

STOP  
BREAKING  
DOWN



2

Number 2

April 1976

STOP BREAKING DOWN  
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edited and produced by

Greg Pickersgill

with

Simone Walsh (Overseas Editor)

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STOP BREAKING DOWN 3 ; material for this issue should be in hand by

15th May 1976

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The cover this issue is a detail from the album cover by Tom Wilson for 'Robert Johnson, King of the Delta Blues Volume 2', and has been ineptly transferred to stencil by Greg Pickersgill.

M O A N I N G . A T . M I D N I G H T  
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um um um um um um

by

Greg Pickersgill

HERE I AM AGAIN ALL DRESSED IN BLACK

No, actually, not black at all, just the usual turd-brown sort of outfit many of you have grown to know and poke fun at down the years. I must admit though, that if I ever got it together and lost 'a few pounds' of weight one of the top items on my new clothing list would be an off the peg set of Gentleman Clerk's suiting not entirely unlike that worn by guitar hero Wilko Johnson, in a suitable shade of dark black, of course. I've already been practising the deranged zombie stare at work for the last few years. Though I suppose I could always just go to the complete opposite extreme and emulate another folk hero and buy a Glitter suit and practice poses of innocent wide-eyed astonishment. Goodness Gracious indeed! Wouldn't have to lose weight either. Can't be so bad.

As usual I'm losing my point, not being content to firm up my self-image by being a hot-shit fanzine editor I want to take on a rock&roll persona as well, second-hand though it might be. Hmm. Anyway, I wanted to explain why this issue follows the first one so closely, being well ahead of its intended publication date, thus making a mockery in turn of those who mocked the deadline date for SBD 2 as posted in the last issue. Simply, we'd previously intended the second issue to come out at this date; it was the first that was three weeks late. If those Folse Wonkas at K can pull this sort of stroke so can we. Better. Actually, it was the excellent LoC response to SBD 1 that finally swayed us into getting this issue out on time; apart from being damned encouraging there were some comments relating to the upcoming Mancon which would have been pretty bloody obsolete by April 20.

Eagle eyed readers will note the lack of genuine articles in this issue, a situation arising from the fact that all the smart stuff we'd commissioned for an issue with an April 20th deadline has not yet been written. For instance famous writer Robert Holdstock is even now flogging himself hard trying to finish a book before it is even more than two months over due, and can scarce spare the time for his frantic round of parties, lunches, and idling about drinking barley wine when he should be working, let alone for something so unrewarding financially as fanac. And there is just no way at all possible of getting even a fractionally truthful Mancon report out of Malcolm Edwards before Easter, no way at all. However, from issue 3 we will have a full bill of featured articles agin, including bits by Leroy Kettle, Jack Marsh, and others too ephemeral to mention.

## SNAKES AND SWALLOWTAILS

It seems that every time you turn around there's another bit of daftness about the Nova Award **looming** up at ya. Most times these days it emanates from Dave Rowe, though I expect before long all kinds of other retardards will get in on the act. Almost as if to forestall this lemming-like surge Peppermint Patty Charnock has, elsewhere in this issue, given some exposure to the true fast-mouthed apologist and greased-pig doublethinker hiding behind Rowe's facade of sweet reason. At one and the same time she also points out that there do not seem to be any clear rules or criteria set out anywhere for the guidance of the Nova judging committee, as indeed I know only too well, having been a member of that committee on two occasions, including the time which produced the controversial MAYA - SHREW decisions which caused Dave Rowe to, in the immortal phrase of Richard MaMahon, get so far out of his pram. Now it certainly seems to me that Britain's only chance for a genuine prestige fan award is going to go rapidly down the drain in a welter of get-em-in-the-back-street-tonite infighting unless something is done. So from now STOP BREAKING DOWN is open to any and all comment and opinion on this problem. Hopefully something sensible will result which can be sent on to the Nova Award administration people in good time for the next Novacon, thus giving the next judging panel some likely very welcome groundrules.

Obviously I can't resist including my idea of how things should be run, so here goes. What do you think?

As far as structure and composition of the judging panel goes five people seems the ideal number. Odd number to avoid ties, and not too many to make discussion too ponderous. I'd like to see them all be individuals who've been active fanzine editors or writers within the previous three or so years, thus making them a more true jury of peers likely to have greater understanding of the entrants' aims, intents, and devices. The disadvantage of this is that some star faneds would be barred from either judging or entering, but this isn't a totally insuperable obstacle. Selecting individuals from disparate fangroups is a good idea, to prevent any charges of collusion and favouritism (it says here) though if this isn't feasible it should be of no real concern as hardly anyone agrees on fanzine standards anyway.

Selection of fanzines for final judging should be mainly a popular con-members write-in as it is now, though I think there's a case to be made for allowing the judges, as a body, to add one or two titles to the final list. Only fanzines with two issues **or more in the** period under consideration should be eligible, and the Award should be given for the entire year's effort, not for a single issue. 'No Award' decisions should be strongly discouraged.

As far as the criteria for giving the Award goes, ie whether it should be awarded on the basis of being that which the judges most enjoyed, or that which represents British fanzines best, and is likely to appeal to most convention attendees, all I can say is I pass.

Any ideas?

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Greg Pickersgill

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NOTHING WAS DELIVERED  
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gruntle  
by

PAT CHARNOCK

After the Boakcon at Blackpool I recieved an unsolicited parcel. It contained a box of Blackpool rock (I hate rock). Wrapped around the rock was an apologetic letter from Gray Boak:-

Dear Pat,

On behalf of everyone involved in this 'award' I'd like to express the wish that you enjoy the rock; and should you discover the slightest tinge of animosity then pass it on quickly, ~~for it isn't~~ aimed at you.

