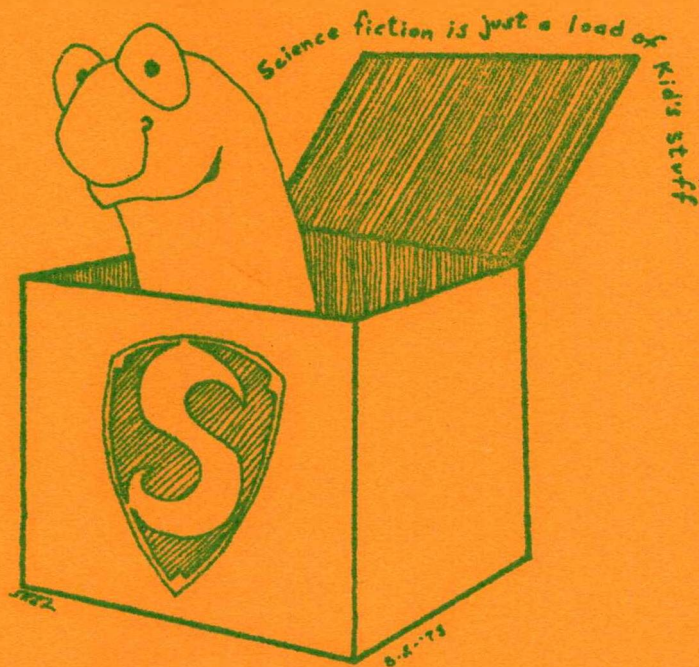


INFERNO 4

INFERNO





friends, 'at home' so to speak. The comparison with Dylan is understandable, at least on the basis of his first album which does include several numbers which are highly Dylanesque. Even his appearance and 'on stage' mien seem to ape the early Dylan. All this leads naturally to the comparisons which have been made in the media. All these compatible attributes are merely the superficial part of John Prine. These are but an aspect of himself, a minor aspect. These are what Dylan is all about, but they are not what John Prine is about. This is not to make a value judgement on the relative merits of any particular outlook, rather to say that each man is a spectrum of the whole of the social aspect, having broad and narrow bands in a 'random' distribution brought about by the force of circumstances. A crofter in the north of Scotland and a negro from a Klannish Arkansas town may both have views on the oppression of minority groups, but they are unlikely to attach the same importance to them.

The Dylanised aspect of John Prine is unimportant, or rather it is not significant. When we get down to the songs which 'are' John Prine we see this clearly.

Dylan deals with the positive, which he overplays:- with positive injustice, positive suffering.

Prine deals in negatives, underplayed:- a lack of justice and the absence of a state of non-suffering.

This can be most clearly seen from Dylan's 'North Country Blues' in which things happen to the song's protagonist, and from 'Angel From Montgomery' and 'Hello In There (Old Folks)' in which Prine deals more with the things which don't happen to the people in the song, and with how they are shaped by all the ways in which society fails them, or in which they fail themselves.

"How the hell can a person  
go to work in the morning,  
come home in the evening  
AND HAVE NOTHING TO SAY ?"

To believe in this living  
is just a hard way to go.

Or again:-

"You know that old trees just grow stronger

And old rivers grow wilder everyday.

Old people just grow lonesome

waiting for someone to say

"Hello in there.

Hello."

24 March 1974 (Skel)

There's a bit in this morning's Sunday Mirror which fascinates me, even whilst it leaves me somewhat at a loss.

Picture a photograph of a twelve week-old baby blithely swimming around in this heated indoor pool. Completing the item is a spiel about it being natural for babies to swim and that this one's been doing it since she was eight-weeks old and a concluding remark, from a London doctor to the effect that "It all tends to support a theory that humans are evolved from a race of sea apes."

Huh? This is what comes of not reading 'Scientific American' regularly. Here they are, sneaking brand new revolutionary theories past me whilst I metaphorically sleep. Skel is not one to lag behind (well, it gets cold in winter). Ever ready to ~~have on the side of the~~ further the cause of scientific thought in this great democracy of ours, I should like to make my own contribution towards extending the boundaries of human knowledge in this area.

I can remember throwing a ball into the river and watching the ~~stupid~~ clever doggy swim in after it. This tends to support a theory that dogs are evolved from a race of sea wolves. See how much more sweeping the Skeltheory is. One has but to cast ones mind back to that crud film on the TV the other night, about the horses swimming across the river, to realise that we must also hypothesise an ancestral strain of sea-horses. Sea-horses? But of course, the theory is proven!

The missing link still exists. The lowly sea-horse will raise me up among the immortal greats of theoretical science. I shall be among that pantheon; there with Professor Dripleak, inventor of the condom with thousands of tiny holes (to let the skin 'breathe'); there, amid this glory of intellect, I shall take my rightful place.

29 March 1974 (Skel)

I am to go to the con after all. Yes, yes, it's the great Skelcinders show. I can too go to the ~~YAY~~ con, but if word is carried back that I have been seen leching after exotic foreign femmefans, or dusky lightly draped maidens, .....oh, oh woe unto ye Skel, woe I say.

I must confine my drooling and dribbling to the ~~YAY~~ bookroom. I am booked into Mrs. Carr's house of ill-repute, she of the ~~big knicker~~ bed and breakfast emporium on Wingrove Road. Cas will not be there (Whoorrrrr!!! Nudge-nudge, know what I mean, SAY NO MORE! No time to lose!)

It should be a good con. Better than the last one at any rate. I don't intend to go near the registration desk. I might even go so far as to get someone else to register for me. I am chuffed to little butties with myself. Ever since shortly after returning from COMPAcon, with Cas not having her period (due a few days before the con), I've known we wouldn't be going to this one. It wasn't until this week that I made the mental jump to the fact that 'we' didn't have to mean 'me'. Well, I am a relative newly-wed, still starry-eyed and so much in love. To be seperated from ~~Kate~~ Cas for three whole days was unthinkable.....almost.

