constructed to please as many people as possible, and uses the conventions that we know and love from 6 different genres to do it.

I saw it being made, or part of it being made, and it was very difficult at that time to see that it was going to be anything special. I wish I had now of course. I wish I'd come out bravely and said "this is going to be the great film of all time". Everyone would have laughed at me for the first year after the review appeared and now they'd all be saying "What a perspicacious critic that chap is." But no such luck. In fact when I did see it being put together it looked ridiculous. It sounded banal. The dialogue didn't make any kind of sense at all.

There was this charade with people dressed in funny costumes and

in the middle of it all there was this little, faintly worried looking chap who was the director, with every reason to be worried. He was coasting through 6 million of Fox's money, and appeared to be having a ball, though in a very interior way. It was very personal and on the strength of that encounter I wouldn't have been at all surprised to see the film result as just a kind of B feature. A sort of throwaway film like THX 1138, which nobody took any notice of. In fact you find that's really very expressive of the way Lucas is and feels, or was then anyway. Of course THX 1138 is out to buck the system and that's what Lucas does and did, and quite deliberately. He was delighted that he was spending all Fox's money on something they were terrified of. They had no expectation of getting a coin of it back. But as I say, in those days it was difficult to foresee that it would even have a moderate public, let alone a large one.

Q

But of course Fox have been amply rewarded.

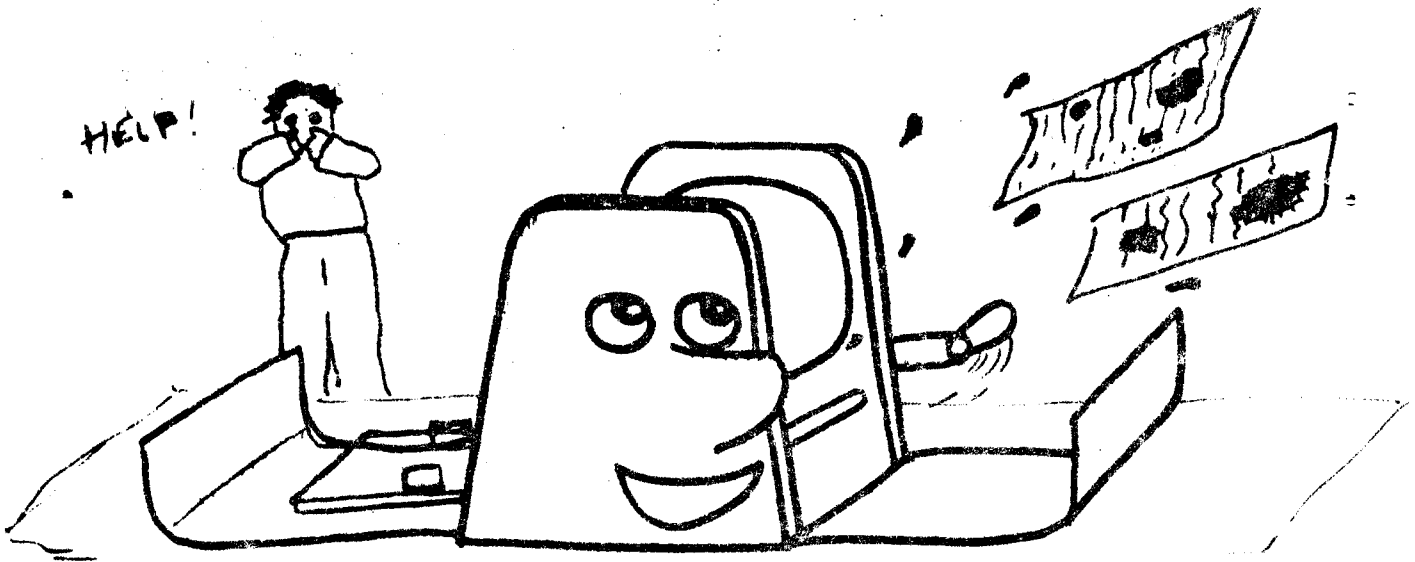
PS

Yes they have. Of course they're not about to refuse sequels - they've got the next one planned. It starts shooting in special effects this year and the main action starts shooting next year. But I think it's a pity that Lucas himself has pulled out as director. I think we shall quickly see a Planet of the Apes situation once again. It'll be numerous other directors just assigned to trot out the same old thing, and in no time at all we'll be sick of storm-troopers, lasers and all the rest of it. In fact, I'm sick of it already.