Wrapped around the letter was a sort of certificate:-

THE FIRST WORLD FAAN CONVENTION

presents the

BRITISH  
FAN  
EDITORS'  
AWARD

for

THE BEST BRITISH FANZINE OF 1975

The Award should go to MAYA, but because of a technicality in the rules it must be awarded to

WRINKLED SHREW

Yeah, Gray, I discovered a tinge of animosity, but it was aimed at you. I don't know who the hell invented the British Fan Editors Award but it sure as hell wasn't Ratfandom. I haven't seen much in the way of conreports on Boakcon, but I've gathered a few names of people who were there apart from you; Ian Williams, Dave Rowe, Rob Jackson, Bob & Sadie Shaw, Boris Lawrence, Janice Wiles, Cas & Paul Skelton, Graham Poole, Ian Maule, and Peter Presford. I would really be interested to find out what happened at that con, and why people, some of whom I count as friends, chose to lay that shit on me.

I did have misgivings before Novacon. I was happy that SHREW had been nominated, but I foresaw difficulties when I discovered my buddies were on the judging panel; I felt that if SHREW won the Gannets would be able to yell 'fix', and if it didn't... Anyway,

by contime I wasn't allowing myself to think of the result. I didn't take any SHREWS up to Birmingham with me. I felt the announcement at result-time was ill-advised - it made MAYA sound secondhand and left me nowhere. I was chuffed to be told that SHREW was the best over the year, but it made losing hurt more and I guess it didn't make winning much fun either.

And that was that, for me, until I recieved the aforementioned bit of paper and Dave Rowe started making an issue out of it in K. In K1 he asks whether it is 'truly representative to have a panel of three Rats plus one other London-based fan'. Possibly debatable, until he turns about face in K2 where, after announcing that the 1976 panel of judges will contain, among others, Dave Rowe, Ian Williams, and Gray Boak, he feels a need to defend himself; 'and before some idiot starts yelling about collusion between friends (which is unavaoidable on a fannish panel) let me point out - mates we may be, but our opinions on fanzines differ widely.' Glad to hear it Dave. He goes on to say that he is prepared to vote for 'NO AWARD' if 'the standard of UK fanzines stays at the level of the past two years' - this after he has told us he would have supported Graham Poole's SPI or Paul Skelton's INFERNO in 1975.

Dave also tells us that he has been informed that the Nova could have been awarded for a year's run rather than a single issue. A rather more serious piece of news. I gathered from Peter Weston's announcement at the time that the rules precluded this, and I also gathered that this topic had been discussed by the judges, or why else was the announcement so worded? If this is true, surely it invalidates the whole proceedings. And if it is true why was Hazel Reynolds - who represented the Novacon committee on the panel - not aware of it? Surely she was the one person who would have had access to any rules that exist, and would have been in the position of interpreting those rules for the judges. If this was the case, it seems about time that we had some kind of clarification from the Novacon committee.

I'm all in favour of fannish awards - after all, it's egoboo, isn't it? I felt really chuffed when SHREW and I were placed in the 1974-75 CHECKPOINT Fan Poll, but last year's Nova has just left a sour taste in my mouth. This issue has to be resolved if the Nova is to have any credibility in the future.

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Pat Charnock

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AVAILABLE SPACE

Patricia has maladroitley left me enough space to give the title and heading credits for this issue; In order of appearance they are:- Howlin' Wolf, Sharks, Bob Dylan, Ry Cooder, John Lee Hooker, Free, Curtis Mayfield, Mickey Dolenz, and John Lee Hooker. The title of this fanzine is by Robert Johnson.

This issue is dedicated to the idea that one day Peter Green will once again take up his guitar and play.

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BURNING HELL  
.....

fanzine reviews

by

Greg Pickersgill

In ALL RIGHT NOW reader G. Rippington raises in a round-about way the question of SF oriented fanzines v. the fannish sort. Whilst in the past I have been notorious for my wholehearted support of fannish fanzines to the exclusion of all others I have recently found in my heart a long-dormant fascination for SF, and can now see the sense, purpose, and currently, need, for a genuine honest to god science fiction fanzine based in Britain. By that I don't necessarily mean a 'critical journal' of the sort typified by SPECULATION (a fairly serious strongly SF-oriented fanzine produced in the sixties by a Birmingham fan named Peter Watson, who became very friendly with a number of professional people as a result) or, more recently, VECTOR, the BSFA journal, which is more 'serious' than the sort of fanzine I have in mind, and is also fairly difficult to obtain. What I'm thinking about is a solidly 'fannish' fanzine aimed entirely at SF, written by and for the science fiction enthusiast rather than the posturing critic or dilettante intellectual. It should carry good book reviews, biographies, interviews, checklists, bibliographies, information on buying and selling for collectors, general news and scandal on or about the sf scene, and, importantly, place for people to talk and enthuse about science fiction, showing what they like, why they like it, making it clear how SF affects them and how it impinges on their lives. The people behind this sort of fanzine would have to know fandom well, know how to produce a good fanzine, and be intimately involved in SF - the sort of character who could (would, habitually) carry on whole conversations in SF terms, make esoteric jokes on SF subjects.