Surprisingly, I thought of it.

Even more surprisingly, Cas came across.

But that's a different story.

So folks, If you think you may have bumped into me at the con, but can't remember having seen Cas wandering round looking

for me, don't think you were halucinating.

7 April 1974 (Cas)

Hi there fans, it's Fat Cas here. Seeing as how I haven't written anything for the INFERNO's so far, I thought I'd better get on with it. Mind you, with Deborah and Nicholas watching television and Bethany gurgling away, all in the next room, God knows how this will turn out. If D and N can manage not to start arguing for any length of time it'll be a miracle in itself.

I've been a bit out of touch with fandom lately, what with having a baby to look after and moving house. Things have been a bit hectic. I can't even go to the MAD-Meets anymore as I don't think the landlord of the Crown and Anchor would take kindly to a three month old baby adorning his pub.

I enjoyed myself at the OMPAcon last year and will really miss meeting you all again at Tynecon. Mind you, its probably a good job as I can't get into any of my pre-pregnancy clothes. I'm on a strict diet at the moment, living on slimming pills, cigarettes and Bisks.

Do any of you remember the story in HELL about me locking us out of the flat? Well, you'll never believe it but.....

Once upon a time there was a scatter-brained idiot called Cas who's husband said to her one night, "Let's go out for a quick walk." She readily agreed to this as the two elder kiddies were fast asleep in bed and the little one could accompany them tucked up snugly and warm in her pram. Sod it! I can't be bothered telling you all the sordid details but it ended with Paul having to chuck a brick through the kitchen window so's we could get back in again.

I always thought that the Scots were tight with their money, even tighter than Yorkshiremen (IT'S NOT TRUE, FOLKS). You might ask how one as plebian as I has managed to unearth this fact. Go on, ask. Ok, I'll tell you then. Well, just a couple of nights ago we received a telephone call from Alan

and Elke Stewart in Germany and we talked for at least thirty-six minutes which at our rates will have cost them £5.40. A very enjoyable chat it was too and if all goes as planned they will be visiting us for a few days towards the end of April.

As you will have already read that ~~xxxxxx~~ dear, sweet husband of mine is leaving me lonely over Easter so that he can go to the con (boo-hoo/stamping of feet/I wanna go!) Mind you, we're all going next year, at great expense to the head of the household. He'll probably put in a bid for a Stockport Con, knowing him.

7 April 1974 (Skel)

Actually, I am a member of the MANCON 5 bidding committee which is hoping to put on the 1975 Eastercon in Manchester. Please note that 'in Manchester' bit. This time we're hoping that we won't have to go scuttling to Chester in order to get a hotel at a reasonable price, not when yer Uncle Roy Sharpe is the Assistant Regional Accountant of a company in the Trust House-Forte group.

The bid will be headed by that Delta fan of much con organising experience, Harry Nadler, with Chuck Partington in charge of vice. Basically, the Delta Group will provide the experience and the MAD Group the enthusiasm. Of course, by the time you read this you'll know how it all went. Did the Manchester bid succeed? Was there another bid? Somehow I just can't see one myself. Obviously not from the Gannets, nor from the Bram Group, nor from OMPA. Somehow, I don't think Bram Stokes will bid again this year either. He seemed far too pissed off after last time. This only seems to leave a totally seperate bid from the London Group as possible competition, unless the March of the Robots was a sign of things to come. I can't think of any other organised groups who currently could be termed 'cohesive' enough to put in a serious convention bid.

The Sunday Mirror (which I buy 'cos it's allus got TITS in it) has again managed to make itself look stupid by going campaigning off, in ever decreasing circles, without even con-

sidering whether or not it's got anything to campaign about. This time their 'cause celebre' is the fact that the owners of one of the stately home parks is selling off its surplus boar to restaurants. No, I'm not sure what could be wrong about that either, but then I don't work for the Sunday Mirror. I think they base their arguments on the facts that:-

- 1) It's young boar.
- 2) It's virtually a kind of 'pet'.
- 3) Rich people buy it and the poor miners can't afford it at all.

All this takes no account of:-

- 1) Young animals are generally preferred because they are much more tender.
- 2) Boar is a traditional British food.
- 3) It might as well be eaten once it's culled.
- 4) It has to be the younger ones because they breed the most, which is what's causing the problem of too many boars.

Aaaaghhh!

18 April 1974 (Skel)

Oh well, after seeing how page eight ran off it looks like that's the last of the green ink unless kindly uncle Skel can get Heinlein to write me 'And He Built A Crooked Wallet' so that I can grope about in an extra dimension or two for some more monies.

Well, as you will doubtless know by now the next Eastercon was won by an independent London bid, and the Manchester group has been given an unofficial go-ahead to put on the 1976 con. Actually, the bidding between Keith Freeman's group and the Seacon group got a bit bitter and twisted at times and that stemmed mainly from the importance attached to the hotel question. However, it all came right in the end. From the interests of fandom as a whole, I feel that the best con won. From



a personal point of view however, it was a total disaster. I have promised to take The Screaming Horde to the next con. Mind you, Novacon is the next con, which releases me from a mutual suicide pact with my wallet. Still and all, we can't afford to go all the way down there and after the loneliness I experienced at Newcastle I certainly won't go without Cas again (all together now, "Awwwww").

Anyway, to get back to the convention bidding, what the Manchester Group wanted was definite acceptance of their two year bid so that we could go to a hotel and say that we'd definitely got this con and would they be interested in tendering for it. However that little piss-pot Williams wouldn't let the convention vote on that basis, saying that we couldn't commit the next convention to anything. Balls!