Well, it's nice to see Carol in the zine again. Hopefully she will now be taking a more active part in fandom now that she's graduated from Leeds. Did you get to shake hands with the Duchess of Kent too Carol? Great honour - my foot. I've never met anyone who looked more bored out of her skull! I'm sure she had a little cassette recorder secreted about her person saying "Congratulations" to everyone who came up for their certificate - and she must have at least had cardboard in her glove (maybe even a false arm - you never know her coat was rather loose). That reminds me, parents can be so silly over these sorts of things can't they. John and I graduated on different days so I went along with his mother and father to see him get his 'bit of paper'. His mother was very upset because we couldn't get her a ticket to see my graduation (we were only allowed two each at first, but you could get extras if there were any left over, John was being presented by 'Fatty' Boyle so there were spare tickets on his day, but since my day was the Duchess all the relatives had already got there ahead of me). So what did I have to do to please prospective mum-in-law? I know you're just dying to know. Well, I had to borrow a cap and gown from a friend of John's and pose with John so she could get a picture of us together - I looked a proper sight since both were about 6 sizes too big! - mothers!

Fanzine File



THE ENCHANTED DUPLICATORS STRIKE AGAIN!

John Harvey

I was going to start off this column by saying how many good zines had appeared on the scene since Skycon. Then I made a list of those to hand and started having second thoughts. Oh, there were the established goodies such as TWLL DDU, TRUE RAT and the return of EGG, along with some interesting new titles, most notable being GROSS ENCOUNTERS and SEAMONSTERS. But the flood of exciting, fresh zines I had imagined just wasn't there - wishful thinking taking over again! I think it's the result of the starvation there's been of good zines on the scene - when a couple of interesting ones come along they get blown out of all proportion and you feel you've had a plethora.

This dearth has another major disadvantage in that it leads to a distortion of one's critical views of the zines. So much of what I get these days is just put in a 'pending' pile that when I do get one that's actually interesting and entertaining to read I flip my lid. This happened with GROSS ENCOUNTERS. It was readable and funny, and compared with most of the stuff around at the moment, excellent. When I look back on the contents, however, I realise how superficial it is - there's very little 'meat' that sticks in your memory either because of the style (a la Kettle)

or subject matter that promotes those never-ending discussions over a pint (or two, three, four.....)