Older fans will doubtless remember the fanzines Mike Ashley used to produce before he became a Jehovah's Witness and in a moment of epiphany realized all he had to do was wait a few years until a hack publisher like NEL would come along and pay him lots of money for doing what he'd previously done for love. His fanzines were not totally unlike the ideal I've described above. The small flaw with doing a fanzine like this is that there are few people capable of it. One would need a very strong knowledge of SF, equal critical ability, genuine enthusiasm about SF, wit, humour, and a generally light touch, and if at all possible contacts in the professional world that would yield up the sort of background material that brings the whole business alive. These requirements cut down the possible applicants no end. Geoff Rippington like most other neofans whose first fanzine is SF oriented has shown that enthusiasm is not enough, and in all truth all Ashley had going for him was a powerful memory and a lot of spare time in which to compile interminable checklists. Kevin Williams, a Newcastle fan, once put out

a fanzine called DURFED, in which beneath a deep layer of fifth-hand sub-sub-sub-TRUE RAT humour a remarkable knowledge of SF lay. Robert Jackson and Malcolm Edwards both have strong knowledge, good critical ability, and excellent writing capabilities. Leroy Kettle, perhaps unknown to many people, has a truly phenomenal depth of knowledge of the SF field (matched only, perhaps, by my own)(ho ho) a fantastic knack for communicating his enthusiasm for it, and a critical sense rarely communicated to fandom at large. It's people like this, who not only like SF, but know it intimately; can write well, and, above all, know how to produce good fanzines, that could make a great success of a fanzine like this in Britain right now; with the huge numbers of science fiction enthusiasts about at the moment it could, done right, be a Very Big Thing Indeed.

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DRILKJIS 1 from David Langford, Boundary Hall, Tadley,  
Basingstoke, Hants RG26 6QD

When I got this I almost thought it was the ideal SF fanzine as outlined above. At least, I somehow expected that sort of thing from ex-Oxford SF Society individuals who figure large in the Pieria Group and have every intention (if not ability) of becoming the John Brunners or Jack Wodhams' of the next century. Turned out different, though, not bad, not superb, but good, enjoyable, solid stuff.

The editorial is the sort of personal view of an aspect of sf that I'd like to see in the mythical SF fanzine; a brief but pointed look at some of the recent ser es-books like Hook, Expendables, Rack, etc. Kevin Smith gives a good picture of the books and makes it clear why he thinks they're rubbish. In fact he makes the damned things sound somehow interesting; so much so I actually went out and bought a secondhand Hook book. It's truly awful and I doubt I'll ever be able to read it through.

The editorial is followed later in the magazine by a parody of the Hook books starring a character called Lynan Sinkler, the Rubberised Man. Apparently this, with others of its ilk, was submitted professionally, but was rejected. Not surprisingly, as the humour is crude (in the sense of not subtle, not in the sense of any of the obvious sexual jests that spring to mind to fit a title like 'The Rubberized Man') relying on absurdity, exaggeration, and incongruity; the writer, Smith again, doesn't seem to have realised that parodying a bad book in the same unreadably awful style does not give the parody any whit more value than the awful original.

There's an interview with George Hay in which he sounds fairly sensible, if you can allow that anyone busily committing his own early fifties sf novels to microfiche, taping for sale sf authors reading their own work, and printing super-short stories on postcards has got any sense at all. George Hay is either the most complete hustler ever to appear on the British Sf scene, or its oldest hanger-on.



The book reviews, by Chris Morgan, Kevin, Smith, and Liese Hoare edge towards the good end of the scale, most of them managing to actually make a point about the book under discussion rather than just providing a precis. A welcome sight.

The rest of the fanzine is snippets; conversations, letter quotes, the latter including the first full account of the Oxford U. 'fireworks in the streets' incident, of which I am amazed to learn that there are people actually in the slammer as a result of at this moment.

Anyway, good fanzine, readable, well produced, could go far.

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TRUE RAT 7 from Leroy Kettle, 43 Chesholm Road,  
London N 16

I was talking to Malcolm Edwards the other day (yes, the Malcolm Edwards, SFM book reviewer and publisher from Harrow) about Leroy Kettle (you know, Leroy Kettle the BNF). About what a socko wit and writer Leroy Kettle was. In fact Edwards went so far as to say that Kettle was the only person he knew who, if there was any justice in the world, would soon become famous. And what else could I do in the face of such praise but throw in my own two pence worth and admit that yes, truly, of all the people I have ever known Leroy Kettle is the one, the solo only, who has the mark of being possessed with a true spark of genius.

Yeah, genius. Wild, erratic, undisciplined, often submerged in a torrent of merely average-to-very-good verbiage (which is often in turn undermined by an onslaught of facile quips, hysteric jests, and an unfortunate - though increasingly infrequent - propensity to make every line a funny one irrespective of context or cost.

Okay, I can hear the mongs snaffling and cursing, dimwittedly pawing the air and demanding proof of this incredible assertion. See me retire confused. See me resigned to explaining this belief with reference to TR 7, which may not be the work of a man possessed but at least came out recently so here goes.

As usual it's a funny fanzine, and even when it's not making you fall out of bed laughing it's the sort of clever, almost 'intellectual' humour that puts its targets neatly down and restores a refreshing sense of perspective to some of sf and fandom's most pompous institutions; a fine example of this is the mock advertisement for a heavy intellectual overview of sf that rapidly degenerates into a revelation of adolescent wanking over PLANET STORIES cover-girls, reference to 'The Wooden Age' of Campbellian sf (many a true word spoken in jest), and in-passing sideswipes to other icons of modern sf like DUNE, the 'New Wave' and the Hugos. What is remarkable about all this is that there is genuine insight and great truth in each and every joke; I contend myself that there's more telling comment in one paragraph of Kettle humour of this kind than in whole wads of ATROPOS-type book reviews, or entire runs of QUICKSILVER. And it's also bloody funny. Fucking incredible.