Now, I know that I'm on record as agreeing with him, but upon consideration I ~~didn't know it was going to be~~ have changed my mind. My argument was based on the fact that the following convention would be disenfranchised. It would not. it could still exercise its franchise in respect of the convention two years later. My previous argument only applies if one year and two year bids intermingle. If a definite system of two-year bidding can be re-instigated, then it will be the same for everybody and fandom will benefit, both from better organised cons and from a more secure future.

What I didn't like about the Seacon bid was that it was originated at the convention which makes me a bit wary as to why they hadn't the organising ability or enthusiasm to lay some definite groundwork before the convention. If Pete Weston hadn't been on the committee I'd also have had some doubts as to whether such spur-of-the-moment enthusiasm would have stood the test of time.

Don't get me wrong. These guys are good guys, it's just that I don't like the way the bid was cobbled together at the last minute.

Which means that I've gotten as far as page eleven and still not mentioned anything from the mailing, which must be

some sort of record. Stuff that however, let's take a look at VAGARY 28.

Thanks for the zodiacal reading for Bethany. Even though I personally think the whole subject to be a load of old rubbish I still appreciate the thought. Cas kept saying that we ought to pay for similar readings for Deborah and Nicholas but after I'd been hitting her for a while she shut up. Whilst I agree that certain strange influences affect peoples lives I am firmly of the belief that in Bethany's case these strange influences are called Cas and Skel. As I said though, we do appreciate the thought and the reading will be treasured until the day we present it to her and see how it stacked up against subsequent events

It has just dawned on me that there is a much better way of looking at the view that everybody has a right to their own beliefs and opinions. Once one accepts the fact that a wrong opinion is one that by definition does not agree with the opinion that one holds oneself. Thus, the right to ones own opinion becomes the right to be wrong. All this is fairly obvious, when stated, but generally people seem to accept that the right to ones own beliefs is only valid if these beliefs are correct.

Once one accepts the fact that everybody but everybody has a right to be wrong it makes things much easier. Williams may be a little piss-pot, but that's his right. He has every right to be wrong (ie to disagree with me) on that particular subject. They even have the right to be wrong if in so doing they cause me hurt, providing that I have that identical right. That is to say that burglars have the right to burgle me but I have the right to have them locked up if I can. If the burglar wants to stay out of jail then he's got to pay more consideration to my rights. He's not got to do what he wants to do (burgle me), but what I want him to do (not burgle me). Either that or he's got to be a damn good burglar.

It is not against the rules of soccer to kick an oponent. How can it be, it's there, provision is made for it in the rules. One is permitted to kick an oponent, provided one is

prepared to accept the results. Where am I going? It all seemed clear enough when I started out but now I'm as lost as you are. The philosopher's stone for peace and harmony on earth has eluded me at the last minute. Never mind Skel, have a glass of wine.

Sniff, don't mind if I do. You're so understanding.

Thank you. You are too, you know...and so BUTCH.

Oooo, you are awful.

20 April 1974 (Skel)

Despite all that rambling I'm still with VAGARY, Bobbie. Regarding your query as to why I scatter my mailing comments hither and yon, your guess was fifty percent accurate, but I do have another reason. Mailing comments are the skeleton around which I hang this zine. Obviously, if I stuck them all in a lump it would blow the whole thing. Besides, I do give a clue on the back page as to roughly where the bulk of the comments on a particular zine are.

My own reasons for believing no ill of Richard III is that he was a Yorkist and thus capable of no evil. Damned Lancastrians are responsible for all the evils of this world. Geoff Boycott Rah-rah Yorkshire pudding etc. Mind you, didn't Henry Maxwell do a magnificent job in that shoe-string production of 'The Shadow Of The Tower'? If the battles hadn't all been fought by two men and a lad it would have been tremendous.

I haven't been able to take much of that article in as I have just read it with 'Good Rockin' ' coming in over my headphones at half volume (and over headphones that is a mind-blowing experience) from the Junior Walker 'Soul Session' album.....the only purely instrumental album of theirs that I have been able to find. Cas however will probably have quite a bit to ~~drivel~~ say about it, if I can edit her down to about six hundred pages, that is.

The place where I work is a converted mill building built

alongside a canal. It makes a pleasant walk to work in the mornings when I get off the bus, among the ducks (various) and the voles (water variety - file under misc.) and such. Unfortunately, even if waterways do come back as a means of industrial transport, we're in the wrong line of business to make use of it. When Fords want twenty-thousand car-seat cushions they want them tomorrow, not when the next barge comes through. Also, canal transport is basically for heavy, dense items and foam could hardly be called that.

I remember my mother complaining about the quality and coarseness of the graffiti on the walls of the 'Ladies'. I used to come home from school and bring her up to date on the latest scribblings from the various toilets there. I was also her cheif source of 'dirty' jokes.

Joan and Roy Sharpe used to say that they envied my relationship with my parents.....I'm beggining to see what they were getting at. I reckon I was drug up pretty good. Cas on the other hand has always been scared stiff of her father who is rather domineering but OK ~~if~~ you're grown up. He must have been hell when you're little though. Actually, I can see a lot of me in him, so I have to watch myself. Getting back to the graffiti though, I'd never come across that one that you closed with ('Now he tells me') and a good bit of graffiti is worth reading any fanzine. From here on in, everything is sheer bonus. I agree with you that the american tendency to call an earth-xcavator-and-short-haul-earth-transportation-device an earth-excavator-and-short-haul-earth-transportation-device is downright diabolical.....but it is good for a bit of a laugh.

Girls on a makeshift altar, huh? Now if I can just get hold of a large black table-cloth it could make our little candle-lit dinner go out with a bang (?)

Am I the only one who thought GERBISH should have been published as part of a history book?

Whilst I accept that you couldn't make every mailing with a VAGARY, I don't see why you shouldn't at least be in almost

every mailing, even if only with four sides of mailing comments. That's only one stencil every three weeks, after all. I'd like to see everybody do something like that if they found that they weren't able to be in the mailing with a proper fanzine. It's kind've like carrying the torch or keeping the faith. Altogether now, "Ad Ompa!"