About 18 months ago I was working in Leeds, much to Eve's disgust. Suffice to say I spent weeks on end in that Yorkshire hamlet, only coming home at weekends. During that period, of course, I maintained contact with all my fan buddies in the area (actually just Carol Gregory and Dave Pringle, since the others had all left town). Thus it was that I was introduced to the new editor of BLACK HOLE - a certain Alan Dorey. Ah, a fresh face, a clean slate, an impressionable youth I thought, so as the Tetley Bitter flowed Dave and I gave him the benefit of our massive(?) experience of fanzine editing! We told him just how a zine should be edited. As more beer was consumed, the advice got more sagacious - I only wish I could remember what was said, then I might be able to practice it! Whether Alan listened or not, he made a good job of BLACK HOLE, not the easiest of zines to edit, and I was quite sorry when he decided to relinquish the crown. Then Skycon saw the birth of GROSS ENCOUNTERS - in all, three have appeared since then and another should hit the pavements by Novacon. Facts - a duplicated zine written totally by the editor straight onto stencil; it's a wholly personal zine in the TWLL DDU mould. One thing is certain, Alan's made quite a splash with this, due in part I think to the frequency of publication. I'm not too sure that all these accolades are beneficial, however, complacency could well rear its ugly head which would be a pity since GROSS ENCOUNTERS could still benefit from improvement. Typing 'live' is a great technique but I feel Alan's style of writing suffers from this practice (you must stop these 'unacceptable practices' Alan, you'll go blind). Take as an example his piece in SEAMONSTERS and compare it with Chris Priest's piece in the same issue. I know it's an unfair comparison, Chris being a pro etc, but even he admits that fan writing is difficult and I'm sure he spent a long time over that article and will have re-drafted it more than once. (Go on, Chris, shoot my argument down in flames by saying you wrote it straight onto the typer first time). Now if a pro has to do that, how can we mere mortals expect to get respectable results without at least some preparation. The point being that Chris has worked on a mere fan article and has written something memorable, something that I will want to go back to and re-read. Nothing that Alan has written so far, although enjoyable first time round, has made the 'fanzines to be re-read' pile. I know he feels that his style deteriorates on re-drafting, but I still reckon good writing, fan or otherwise, requires working on.

In GE3 Alan uses the BSFA for target practice - this is just too easy. No matter who the personnel are, the BSFA Council are always going to set themselves up as 'Aunt Sallys' and it gets tedious to keep re-reading hatchet jobs on them. It is good to point out their faults to them, but Alan's article is just putting the knife in and twisting it, which is likely merely to arouse even more antagonism on the BSFA's part. We want to make them think and try to correct their errors. Perhaps this isn't what Alan's

trying to do, maybe he's just trying to stir up bad feeling against the BSFA organisers and change things from outside. But surely, if you want to improve it you must communicate with them, not mud-sling, and try to work through the establishment. Although I agree, this is impossible with someone like Garbutt and the other paranoids the organisation attracts, they don't constitute the whole of the BSFA Council - thank god - so there might be the facility for improvement.

Distributed with GE3 was the anonymous VICTOR - Journal of the Boys Own Science Fiction Association - BOSFA; we all know what that's about. In fact VICTOR has a better attitude - this sort of amusement is reasonably harmless and is far better than full frontal attacks in that it might get some positive reaction.

Do I see the spectre of D West looming over the editor's shoulders?

Onto other things. One thing I receive far too frequently is the unreadable fanzine; those which I take one look at and just go aaahh! They get put to one side instantly for 'scrutiny at a later date' (ie probably never). The unreadability of a zine is probably due to a number of factors - all stemming from my own attitude I expect. Fanzine Fanatique, for instance, I find pathetic; really the joke's over Keith, even the latest lithoed ish was hopeless. He seems to revel in illegible duplicating and, latterly, confusing litho paste-up. It's sad really as I've noticed one or two articles that looked worth reading, if only I could.

R I Barycz's zine YCZ falls into this unreadable category too, but not because of its duplication, just its total lack of layout. Eight sides absolutely covered in tiny type sends my eyes spinning. Then when I did manage to scan the pages of issue one, I found it was just a boring exposition about Star Wars (yawn).

Next zine please. God, FLEDGLING. Now here the printing's OK, layout's OK but the content! Juvenility drips from every page - even the Bell illos look childish. Shows how old I'm getting?

Strange how some fanzine reviewers get apparent pleasure from dismembering innocent little fanzines - something I don't subscribe to so let's talk about an entertaining new fanzine - Simone Walsh's SEAMONSTERS. I say new, but that's slightly misleading as it's really a STOP BREAKING DOWN substitute; no, more a successor to SPD. The overseas editor has taken up the reigns and given the whole thing a new flavour. The only fault might be that it's too nice - Greg's not putting some poor little sod down, in fact he's doin' nuffin' - bad form, get your finger out son! The only person copping their wack is Garbutt who's doing it on his own head (neat trick that). Simone's faithful reproduction of his letter really shows him up as a twisted burk. Does he really exist or is he the figment of some warped fan's mind? The best letter of the issue is one from Ann Looker which shows that even Trekkies can be human. She'd make an interesting member of SF fandom. Definitely a worthwhile fanzine - SEAMONSTERS.