Ballbuster of the issue, though, is an astonishing compilation of esoterica entitled 'BIGGLES ALIVE', a mark of genius devised around one of Malcolm Edward's most Archietypal puns ('Biggles and the Giant Algae from Outer Space' Ho ha hee!). This is cast in the same form as a Philip Jose Farmer 'true fiction' biography (TARZAN ALIVE etc), but written in a perfect pastiche of the Whillans-Searle demon schoolboy Molesworth's style, and including refernces to a million historic characters from the great days of British comics. The whole thing goes into a story sensible and cohesive to its interior logic and is only a fraction over half a page in length. Anyone who doesn't see this as an example of a rare creative talent is either gormless beyond repair or simply - as will probably be the case with young or foreign readers - not know enough of the influences or ideas used to appreciate it properly. This sounds awfully pretentious, but is true; taken as simple fanzine humour the piece is not exceptional, but if one understands what he is getting at it is immediately the work of a genius. I wouldn't be surprised if this completely passed over the heads of many trumpeting fans of today.

LRAK's parodistic skills fly again with a phony MANCON progress report, in which he captures Peter Presford's discomfort with the language, inane ambience, feeble and tasteless jokes, and inability to put across any genuine information perfectly. Mr Kettle, I am sure, does not want this to be taken to mean he has no faith in the MANCON 5 concom.

The rest - fanzine reviews, one-liners, letters, a few bits of Kettle talking in his 'real' mask - is merely above average. Superior fanwriting. Kettle improves almost weekly, and will one day truly get his shit together and cancel us all out.

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ZIMRI 8 from Lisa Conesa, 54 Manley Road, Whalley Range,  
Manchester M16 8HP

Once upon a time this used to be the posey fanzine, no question at all about it. It isn't quite so bad now, it doesn't have the same ambience of 'Gee, I wish I had lots of money and a printing press and a distribution contract and wouldn't it be nice to see ZIMRI on every newsstand between here and there'. Conesa even seems to have withdrawn intentions to go litho - though whether this is for financial or preferential reasons is unclear - and I must admit I do enjoy it better without that implicit division into 'good' and 'fannish' material that was present in the last couple of issues.

In fact, now mon, this whole fanzine is considerably more fannish oriented than ZIMRI has been since I last had a fanzine-review column in it; I'm sure this is due to the influence of one Brynley Fortey, a great old fan who was at one time deeply involved in the ZIMRI organization, and should have been billed and featured as co-editor of this issue. However, several bizarre things came to pass, to the undoubted satisfaction of some, and Bryn's role has been off-handedly explained away by Conesa, though his influence remains, and, I think, helps make this one of the most enjoyable fanzine I've seen

for some time.

The standard of material within is uniformly high. Leroy Kettle deserves more praise for a piece of mature and very funny writing about his somewhat disturbing relationship with cats; this piece, as it should be accessible to anyone with half a brain, is probably his best effort so far. Rob Holdstock contributes an odd assembly, including an interview with himself, some letters, and a piece of almost-true fact reportage. In the interview he deliberately reinforces the image of himself as boy-buffoon that he is determined should be uppermost in peoples' minds whenever they think of him. This is because when he's a famous writer he wants people to say 'Good grief, I knew him when he was just a cretin!'. Rob is fully aware his own real dull personality makes him especially unmemorable, and goes far, far out of his way to make a fool of himself. Actually, he's a fucking good writer and it shows here. I must admit I can't really understand why Conesa puts 'F--k' in this article where one might reasonably expect to read 'Fuck', but if she wants to compromise her editorial integrity that's her problem.

Of the rest of the material Jack Marsh's collation of eighteen fans choice of six books and a record to take to an uncharted asteroid is the sort of stuff that fascinates me; the book reviews, particularly Harry Turner's, and with the possible exception of Chris Morgan's, are damned good indeed; Harry Turner's own article is not merely well written but interesting; Ted Tubb provides an interesting insight into the way of work of an ageing and reactionary hack writer; and even some of the poetry, particularly Ritchie Smith's 'A Poem For Cath' is quite readable, and in the cited instance rather impressive. A lot of it has no apparent merit however.

The general production is good and clean, the art, particularly Conesa's which shows a hitherto unknown facility for humourous artwork, is very good to excellent. If only she could manage to clean up the typos a bit more, and lay out the lettercolumn (which is huge and excellent) in a more open manner this would be a fine looking fanzine indeed.

Really the only thing to compare to this in intent and style is MAYA, which is, if anything, although more slickly presented the more obviously fannish of the two. Regarding editorial prescence Conesa often seems to strive to write about the 'intellectual' in a somewhat out of place manner, whereas Jackson - rather a better writer anyway - almost invariably keeps his thoughts to SF or fannish oriented lines. MAYA does look better, benefiting from litho, but that's no big deal. The general standard of contributions is pretty equal, each one having a stable of good writers with no crossover between the two (almost as though they exist in separate fandoms).

Actually I find myself in the unenviable position, as a reviewer, of having little to say about this fanzine. Once one accepts it is not really either a SF or fandom oriented fanzine in the strict sense of the terms, merely a collection of what the editor concieves of as good material - and actually is, for once, good material, and then says yes, this is a damned good fanzine and a good substantial read, that's all there is to it. Myself, I think that on those terms ZIMRI 8 is quite an achievement.