Sixteen pages????? Aaaaarrrrgh! And here's me all in favour of increasing it. Anybody who's really interested will put out over thirty pages a year.

We've a cat round here that I wish was terrified of dustbins. If ever we don't put the lid on properly you can bet that she'll be in there. All cats are 'she's', it's a wonder they don't die out.

The only people who seem to be taking streaking seriously are the judges who are slamming on fines ridiculous in the context of 'students' lark'.

Today Cas baked a cake, the first she'd baked since we were married. Truth to tell, it was ~~bloody~~ quite pleasant really.

That bit about a disgusting man running about the streets in his pajamas reminds me of an oft recurring dream I used to have when I was much (much) younger. It was shortly after we had moved to Offerton from beautiful rural Wombwell, where the sun never set.....it just disappeared behind one of the countless coal tips. I'd be about ten at the time of the dreams. In them I'd always be stuck in the busy centre of beautiful rural Wombwell etc., in broad daylight, wearing only my vest. I had to get back to my Nana's without being seen. I always made it too, except right near the end when I used to march boldly down the road in front of her house because I knew I was only dreaming. Then I'd wake up. Odd dream that. What I could never figure out was why I was always back in beautiful rural etc., not in Offerton, and why did I have to get back to my Nana's instead of back 'home'? Is there a psychiatrist in the house? Which about wraps it up for me, Bobbie, but tell me.....where can I buy a set of teeth secrets?

Sometimes  
when I look out through the windows of my eyes  
I see The Dark  
waiting for me.  
Sometimes at night,  
on the threshold of a dream,  
I hear Him calling to me  
across the cold eternities of waiting.

And there are times  
when  
I feel His chilling breath  
fondling my neck,  
prickling its wet way down my spine.  
Standing there,  
breathing rapidly in the clammy air,  
I look around!  
But the curtains are drawn behind the windows of my eyes.

I wonder, often now, since I first saw Him, and heard Him  
silently mouthing my name.  
Yes,  
I heard Him.  
When the curtains behind the windows of my eyes  
are forever drawn.....  
when I am dead.....  
will He be in here with me?

The above poem was written over three years ago and I still like it a lot. Mind you, it takes me back a bit. Back in fact to the time when I was a single young fan who was just working himself up to fancying a young femmefan called Lisa Conesa. As I had dabbled a little in poetry and as she seemed poetry mad, I decided that this was the basis for coming on strong. This was the kicker I needed to get me writing poetry in earnest. However, just as I was getting into gear \*WHAM!\*. Cas happened to me....and yesterday's news was old news. All of which in no way invalidates the poem. It's merely the

reason I chose to set it down on paper. It remains an accurate statement of my morbid fear of death. I view with horror the fact that one day all this 'ME'ness will just cease to exist and will never NEVER again experience anything. It hurts, it is so bloody final....and there's not a damned thing I can do about it. I will be murdered by circumstance and none can save me.

Coupled with the injustice of death itself is the fact that the universe is just around the corner, and I will miss it. Lots of other people have missed it and will miss it, but I know what I'm missing. I will never see a different world, never walk beneath alien skies and feel a breeze of otherness upon my face. It may all sound like something out of an early space-opera, but I do feel the loss.

Probably if I'd been born in earlier times I'd have be-moaned the fact that I'd never experience the marvels of easy travel and communication, or something like that. But isn't this what mankind is all about? This permanent sense of dissatisfaction which drives us on?

21 April 1973 (Skel)

A much better mailing this time....only two flimsies and one of them was OFF TRAILS. Much more meat in it this time too. However, before we get on to the egoboo proper let's dish out one bonus category :- WORST STAPLES ---Dick Eney. Neither of your staples made it through the back cover on my copy, Dick. I know that mailings have been getting thinner, but there's no reason why they should start getting slimmer still as you lift them out of the envelope.

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** Best Fanzine . . . . . ERG 46
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** Best Cover . . . . . PHENOTYPE
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** Best Artist . . . . . Jeeves
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** Best Writer . . . . . Eney
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** Best M/C's . . . . . VAGARY
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Best mailing comments was pretty tight this time, with a whole heap of good m/c's in the mailing, and Dick made best writer for the marvelous 'Torconpix' thingy, even if it was really a composite item.

21 April 1974 (Cas)



Have you ever been attacked by a rabid mattress, 'cos I have. There I was, t'other night, snugly wugly peep eyes (for those of you that do not understand baby talk, that means 'fast asleep'), when suddenly it sprang - the spring that is - and took a chunk out of my thigh. We've decided that it's too dangerous to allow this mattress to roam the back-streets of Stockport so we are having it put down as soon as the new Slumberland Posture Spring breed arrives.

My horoscope in the Express says "Tiresome day for the Virgo housewife and for all those trying to work at home." Well, I didn't fancy doing any housework today anyway.

Shucks, Beth has decided to wake up and yell. What a lovely day it is for going out into the garden and comitting infanticide. She's a lovely little thing really. How Paul and I managed to produce such a cuddly bundle of fun I'll never know. She'll get ruined, as Deborah and Nicholas adore her and fight over who's going to do what for her, and she gets loads of attention when either set of grandparents pay us a visit. Little Shelle Sharpe keeps asking Joan when they're going to have one. I won't tell you what Joan said to that.

My son loves me, my son does. He has just arrived home with two daffodils for me. They're both dead mind you, but it is the thought that counts. Then again, maybe he thinks that I ought to be dead.



We've just received the last mailing and as co-editor my other half says I've got to review some of the zines. I'm not really looking forward to this as I don't think I'll be much good at it. So, if I review your fanzine and make a mess of it, remember I'm only a beginner and anyway.....I'm bigger'n you and I'll smash your face in if you say anything nasty about me (and in case you haven't noticed I'm terribly childish.) So NYARRH!