Right, that's it for now, time to put WALLBANGER to bed. I've had enough of pawing through the pile of zines for now. Just like to say thanks for the trades - let's have more for me to muse over (god, even Eve's started reading them, that's a habit she'll have to lose otherwise I might never see them again HELP). Here's a list of zines received since Skycon:

Has he gone? Good, now's my chance. One good thing about typing up the ish is that you can get the last word in. Yes, the terrible rumour is true, I've actually started reading fanzines all the way through! Is there a doctor in the house? Well, one that's willing to give Greg Pickersgill mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Oh dear, I am sorry Simone. I actually read three over Silicon! Anyway, while John's away I thought I'd get a quick word in. SEAMONSTERS - great, can't really add much to what John said, except I wish I had such an exciting time at work I could write about it. TWLL DDU 12 and a bit - well, to be honest Dave, I was disappointed. I was just getting interested and it ended. Poor old Kate, it's a wonder she ever had the courage to show her face again. Decidedly a juicy episode though. John and I heard Kev's side on the way home since we took pity on the poor lad and gave him a lift - well, from his account it was rather traumatic and he missed his pizza too! Quite interesting to read two versions of the same episode - yours and Kev's in DOT - blow, John's gone off to Nottinghamshire with the copy and I can't remember the number, oh well, just pick a number, any number.

Do I sense a bit of male chauvinist piggery here (no, not you Piggott) though - what happened to the grand exposees of Dave Pringle and his escapade at that memorable Smith party? I seem to remember promises of 'read it all in the next NABU' from a certain Ian Maule - what happened Ian, did you enjoy Dave's advances so much on the ride back in our car that you haven't dared put pen to paper (well, typewriter key at least). I hunted through NABU for the juicy bits but they just weren't there. God, I actually read the whole zine. If I can suffer such agonies you might at least give me some reward. In fact, I quite enjoyed NABU 4 - starting with Paul Kincaid's article was the trick. I like Paul's writing immensely - has the knack of being able to write Sercon and Fannish equally well, all too rare these days. Also the fact that there was very little from the editor in this issue might have something to do with it. There's a horrible rumour going round that there's just a little bit in NABU 5, so perhaps I'll just put that to one side 'for scrutiny at a later date'. I was going to say much more about NABU4, but unfortunately we've 'mislaidd' our copy, so just fill in your own comments below - that way you'll think I'm so very perceptive, thinking just the same as you about the ish.

