

A FEW THOUGHTS ON CHECKLISTS, INDEXING ETC.

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Breathes there a fan with soul so dead, Who never to himself has said....."About time I started to index these fanzines"?

As soon as the Collection becomes an unwieldy rubbish-dump, and you start to think about making a checklist (a cursory list) or an index (a full-blown itemised list), there's a certain number of decisions to be made. For instance, do you pile 'em-up by title or by editor/publisher? How about noting down the sizes of pages? Methods of reproduction?

The earliest index I've heard of was compiled by R.D.Swisher, who took eight years to list fanzines from the beginning to mid-'46. I haven't seen that, but I do have the Pavlat/ Evans Index, which was published in '52 and took six years to compile. Both British and American fanzines were included. These are arranged by title, which is fine except for when you're asked to find (as I was once) Bob Tucker edited 'zines from ancient times. Scanning 140 pages is, frankly, a drag.

The Pavlat/ Evans Index was arranged in double columns, and read as follows:

Snide

Damon Knight

(1) May 40 ½; 40; h

Damon Knight, Bill Evans

*

(1a) (Mar 41) 1; 2; h

2 (1941) ½; 46; h

* b/w "The Denventioneer."

{ "The Denventioneer" was a Convention combozine of 1941 }

The prime objective in all such lists is to pack in as much information as might be needed. Needed by whom? I'll come to that later. In the above specimen, the brackets indicate either that the date or number is estimated, and also that the information is derived from a review, not the fanzine itself. Underlining shows that this is the actual number of the fanzine, not some fancy 'Volume X No. Y'. The three columns on the right indicate size (8½ x 11 is unity), number of pages, reproduction method used ('h' is hectograph, both jelly and spirit duplicated).

There are other abbreviations used - charmingly, there is 'rs' = rubber stamp - but these few give you the spirit. The P/E Index is certainly a magnificent effort.

In the '60s an indexer named Piser undertook the colossal task of bringing the Pavlat/ Evans index up to date. He unfortunately died before it was completed, (if the task was possible even then), and his notes were destroyed. Since that time fans in the US have looked at the sheer quantity of fanzines, APAzines, Convention zines, etc., shuddered, and turned away. I suppose that given modern computers and sufficient dedication a band of fans could undertake the job, but

where would you find even a handful to undertake such a soul-destroying task? Possibly it could be done on a yearly or five-yearly basis, although when one thinks of everyone with knowledge of old US fanzines contributing on those published between '52 and '57 as a start off.....one winces.

I suppose that to get some idea of the amount of current fanzines being published - much as Robert Lichtman publishes once a year raw data of those received in his TRAP DOOR - there could be a united effort by everyone in, say, the year 2000, to send a copy to a certain address (rather a club address than an individual fan), this being well publicised during the previous couple of years. A Daugherty project?

In the (comparatively) early years, some brave fans attempted some short indexes. THE FAN PRESS of November '52 was a survey of three months up to that date of 'zines received by Ken Slater, in no particular order. No further issues. A FANZINE CHECKLIST Autumn 1950 to Spring 1952, was published by the NFFF, apparently compiled by Eva Firestone.

There was a hektographed list by Russ Watkins, FANZINIO, probably 1954 (hektography fades), of titles and addresses of 108 currently published fanzines. Then, as far as I'm aware, there was a gap of some years, until Keith Walker of Britain published.

Typical of Walker is TOWARDS FANZINE INDEX ((TOWARDS A FANZINE INDEX on the editorial page)). It's undated, but the latest fanzine listed is for March 1970. It asks for help in compiling a fanzine index, and lists what was apparently an accumulation of the BSFA, fanzine title first in alphabetical order, as follows:

Kobold	Brian Jordan	1 (Nov 60)	Britain
Komet	Alvar Appeltofft	4	Sweden
Lands of Wonder	?	5 (68)	Germany
Last Splotch	Lynette Burfield Mills	1 (Nov '58)	N.Z

There are about 400 fanzines listed, about half without dates. In October '74, (unusually for Walker, fully dated), a FANZINDEX was published. This time Title, Editor, and Date of 1st. Issue were given (when known), but no indication of country of origin, or no indication of the number of issues. About 800 titles were listed, and this was in addition to 400 in the previous list. No indication of, or reference to this, was given - there's no editorial.

Walker published FANZINE FANATIQUE for some years from April '72, reviewing SF and comic fanzines received, but the lack of dates and often numbers on what he produced drove fans of the time (and later) to fury.

A determined effort was mounted by US fan Steven Beatty at the end of '75. His FANZINE DIRECTORY No.1, 1976 Edition lists all fanzines he knows of published in '75 except APAzines, listed by: code/ Name of fanzine/ number of issues published in '75/ mailing address/ price or other availability/ average page count/ page size/ method of reproduction/ editor and publisher if not given in

address/ other bibliographic notes/ brief statement of contents/ format or coverage.