21 April 1974 (Bethany)

Ghlurp.

21 April 1974 (Skel)

The idea of sticking at sixteen equivalent quarto pages per issue could go sailing out of the window this issue, due entirely to the fact that we've not looked, in print, at the bulk of the mailing and we've only got about six usable pages within that page limit. Mind you, the first three issues of INFERNO managed to pull off that fannish miracle of not growing a single page, neither did they shrink.

yug

That was the Skelish attempt to get into the Guinness book of records for the youngest ever contributor to a fanzine. She typed that all by her little self, she did, and she is only just seventeen weeks old. Mind you, I thought her fist was going to go right through the keyboard.

Terry raised what could turn out to be a valid point on the phone the other day. He mentioned the fact that if I was only running off twenty-two copies of each issue, it was hardly worth the stencils. Snug in the knowledge that all my stencils have been unashamedly filched over the years, I brushed it off as being unimportant. Alas, today I found that my bottomless box of motley stencils has but two stencils therein. Not even enough to complete this issue. Here then is a test of trufan-nishness. In the meantime though I do have some stencils with a large Whitbread heading stamped on them (now I wonder where

they came from?) The question is, when I've corflued it out can I raise the print high enough. If this page is OK then I can, and the evil day will be postponed until next issue.

24 April 1974 (Skel)

One thing that like puzzles me about OFF TRAILS is why it is always credited to this geezer 'Officers' (a pseudonym if I ever heard one) who doesn't appear to be a member. Why isn't it credited directly to the members concerned?

There is one thing about being down to only twelve or so 'active' members. At least we are all pretty active, those of us that're left. Take a look at the back page and you'll see that, after two mailings, of the twelve active members half have already completed their activity requirements and a couple more are over half-way. Come to think of it, isn't LES SPINGE an OMPazine anymore? Well, if it is, and I got one postmailed to the last mailing, how come les Pardoes are down as still owing twenty pages? Hmmmum. Anyway, as I was saying, now that OMPA is down to just the active fans one probably gets just as much reaction, if not more, from OMPA as one would get from eighteen copies of ones fanzine circulated in genfandom. So, my argument is that OMPA is in a better position now than it has been in since I joined. All we have to do now is be really brutal and make sure that any new members we get aren't allowed to become deadweight. Obviously we can't be all that particular about new members when we get 'em but but if they fall by the wayside then they will have to bloody well go. Let's have done with all this milk of human kindness that's balls'd us up in the past.

By all means let's exchange mailings with ROMPA, and anybody else who'll swap too, as I think I've suggested once before. We might as well get some mileage out of those extra copies we send in .

I thought we'd been on that 'members + 5' for a while now. I have at any rate, but I'm sure I didn't dream it. I must have read it somewhere. Or have I been in danger of being thrown out for not sending in enough copies? Oh-oh, what's

this? Bobbie Gray, patron Saint of Lame Ducks? How are we ever going to get the deadlegs out of OMPA if we keep picking them up and carrying them? Maybe we could solve all this heartache by only permitting dead fans to join OMPA, then there would be no question of them meeting their activity requirement and we'd have a full membership of forty-five again.....and no postal expenses for the mailings either.

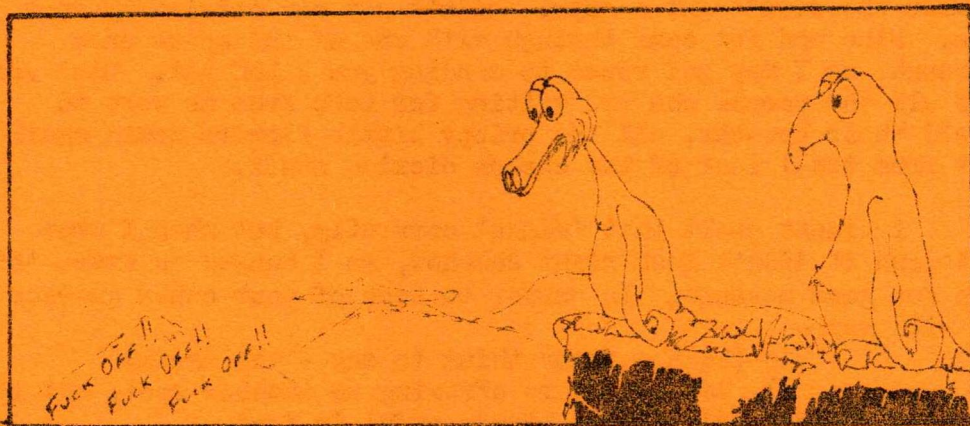
What ever would we do if we received a mailing of over three hundred pages---three times as large as the last one? Ghod, it'd probably mean a ninety page INFERNO for the next mailing! Eh, eh, I think I'd put a bit of minac through then instead, to preserve my sanity.

### THE STATE OF THE PARTIES

Obviously you can't wait to see how my egoboo vote for the year to date is running, so here's how it stands after half of the mailings:-

Best Zine	ERG/PHENOTYPE/COITUS
Best Cover Art	ERG/PHENOTYPE/OSTEEN
Best Interior Art	ERG/QWEHTYUIOP/WHATSIT
Best Fiction	No votes.
Best Poem	WHATSIT/No other votes.
Best fact Article/Review	Torconpix/Fans Across The Sea/Negative Evidence
Best Mailing Comments	COITUS/VAGARY/WHATSIT
Best Editorial Comments	OFF TRAILS/VAGARY/PHENOTYPE
Overall Favourite Item	Torconpix/ERG cover 45/Dying Proced.
Other Egoboo	No votes.