FANZINES THAT WE HAVE RECIEVED - shortish comments

VIBRATOR 5 from Graham Charnock, 70 Ledbury Road, London W 11

A personalzine that packs more good writing and more interesting comment and opinion into six sides of quarto than is in many unreviewable fanzines that go on for a million times the length. Most fanzine writers can't grasp the quality of brevity at all, and as they generall lead pretty inconsequential lives their interminable writing on them is painful to behold. Graham not only does interesting things but writes about them well. If you don't get this fanzine you're doing yourself a terrible disservice. The fact that VIBRATOR 5 carries a glowing review of SBD 1 does not cause this equally glowing response; myself, I still think that Charnock was taking the piss in some subtle and not entirely evident manner.

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GLIMPSE 3 from Paul Hudson, 102 Valley Road, Rickmansworth, Herts.

An 'amateur fanzine' it says here. Actually, it seems like an odd mutant progeny of orthodox sf fandom and comix fandom, obviously produced (printed) along professional lines, and having a commercial viewpoint throughout. I'm trying to find someone who is familiar with this interface between 'our' fandom and the pro-oriented comix-types who can either write me an article about it or give me enough info and background to do so myself. It's a curious half-world unknown to most fans, I believe. Anyway, I rather liked this issue, most of the articles (on William Burroughs - very good -, Colin Wilson - OK -, book and film reviews - generally average fanzine standard (poor) -,) being worth reading, tho the fiction was overall astonishingly bad, redundant of originality, and very amateurishly written. Nicely presented fanzine though.

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ORION 2 from Paul Ryan, 29 Morritt Avenue, Halton, Leeds LS15 7EP

Despite being in booklet form and litho this is very much a personalzine, and remarkably Ryan preserves the atmosphere, so often lost away from dupered quarto. He writes reasonably well, seems dead keen, and I imagine that once he gets over a tendency to abbreviate his articles to almost pointless lengths he will become a good fanzine writer. His artwork, though, is flat, dimensionless, and uninspired. Get this one for the words.

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THE GRIMLING BOSCH 5 from Harry Bell, 9 Lincoln Street, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear NE8 4EE

Good personalzine with many references to recent fan-cons and much puff for the upcoming Silicon. A bit insubstantial, though does give a bit of background information of various Gannetfandom activities, which I'm sure all dead keen fans will just lap up.

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Greg Pickersgill

A L T E R N A T E T I T L E  
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aggregation

by

Simone Walsh

The last couple of 'One Tuns' have been very enjoyable, which makes a refreshing change from the dull uninteresting events they have been recently. Lately they've been crowded and almost as exciting as those I first attended when the novelty was still great.

Two months ago Peter Weston turned up. Now, Peter is a lovely person but, just think, if he was a Young Conservative at the tender age when most people are Communists you can imagine how reactionary he's become in recent years. This fact he demonstrated.

I was sitting at the bar drowning my worries. I really had some that night and had decided to make a determined effort to wash them away. Even so, through the blurr of alcohol a remark of Pete's managed to lodge itself on a ledge in my brain labelled 'To get annoyed about later, when sober.'. The knife he thrust during a short conversation about the coming Worldcon claimed two victims. Greg has already complained about his wound; but to refresh memories Greg was informed he was too unreliable for the Worldcon Committee by its chairman, Pete. My point was that a chairman of a committee ought to be able to control people in such a way that the more awkward members can be 'managed'; This way people with ideas, creative talents, even the prima donnas, can be used for the benefit of the project. The chairman should be able to extract what is needed from committee members and should not reject people because they may be 'unreliable', which is a euphemism for 'awkward', which is one for 'not docile'. A committee of polite people who are easy to manage and who won't stand up for things they consider right because they don't want to make waves will probably at best produce a smooth, unremarkable, easily run con, or at worst an unimaginative one.

On to my own wound. I said to Pete "What about me?" (for the committee). This isn't as silly a suggestion as it may sound. I've been involved with the organisation of two cons, I know about cons, I have experience of cons etc. My job as a secretary involves planning, organisation; my basic secretarial skills alone without injecting ideas would have been of use. But no, Peter said he didn't want women on the committee, they were too emotional and hysterical.

Was he joking? Was he? I don't think so. The fact I didn't smack him right between the eyes demonstrates how unhysterical I can be, I didn't cry at being rejected either. The sad part was that I was so tranquil thanks to Mr Smirnoff that I wasn't prepared to take the matter further at the time. But really, how can a man generalise about woman like that?

I can recall a number of instances where men on cons have lost all enthusiasm between cons for their responsibility, and

their wives/girlfriends have had to carry on with the task getting no mention or credit at the end. The well-run Novacons always have women on their committees who seem to survive the ordeal without having a nervous breakdown apiece.

To have such a narrow viewpoint suggests very limited vision - a characteristic not particularly desirable in a chairman I would have thought.

But then chauvinism is an aspect of the male that today's woman does not accept lying down! Unfortunately most men reveal their ignorance/insensitivity at this point and usually sigh when they hear liberationist talk these days, but because they've heard it all before doesn't mean that they've ever stopped to think about what it is all about, or even tried to understand why women get so irate at being dismissed so frequently, purely because they are women.