Fanzines Received

- One-Off 4, 5
Dave Bridges, 130 Valley Road, Meersbrook, Sheffield
- Crystal Ship 3
John Owen, 22 Coniston Way, Bletchley, Milton Keynes
- Seamonsters 1
Simone Walsh, 7a Lawrence Road, Ealing, London W5
- Maya 15
Rob Jackson, 71 King John Street, Heaton, Newcastle upon Tyne
- YCZ 1, 2
R I Barycz, 16 Musgrove Road, New Cross Gate, London SE14
- Black Hole 14
Immo Huneke, Leeds University Union, Leeds LS6
- Black Hole 11, 13
Alan Dorey, address as for 14
- The Friends of Kilgore Trout Magazine 2
Bob Shaw and Sandy Brown, 18 Gordon Terrace, Blantyre, Glasgow
- Checkpoint 87, 88, 89, 90 and Egg 11
(Christ, what you can do when you're unemployed!)
- Peter Roberts, 38 Oakland Drive, Dawlish, Devon
- Small Friendly Dog 15
Paul Skelton, 25 Bowland Close, Offerton, Stockport, Cheshire
- Unifan 1
Ellen Pederson & Niels Dalgaard, Tohubohu Press, Horsekildevej 13
IV dør 3, DK 2500 Valby, Denmark
- Derick Prince of Fandom & Procyon 5
John Collick, The Goosewell Gallery, Westbourne Drive, Menston,
Ilkley, Yorkshire
- Erg 62
Terry Jeeves, 230 Bannerdale Road, Sheffield
- Zealoc 2
Bactrianus Publishing Co, Ragnar Fyri, Solliveien 37, N 1370
Asker, Norway
- Fanzine Fanatique 30, 31
Keith Walker, 2 Daisy Bank, Quernmore Rd, Lancaster
- Twll Ddu 11, 13
Dave Langford, 22 Northumberland Ave, Reading, Berks
- Daisnaid 6
D West 48 Norman St, Bingley, W Yorks
- Wajf 1
Tom Jones, 39 Ripplesmere, Harmanwater, Bracknell, Berks
- Gannet Scrap Book 5
Dave Cockfield, 57 Wilson Ct, Hebburn, Tyne & Wear
- Arena 7
Geoff Rippington 15 Quens Ave, Canterbury, Kent
- Epsilon 4
Rob Hansen
- Gross Encounters 1, 2 & 3 and Victor
Alan Dorey, 20 Hermigage Woods Crescent, St John's, Woking
- Fledgling
Andy Firth, 185 Osborne Road, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne
- Triode 26
17 Riverside Crescent, Holmes Chapel, Cheshire

Munich Round Up 146

Waldemar Kummin, Herzospitalstabe 5, D-8000 Munchen 2, Germany

Not True Rat Ten

Leroy Kettle

Nabu 3, 4

Ian Maule, 18 Hillside, 163 Carshalton Rd, Sutton, Surrey

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THE WHAT THE HELL DO I DO WITH THIS SPACE BIT

Before leaving for the depths of Nottinghamshire this morning, John said - "Do a bit at the end about how this ish was going to be out a week before Silicon, then at Silicon, and now, hopefully just after Silicon. Then go on and say a bit about the con itself". So....

At Skycon, several people may have overhead a certain couple promising that their 'new zine' was going to be out 'real soon now'.
"Oh, yeah, what about the frequency of GHAS then? Once a year!"
"No, honest, it's going to be out by July".
"Yeah?"

"Yeah, you see it must be done by then for the electros, otherwise we'll have to wait until I go back to work in September?"

"Yeah?"

"Of course, that's assuming Paul Kincaid get's his piece done in time."

"Yeah?"

Well, it wasn't out by July, nor by the week before Silicon, but it was almost out for Silicon. 2 p.m. on Friday afternoon I was still duplicating, but since Alan Dorey and Eric Batard (to whom we were giving a lift) had shown some desire to arrive before Monday evening, I gave up with promises that "it will be finished on Tuesday and sent out on Wednesday" Hey, John, we're actually going to keep to a deadline.

Silicon - where do I start? It's a hell of a long way away. Why can't they bend Britain in the middle? Well, we arrived in one piece at about 9.45 p.m. and immediately the con looked as if it was going to be good. The hotel was excellent - bar open to after 4 a.m. each morning and a friendly staff, even if the owner was rather upset when a rather drunken Leroy Kettle and slightly less drunk Kev Smith were having a balloon fight in the lounge on Sunday night/Monday morning. I don't think he would have minded if his chandelier hadn't been suffering most of the blows - neither of the combattants being able to aim too well. Still more of Silicon in the next ish - if John does his stuff. Since we hadn't been able to travel in convoy with Greg & Simone on the way up, we decided to go back together and stop off at a pub on the way so that we wouldn't suffer too much from withdrawal symptoms. Unfortunately Greg & Simone only made about ten miles before breaking down and having to call relay out. I know the AA are slow, but christ, we left them at about 5 p.m. and they arrived in London about 8 a.m. the next morning! Still, we'll no doubt hear the full story in SEAMONSTERS. Still, it looks like something happens at the end of each con these days.

Hey, THE END OF THE PAGE. I can finish now.

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