I'm not too sure just what is elligible at the moment so I'll have to quiz Mike and Pat next time I see them. Things such as:- Who did the PHENOTYPE cover, Dick or a non-OMPAn, and if the latter, is it elligible? Is 'Best Cover Art' a vote for



the fanzine which bears the cover, or for the artist who drew it? Some of the categories just don't rate either. 'Best Poem' no longer deserves a category of its own. There have only been two poems put through OMPA so far this year, by OMPANs that is - one of mine and one of Kench's. At this rate they should stand with 'Best Fiction' and probably 'Best Review' in a sort of jumbled category. Where's the egoboo when 'Best Fiction' means 'Only Fiction'?

25 April 1974 (Skel)

Ah yes, good old OSTEEEN U. Sorry I never reviewed QWERLY-UIOP 6, but like I told you at the con, I must be the only OMPAN who didn't get a copy. Didn't get one originally that is. Mike and Pat came through with one of the spare ones though, so I may get round to sending you a LoC yet. Mind you if all the people who are waiting for LoCs from me were to hold their breaths, all the prippy little flowers would snuff it from total lack of the carbon dioxide stuff.

I almost spelt that 'Minen' correctly, but when I wrote it down it didn't look right somehow, so I bunged an extra 'n' in for good measure. In answer to some of your other queries I will say:-

10 (What a funny thing to say - try again)

1) Yes they were offering me another spot, but it wasn't a very good one.....bloody awful in fact.

2) I really enjoyed 'Time Enough For Love', although it did have its bad patches.

3) 'Stranger In A Strange Land' wasn't really 'unreadable', 'cos I read it. It did take me four years to do it though. Valentine Michael Smith was such a boring individual, which didn't help. Also, I don't enjoy reading about people talking about sex. 'Time Enough For Love' got over that by having a far more interesting protagonist.

How about "He who hazzards tapes is lost."?

The authorities over here are most definitely not taking a rather relaxed view of the streaking craze. They are making

themselves appear rather foolish in the harshness of their reactions. One keeps expecting them to call for the bringing back of the cat.

27 April 1974 (Cas)

I'm glad we moved to this area, not only because we now live in a house instead of on the eighteenth floor - which is much better for the children, but more for the fact that Joan Sharpe, my best friend, lives only about five minutes walk away. Joan and I met back in 1968 when we both moved into Pendlebury Towers but we didn't become really close friends until 1971 when Rod, my then husband, decided to walk out on the kids and I. Joan and Roy were marvelous and helped me through a trying time. It was through them that I met Paul.

At the beginning of 1972 they moved to Offerton and as I started work again Joan and I sort of lost touch with each other. Now we are near-neighbours again and it's great. We

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Chelle Sharpe:- "I'm having your Daddy".

Nicholas:- "Well, we'll have your dog then".

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have long therapeutic talks (when the kids are driving us mad) about how we'd like to strangle the little swines sometimes and how guilty it makes us feel. We reckon no matter how much you love your children there are times when you could cheerfully murder them (how do you parents out there feel about this?) and that this is a natural emotion. We leave each other feeling more able to cope with the trials and tribulations of bringing up children. Not that it's all sheer hell. Kids bring a lot of joy into life - little things like bringing home from school the Christmas cards they've made (with the help of teacher) and washing the pots for you as a surprise (and you've got to wait until after they've gone to bed before you can re-wash them properly, so as not to hurt their feelings).

We also have nostalgic conversations about our teenage years and console each other about the fact that we're getting on in years and that, at the moment, we both need to lose weight. Yes, it's good to know I've got a friend like Joan. Oh and Joan, can I have back my 20lb of potatoes, 3lbs of sugar, three jars of coffee, etc?

27 April 1974 (Skel)

So, at last Alan Burns' secret perversion is revealed. He watches 'Van der Valk' (\*S\*H\*U\*D\*D\*E\*R\*), and brags about it. Actually, it wasn't too bad Terry, and the rest of this issue of ERG made good reading too.

That fellah with the theory about everyone's life having equal areas on both sides of its own median line is on to a good thing. After all, the median line is by definition the one that comes exactly half-way. Everyone's lifeline must have equal areas on either side of its own median line.

I have only admiration for your mastery over all things mimeographical. The only time I ever tried to get inside my Roneo I couldn't even get the bloody side cover off. Luckily the problem was only minor and it seemed to sort itself out anyway. I have no end of bafflement whenever I try to picture your 1972 Opel stoofing on your druve.

Surely you're overstating your case when you say that OMPA only returns about six reviews in a year? You invariably get four from this quarter and I've seen more than that from other zines. I'd say twice that number, twelve in fact, was a more realistic number for the OMPA reaction. Oh, oh, Sskel has just trapped Doctor Who - must dash...isn't it exciting? Huh, huh?

THE MEARAS ARE COMING, THE MEARAS ARE COMING!

Yes folks, the reason for all this frenzied fanaticism is now revealed to be no more than his mercenary Skelishness attempting to save himself a couple of bob postage by getting this

issue ready in time for them to take it back with them. It's all part of life's rich pageant.

A stencil a day keeps the gafia away!

3 May 1974 (Skel)

Didn't make it, did I?

Why?

Things have happened. In my head things have happened. Things which portend a time of changes. Like a butterfly emerging from its chrysalis, I'm gonna spread my wings and fly baby.

Fly to where?

Does the butterfly know whither it mote go?

Does it fuck, and neither do I.....but enough of this cryptic shilly-shallying around, let me to the gist. I'm missing it of late, not getting enough. No, you filthy sods, I'm talking about my involvement with fandom, or should I say my non-involvement. Like I've said before, INFERNO is not a response based fanzine. Unlike HELL, where the pleasure was coming, in the later stages, more and more from the response it evoked by way of LoC's, Trades and comments.....well, unlike that, the pleasure in this fanzine comes from the doing of it. However, I am missing the fannish contact of trades and LoC's. Just about the only zines I get regularly are MADCAP and MAL-FUNCTION, which doesn't lead to a very balanced outlook upon fandom. Oh, odd things trickle in from time to time. Dave Britton let me have a copy of DOMINANT the last time I was admiring the porn section of his and Chuck's shop, but that certainly doesn't make for a balanced outlook.