This dreadful lack of consideration shown by men is not about whether they should hold open doors for women, or walk on the outside of pavements (I couldn't care less about those things) neither is it about equal pay for equal work - the logic behind that is flawless. No, it is the insulting attitude that some men, no matter how meagre their intellect, have towards all women. They assume women are illogical, unintelligent, good for nothing but cooking and bringing up children (is that a new form of childbirth? One for you, Leroy).

The patronising attitude that less bright men have towards women is easy to understand. You only have to watch the demeaning anti-female propaganda on TV to appreciate it. In the 'Tom & Jerry' cartoon the housekeeper (not only female but also black - double dose of propaganda here) cannot tell the difference between Tom, after he's fallen into the coal cellar, and a black man. The female cats are portrayed as simpering fools who don't twitch a whisker when Tom is kicked out of the way mid-courtship and instantly superseded by another cat. I appreciate that cats may act this way, but cartoon cats are given human attributes. No, the female cat just represents some dumb female broad. Therefore, little boys grow up with the idea that little girls and big girls are both silly.

I would have thought that the average intelligent male would have shaken off all this early brainwashing, but not so. Women have to fight to assert their personalities and rights (rights that are so basic, like being considered capable and intelligent without having to prove it all the time). Yet women are trained from girlhood to act in a docile, weak manner. I can remember absorbing doses of feminine etiquette from women's magazine when I was in my early teens. I can almost remember the split-second when I decided perhaps I shouldn't run so fast and with such enthusiasm because the boys wouldn't like me if I ran faster than them. I found myself unable to open bottle tops etc and asking the nearest 'strong' man to do it for me, even when I probably could have managed with my little finger, of my left hand, and blindfolded, I shouldn't wonder.

I am left now with a deep regret that I was ever taken in by such brainwashing, but at least I realise just what pressures

were exerted upon me to conform to the role that has been allocated to women, and I am quite prepared to sacrifice the honour of running slowly, having bottle and doors opened for me, for the right to be considered equal on a human and intellectual level as any man.

I had hoped that the more aware man would have seen through the male/female role propoganda to which he had been exposed and would not feel the need to perpetrate the myth of female inequality, either for real or in jest.

Therefore, Peter Weston, reject me because you have no need for my contribution to the committee, and not because I am a woman.

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

I was talking to Chris Atkinson the other evening about writing for fanzines and the gist of what she said was that she was not keen on the idea because once you are in print you are a possible target for scorn and ridicule. I agree this is so, but in the event that people like what you write it makes the gamble worthwhile.

I shall now plunge into fannish deep water and **show a** poem of mine to the world (well, to 70 lucky SDB recipients), actually under my own name and not under cowardly 'anon' like the last time a poem of mine was published.

You will notice I say 'fannish deep water'; this is because I am perfectly aware that poetry in fanzines is generally despised by most people (particularly by the editor of SDB!). I shall ignore this prejudice and as Overseas Editor shall assert my will - my poem stays.

My poems are always about personal experiences, I could never wax lyrical over a daffodil or some philosophical shaft of brilliance, and I only write them when I get the desire to record a specific happening. I'm a frustrated artist/writer - it's easier to sketch in words.

The following poem needs some explanation; it was written about nine months ago and basically it contrasts the change in my lifestyle during the preceding year, from Provincial-married-settled to London-divorced-housesharing.

The first verse covers the period when there were two 'temporary' lodgers here as well as the 'permanent' four inhabitants, and the house was really overcrowded. We actually had a mouse living in the very small kitchen (that overcrowded, we were!). It was shot with an air-pistol in a primitive attempt at pesticide one day, but was only winged (whoever **heard** of a mouse with wings?) and many weeks later Greg caught a lame but otherwise fit mouse in the kitchen and dropped it out into the back yard. An act that really defeats the object of pest-control but demonstrates what a humane editor we have.

Anyway, read on.....(please).

A P O E M

Exhaust filled air, no time for tea,  
Rush-hour rush, exhaust filled me.  
Blue paint walls, crowded house,  
Smallest of kitchens, home to a mouse.  
Laundromat, supermat, pie-in-a-tin,  
Monthly One Tuns - the innest of Inns.  
I feel like an Indian, I want a pizza,  
I don't care as long as we eatzer!  
Rock music, folk music, blues music - loud,  
Four's enough, six is a crowd.

But what about Cleo Laine, live on stage,  
Or being a pseud about wine,  
Or games of tennis after work,  
Or watering the vine?  
When did I last make a cheesecake,  
Or buy a Maxine lardy,  
Or hear a play on Radio Four,  
Or read some Thomas Hardy?

Gone the rainbow trout,  
He'd sooner-tuna.

\* \* \* \* \*  
\* \* \* \* \*

Only a few more days to the Con now, this one should be a bit different because never before have I been so involved with the fanzine world. At last I'm a true-fan, well according to Greg you arn't really a fan if you are not involved in fanzines. We have had hundreds of arguements on that one. Anyway, see you from Thursday on.....

\*  
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Simone Walsh.