The 'code' mentioned contains the first one or two letters of the fanzine title plus a number. This is because at the back of the fanzine listings there's an index of editor/publishers with the code numbers of the 'zines they've produced, so if, for instance, you look up 'Robbins.B', you find B6442 and P2115, which translate to BOOK LIST (?) and PARADOX. Entries included those from fanzine reviews as well as those personally inspected, which are marked by an asterisk.

This possibly overly comprehensive listing is further complicated by the fact that included are fanzines dealing with comics, movies, wargames, "and other overlapping areas....I have operated on the principle of 'when in doubt put it in'." A typical inch or so of one of the packed pages reads:

- M713 MOBILE PANELOLOGY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER (?) Box 1912/ Mobile AL 36601 (comix club)
M722 MOEBIUS TRIP (22-23/4) Ed Connor/ 1805 N.Gale/ Peoria, IL 61604 (\$1, 5/\$4) 82h/m (alt title SF Echo; sf gen)*
M739 MOM'S HOME MADE APPLE FANZINE (1000 ie. #1) Jessica A. Salmonson/ Box 89517 Zenith Br/ Seattle, WA 98188 (\$1) (sexual disorientation and creativity) 32/o *

By the third issue of FANZINE DIRECTORY (for 1977, published in Jan '81) the system had been much modified, including the fanzines being numbered in strict numerical order - there were 496 listed - and the addresses being separated to other pages. I don't know of any further issues.

But by then Peter Roberts, a very active fan and probably the keenest British fanzine collector there'd been up to that time, was on the scene. In three booklets (May '77, Jan. '78 and June '79) he listed all known British fanzines (inc. APAzines) up to 1970, and, given that he inserted '?' for 'unknown' on many early descriptions, was, marvellously (at least 99%) complete on titles. The 1951-1960 bibliography starts :

Aaaaah! Ken Bulmer
1 Sep/54 ? ½Q 6 d/w OMPA
(i.e. No.1, date, form of duplication unknown, size half-Quarto, six pages, distributed with OMPA.)

The three booklets covered '36 - '50, '51 - '60, and '61 - '70, had 9, 18 and 19 pages respectively, and gave details as above of (very approximately) 60 fanzines per page. These booklets were elegantly produced.

Not so elegant, unfortunately, was a 1991 addition in cramped word-processor font, designed to imitate the Roberts originals, by self, much helped by Rob Hansen and others, also using some of Peter Roberts' original card-file notes which he'd given me. It covered 1971 to 1980, and had 30 pages with similar approximate coverage to Roberts - 60 fanzines per page. The only large-scale

change was the separation of Convention fanzines into their own section. There were also more footnotes than the Roberts lists - e.g. what can you do when a Cambridge University fanzine, nominally entitled T.T.B.A. (Title to Be Advised) has this leapt on as an acronym by successive editors, leading to such weird locutions as 'Ten Ton Block of Aluminium' as a title of one of the later issues?

A 1981-1990 rough checklist on the same lines is at present in the hands of Rob Hansen. There are huge additions to the checklist in each decade (APAs and Conventions have swollen five-fold at least), and whether this one is ever completed and published is in the lap of whatever fannish ghods there be.

Back to the '70s, and a deeply appreciative bow to Brian Earl Brown, who produced THE WHOLE FANZINE CATALOG from the late '70s to, as far as I know, 1997. Typical is # 14/ 15, listing all fanzines Brian received for about the last quarter of '79 and the first couple of months of '80 (unfortunately, he doesn't give parameters).

Although the format etc. changed slightly over the years, he gave in this issue title/ editor/ address/ size/ type of reproduction/ cost and a short review of each of well over one hundred 'zines from several countries, plus C.O.As, plus several articles (Brown ran a series of specialised articles, 'Stalking the Perfect Fanzine', on the tools of fanzine fandom such as duplicators), plus an extract in this issue from the just-published WARHOON 28, plus reader's letters - a really astonishing 30 pages, not including 18 for the WARHOON extract.

There's been other review zines over the years, but nothing I've read touches the WHOLE FANZINE CATALOG. But as with many of the listings mentioned, this was purely the 'zines received by one individual. This is, unfortunately, a long way from an inclusive list of all fanzines published. But it's possible to do it for a small country, as has been shown by Nigel Rowe (name seems familiar).

Nigel, then living in New Zealand, became a fan in '79, and soon discovered to his surprise that little or nothing had been published on NZ fandom's history. By 1983 he'd published TIMELESS SANDS, part one of the history, which included an astonishingly complete bibliography of fanzines, APazines (inc. NZ contributions to foreign APAs), a listing of then-current organisations and fanzines, and even an index of main fanzine subjects and reproductions of some covers.

Nigel's listing was, interestingly enough, by year. Part of it reads:

1955

May	Rocket	17	fcp	CC	Horrocks/Crooks
Oct	SFiction 1	5	fcp	D	Horrocks/Mcleod
Nov	Magnitude 1	4		D	Sarchett
Dec	Focus 1	24	A5	M	Barrett/Burn/Paris

'CC' was carbon copy; 'D' was ditto or hektography; 'M' was mimeographing. This simple but effective listing should be a lesson to us all.

(To be continued; other listings and indexing a fanzine library)