Couple this with the fact that some women can't seem to face the fact that their part in a co-editorship is merely to type the stencils and say "Yes Luv," when informed of details like 'editorial policy' and overall content.



Here's a couple of comments I've gotten recently:-

TERRY JEEVES - "I don't see how you can put out a zine just through OMPA. It's not worth the cost of the stencils."

CAS ----- "I think we should take INFERNO out of OMPA. It's daft just doing twenty copies of a fanzine. It's daft."

OK, OK, O - BLOODY - K! Maybe. Nothing luv, just clearing my throat, that's all.

Mind you, I can still have my cake and eat it too. I can continue to put out INFERNO, yeah even through OMPA, but I think I'll be taking in other fanzines besides those in our close-knit little community. Obviously that will mean that this fanzine will no longer be 'OMPA only', which probably upsets me more than it upsets you. Ah, but I am ~~flexible~~ ~~flexible~~ ~~flexible~~ flexible.

This issue of INFERNO will be going out in the July 1974 mailing. There will be no copy of this fanzine in the October mailing. This will give me time to 'get my head together', which is a phrase as apt as it is hideous. The reason why INFERNO 5 is to be shelved for three months is that I have decided that enough is indeed sufficient. HELL 9 appeared in the seventieth mailing. HELL 10 will appear in the seventy-fifth. I have decided that despite it's state of almost completion, to devote my full attention to it. This might even mean that I can junk my editorial (long ago run off) and put in something which will make me look less of a cretin. I feel I owe it to HELL to see that it goes out with dignity and so I will do a proper job, not just run it off and send it out as it stands. The last rites must be carried out correctly.

So, the more things change the more they remain the same. HELL will once more be my OMPazine, if only for a single, solitary mailing. Aren't you the lucky ones? Aren't you? Oh, be like that then. The trouble with youse guys is that you don't realise when you're well off. Mutter-mumble.

9 May 1974 (Skel)

It is now seven-thirty in the morning. I have been up already since six o'clock, performing that ancient fannish ceremony known as 'slaving over a hot duper'. I had to do this because my belief in science has just been shattered at the same time as I have developed a healthy respect for all things mystical.

It was like this..... It is a well known fact that a Roneo works along strict scientific principles and it will get by quite happily on these alone. The formalized incantations which one is wont to incant are supposed to be merely hold-overs from a less enlightened faanish age.

So, there I was last night and the bloody page twenty-four just would not run off. Every time I tried it on blank paper it worked a treat, but every time I switched back to the reverse side of page twenty-three SHKAPAAM, it chewed them up and no messing. Then some would stick to the drum and refuse to drop off after impression, causing an excess of ink on the surface of the stencil, causing the next page to stick worse, ad nauseum.

Now whenever this sort of thing has happened in the past I have made use of certane arcane lore, made the passes and intoned the spells and, sure enough, things have soon picked up. Unfortunately I couldn't use the spells yesterday because one of Cas' friends was in the next room and one doesn't use language like that with ladies present.

So, I let it stew in its own juices overnight, giving it time to realize what a naughty little roneo it had been. Contrition must have set in because it was all sweetness and light this morning. I ran of lots of copies of page twenty-four, unscrewed the stencil for page twenty-three, ran off some crudsheets to clean it, and slapped it onto the front of page twenty-four. I wonder what my signs were last night, Bobbie?

However, tempus fugiteth like mad and I have to go to work.

Now that I'm back it's about time I took another look at the mailing. The question I would like to pose, Mike, is "How many more plays on the word 'coitus' can you come up with?" The trouble with the Creative Non-Use of Corflu is that when you make as many mistakes like what I do you have to work at a combination of that and the red peril. Don't you have to get really worked up to do that 'steam of consciousness' type stuff?

I didn't claim that John Denver challenged 'orthodox' life styles, rather that he challenged the orthodox alternate life style. Instead of dwelling on what is bad with the world we've inherited he points out that it has some really good points too, if we'd just take the trouble of looking for them. I don't really go for Ralph McTell, nor Don McLean (except for the truly superb 'Vincent'). I don't know why, it's probably that I'm more interested in an overall gestalt of the persons 'image' (wrong word) than in their relative vocal merits (not all important) and in their guitar playing ability (of no importance to me at all - if they want good guitar work they get a good session musician). I'm not trying to challenge your musical priorities here, just trying to explain why I like the sort of things I do. Trying, but not succeeding very well. I much prefer songs about personal feelings 'Goodbye Again - Leaving On A Jet Plane - Poems, Prayers and Promises' to valid social comment 'American Pie - 98% of Dylan'. I go for these too, but I'm more into the former. "How sweet it is to love someone, how right it is to care," just about sums me up. This is me. I'm not dashing and adventurous, setting the world to rights. I'll settle just to love and be loved, to see a future for myself and to know that it will be good. Not a fixed future, but a warm one. Hell and dammit, I'm still not saying exactly what I want to say, but I could keep on trying until I run out of stencils and still probably not get it right.

I must admit I agree with you to a great degree over the undesirability of fan awards, but whether or not there should be only one award depends upon whether or not sub-divisions of fandom are realistic or not. Is there such an entity as Brit-fandom, separate and distinct from fandom as a whole, whilst

still a part of the greater whole. If there is then there is no reason why it shouldn't and even a reason why it should have its own awards/egoboo rewards. If you don't think that Britfandom exists as a separate entity then it oughtn't to have any such awards. I incline to the view that Britfandom is unique. Not separate, but unique, one of a kind within the framework of international fandom.