A L L R I G H T N O W

letter column

(((( ))) - Simone Walsh

(( ( ))) - Greg Pickersgill

: : : : :

: : : : :

: : : :

JIM LINWOOD,  
125 Twickenham Road,\*  
Isleworth, Middx.. \*  
\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*  
I am envious of you having your own zine  
and therefore free of editorial restraints;  
something you don't abuse in your fanzine  
reviews which were truly fucking superb.  
They forever buried your reputation for being a snide, cynical fanzine  
basher; they are mellow and mature but still with the abrasive brash-  
ness of FOULER reviews. I'm not too proud of my own reviews in K 1; the  
original conception was a column about fanzines with references to  
specific ishs. Dave, however, cut out about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the material and  
reduced what was left to individual reviews. So in K2 Dave got the  
usual standard review layout, and with Bernie Peek saying he only wanted  
negative criticism I'm surprised the WRINKLED SHREW and EGG reviews saw  
print. You misinterpreted the 'snideries' in K 1; the Lothair Road  
bogeymen remarks were aimed at fans who are in the habit of making  
generalised remarks like "----- is a typical Ratzine", "----- is  
the latest recruit to Ratfandom", or "an attempt at Rat style humour"  
with the implications that there are numerous strings emanating from  
Lothair Road with twitching fans on the end of them. Charnox, Kettle,  
and yourselves all have distinctive styles and opinions that make  
collective grouping facile.

You seem to have joined the Dave Rowe Fan Club - the biggest  
surprise since the Nazi-Soviet Pact - I hate to think of the effect  
this will have on his not inconsiderable ego.

Nice to see Simone writing at length; a good article with  
the beginnings of a good editorial at the end. I agree that plastic  
con hotels with their plastic staff, plastic food, and attraction for  
plastic 'fen' have taken all the fun out of conventions that were  
once spent in grotty hotels. I remember my first con at the Birmingham  
Imperial before it was refurbished, with its seedy between-the-wars  
atmosphere like something out of Graham Greene; a punitive fannish  
expedition discovered that the top two floors were entirely deserted  
except for the debris of about 50 years of Brum's commercial life.  
When the Kitten Mhob blazed up to Lytham last year to put the fright-  
eners on Gray Boak we stayed in a hotel that seemed like a Gothic  
brothel erected on the Hammer back-lot (needless to say Dave Rowe  
chose it) called The Select Hotel For Commercial Gentlemen or something.

At the end of one of its labyrinthine corridors we discovered a romper-room equipped with rocking-horses, toys and dolls - either the property of an over-indulged child or a fetishist's paradise. Dave made a narg of himself as usual by waltzing around with a full-size teddy-bear until the manageress turned up and turfed us out. They even had stacks of porn mags in the rooms instead of Gideon's Bibles for their 'clients'. When we told Gray we were staying there he said knowingly "Oh ys, I've heard of that place."

Pete's piece was excellent as usual, and enlightening as to what was happening in the fannish doldrum years of the late '60s. When I returned to the Smoke in '67 after two years in Nottingham I found that the once thriving fannish scene had collapsed; no more Friday nights at Ella Parker's penthouse because Plattie had taken to smashing up the furniture, no SF Club of London because of internecine fueding, and regular Globe attendances of about 20 - mostly Moorcock's groupies. Gra Charnock and Robert Holdstock are two writers who usually jar my nerves with their '60s trendiness and narcissism, however Gra has risen several notches in my estimation with his sexual honesty - few males would have the guts to admit theyr were virgo-intacta at the age of 21 - and crisp style in a regrettably short article. Robert Holdstock remains a fart.

I hope SBD makes a second issue and thus becomes eligible for the Nova, becoming part of the power-struggles, wheeler-dealing, and secret heartbreak that lie behind fandom's most coveted award. Last year's strange Novaward result (Yes W.S. should have got it on single issue merit) gives me a foreboding that this year's presentation could be like the final scene in Ellison's script for 'The Oscar' ;

Dave Kyle "Well ah, this year for once the judges reached their decision within minutes, agreeing unanimously that the award for the year's most intelligent, literate, and consistently brilliant fanzine should go to Peter..."

(Peter Roberts rises slowly to his feet, smiling shyly as he is patted on the back by his friends. He begins to walk nervously towards the rostrum.)

"...Presford." .

\*\*\*\*\*

CHRIS PRIEST, \* Your fanzine reviews are just about the  
1 Ortygia House, \* best thing of yours I've ever read. If it's  
6 Lower Road, \* any guide, my idea of good reviewing  
Harrow, Middx HA2 ODA \* (whatever it is that's under review) is that  
\* \* \* \* \* the review itself should be capable of being  
read and enjoyed independently of the reviewed item. Which is why I  
can't understand most fanzine reviews.....being a snooty pro I don't  
seem to recieve as many fanzine as everybody else (self-pitying whine)  
and because the standard of reviewing is, in general, low, I can't  
follow long grey pages where the reviewer says something like "Of  
course, I agree with Terry, but he's wrong-headed about this!!!" Your  
reviews are superior because you state general principles, and you

state your own position, and you describe in sufficient detail for the reader to see both processes at work, and at the same time form their own opinions about your opinions. And that, as I say, is for me the test which you pass.

\*\*\*\*\*

GEOFF RIPPINGTON, \* I cannot say I was pleased to recieve SBD  
15 Queens Avenue, \* because after reading the review on TITAN it  
Canterbury, \* has to a certain extent left a sour taste in  
Kent CT2 8 AY \* my mouth.

\* \* \* \* \*

On Keiths story there is a difference of views in everybody that writes in. It's a matter of personal taste. The fiction will always change so lets leave that.

Poetry; Bad? The poetry by Brian Ridsdale was borrowed with his consent from the book "THE BEST POETRY OF 1974". thus no comment!

Yes agree ((( with my criticism of an article on 'ecoliving in TITAN 2, I assume.))) but the idea was not to give information it was rather to find out people's views on the subject. The Sunday papers give the information I'M trying to find there reaction. Please don't misquote me; I said that 'If you keep sheep, goats, or rabbits you have your material yo hand'. I never said 'that it was solved'. Even you notice that, that's stupid!