International fandom is American based. This is because, in the distance-is-no-object world of correspondence, the bulk of fandom is in the USA. Fandom as a whole can be seen to have an American flavour (Pizza ice-cream with strawberry, what else) whereas Britfandom hasn't (more Scampi 'n mash) but I'm missing my mark again and seeing that INFERNO has only one more stencil to go I'd better move on to other things, another glass of sherry for a start.

My inscrutability was marred by the merest upturning of the corners of my mouth Dick. Yes, the only Britfan with a square mouth strikes again. Damn though, if 'Torconpix' has to be extracted from you, like self-adhesive teeth, then fie on you sirrah! The caption for the battle scene had me in tucks.

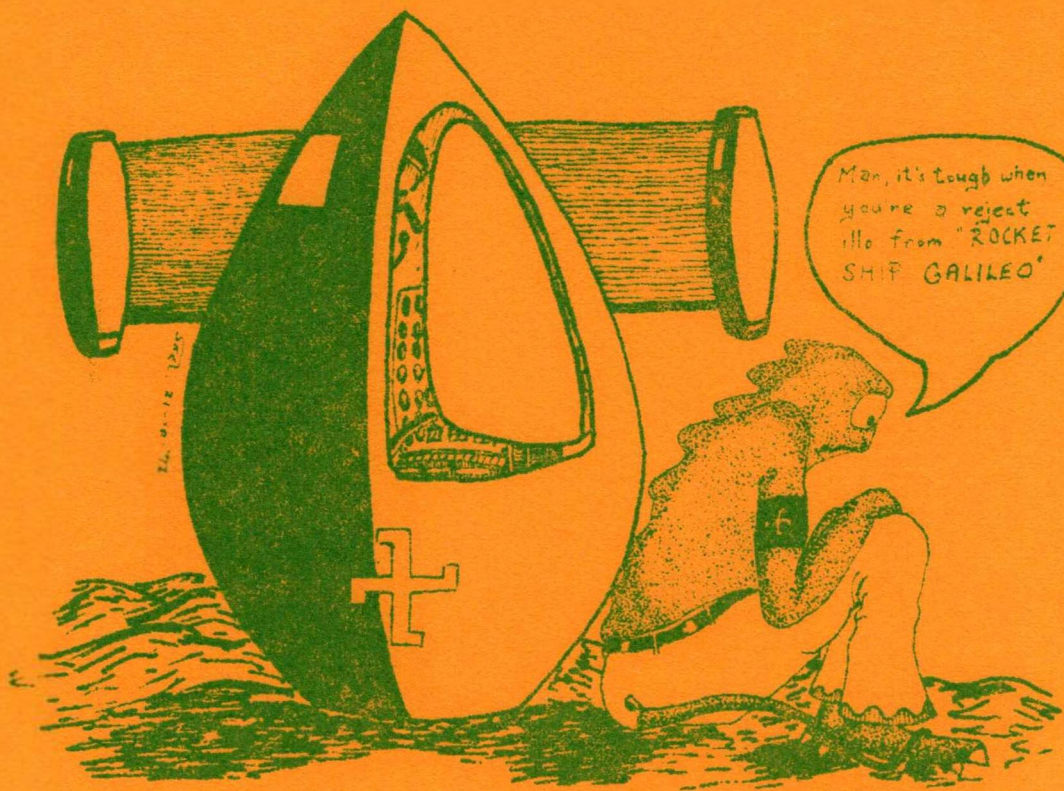
Oh, I don't know, I quite like green on green. I'm rather in favour of porn period. I like it (although I will admit that one photo-mag I saw almost made me puke, but I do not class that as porn but as obscenity) but surely the best things for keeping sex objects in their place would be leather straps and handcuffs and drive/drool/ghasphokepart.....

I toyed with the idea of numbering my fanzines in an all embracing sequence but I finally dismissed the idea as too self important. I decided it would imply them having a place in some overall scheme of Skelac, which would have been attributing to them something over and above themselves. Obviously you don't feel this way, but for me to do it would have made me feel pretentious. This is obviously a kink in my make up (warped lipstick) so maybe I'll go ahead and do it anyway. Everybody needs to feel a trifle pretentious from time to time.

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 \*\* Artwork throughout is by Skel, if such a sparcity can  
 \*\* be dignified with the term 'throughout'. If you have  
 \*\* lavished love and affection upon your fanzine then do  
 \*\* please take note of the following pages to avoid at  
 \*\* all cost:- VAGARY p11; OFF TRAILS p19; OSTEEEN UNIVER-  
 \*\* SITY REVIEW p22; ERG p24; COITUS INTERRUPTUS p27;  
 \*\* PHENOTYPE p29; and WHATSIT p30. To protect your san-  
 \*\* ity however, maybe you should skip 1 through 32.....  
 \*\* WARNING by H.M. Government - FANZINES CAN DAMAGE YOUR  
 \*\* HEALTH....don't cut yourself on rusty staples!!!!!!!  
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<u>STATEMENT OF PRINT RUN AND CIRCUL-</u>	**
<u>ATION OF INFERNO 4.....</u>	**
**	**
**	**
Number of copies to OMPA = 18	**
Editors (1 each) = 2	**
B-ro (courtesy copies) = <u>2</u>	**
	**
	<u>22</u>
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Ishudder to think what an overall sampling of what has been put through OMPA would look like. If it is to be a sample rather than a 'best' selection then it must, of necessity, contain some of the worst crap we've had. No kench, please, let's at least stick to the 'best' and delude ourselves a bit if need be. The only trouble with something of this sort though is that the flavour of a thing might be lost. This flavour comprises not only the content, but also the presentation and the manner in which it is produced. Could anything I typed and duplicated capture the essence of something that had originally appeared in WHATSIT? I very much doubt it. Damn, end of fanzine. Teach me to save these things till last.



Man, it's tough when  
you're a reject  
like from "ROCKET  
SHIP GALILEO"

THE GUY FROM 'ROCKET'