Fanzine reviews! WHAT FANZINE REVIEWS? I made a comment in the editorial to point out they were not reviews, anyway my comments on EGLADIL were not particularly nice, although they are if compared with your reviews (no there not reviews) with your aborticide.

Van Vogt. At last I agree. I won't be doing this sort of article again, though some people found it interesting.

I hope you like the next issue as much as this one. I will enjoy up-setting you. YOU HAVE DONE ONE THING WITH THIS REVIEW YOU HAVE HELPED ME DECIDE IF TITAN WAS GOING TO BE A FANISH FANZINE OR A S/F ORIENTED FANZINE. THE LATTER HAS BEEN DECIDED.

(((Look, I don't wanna disillusion you, but the only BEST POETRY anthology I know of is published by an outfit called .agency Press; a 'vanity press' which for a fee prints the otherwise unpublishable poems of sensitive narcissists. I'll be amazed if this isn't the volume in question, considering the quality of Ridsdale's poems. If you want reaction you'll have to present a carrot a lot less facile and superficial than you have done. At no point did I imply a SF oriented fanzine was a bad thing; what I said was what you weren't doing it at all well. In fact I'd welcome a good SF fanzine right now. See more remarks on this in BURNING HELL this issue. But whatever you do you're going to have to put more thought and effort into it than you did with TITAN 2 I'm honestly not being vicious; you'll soon find that the more effort you put in the better the .)))

ALAN BARRIE STEWART,  
7 Surrey Lane,  
London SW11 3PA

\* \* \* \* \*

\* Thanks for the namecheck, baby. I'll  
\* see if I can do the same for you in  
\* the next ish of NEW ELITE. The trouble  
\* is we Huge Name Fans are always so busy

giving lectures on 'Fannish Jargon' at  
the local Poly or helping someone to found a local group in Addis  
Ababa that we bhardly have a spare moment free to loc the first issue  
of a new fanzine. But right now I've got half an hour between  
negotiating the film rights for the S.F. YEARBOOK and discussing the  
content of the first issue of TTCCH MONTHLY with NEL, so I can fit  
you in.

Now to the real nitty-gritty (as Shirly Ellis used to  
say, or is that the title of an article in your second issue?).  
Why does anyone put out a fanzine? Well, I can tell you why I do it,  
and that is because it gives me a chance to satisfy what creative  
urge I have, whilst at the same time making myself 'famous' within a  
small hobby group.

But I think you're getting at something else here. It has  
partly to do with the kind of fanzine someone wants to edit, and  
partly to dowith the reluctance of most fanzine editors to stop  
editing. I, for instance, want to edit what for want of a better  
description I'll call a 'science fiction fanzine', ie a fanzine  
containing and about SF. Some editors prefer to include only material  
that is not about SF, some exclude fiction, poetry, or whatever.

But all of their fanzines are equally valid - to the  
editor. They will not be equally good to the reader, but it depends  
to a certain extent on what the fanzine reader's preferences are,  
which zine he reads first. I recieved RITBLAT 3 at the same time as a  
certain Sunday Supplement I recently wrote a strong letter to.  
Guess which I read first? The Sunday Supplement is predictably full  
of letters of praise, because it's now had time to attract the kind  
of readers who like that sort of glossy fandom. Fine - for them.

((The sender of the most intelligible explanation  
of what the preceding paragraph actually means will  
recieve a mint copy of FOULER 1 - a rare prize indeed.)))

Back to my second point, which is that once started on  
this 'primrose path' it's very difficult indeed to avoid the ever-  
lasting duplicator not to mention Instant Print Shop. Unfortunately  
this usually means a drop in quality if the editor does all the  
writing himself, witness for example INFERNO or KNOCKERS FROM NEPTUNE,  
whose editors should have stuck to multiple-contributor fanzines.  
Once it's in the blood and all that crap. Look how Peter Weston  
steadfastly refuses to admit SPECULATION is dead, although he hasn't  
published for three years now. I suppose he's able to point to TRIODE  
now. Actually I've considered reviving FRANKFURT AMATEUR MAGAZINE  
REVIEW, now also resting for three years, under the name LONDON  
INTERNATIONAL AMATEUR REVIEW, whose initials make a pleasing acronym.

I must have been out when Peter Weston rang to ask if I  
would do my duty for Scotland and be the Scots Representative on the  
Worldcon Committee along with Roy. Maybe he's run out of twopenny  
pieces.

That's the problem with Huge Name Fandom, everybody thinks you're already so swamped with projects you can't take on another one. And I haven't seen any of those new fanzine you reviewed, although I suspect you got them from Peter Roberts yourself. Ah well, I shall just have to press on with the INTERGALACTIC YEARBOOK and NEW ELITE 4.

\*\*\*\*\*

JOHN PIGGOTT,  
8 Hillcroft Crescent,  
London W5  
\* \* \* \* \*

I think you've bent over backwards to be lenient to the incredible Geoff Rippington. Your arguments concerning his inexperience in fandom would explain away his first issue quite well; but his second?? Since TITAN 1 appeared he must have recieved quite a few zines in trade, including such things as MAYA, SHREW, GOBLINS GROTTTO, etc.

I wonder whether there may perhaps be an actual demand for this sort of zine, containging earnest book reviews and checklists, and pretentionously unreadable fan-fiction? Maybe this is the sort of thing SF MONTHLY readers expect and want from fandom. If true this would explain a number of things; and bring also the unwelcome implication that (considerations of quality and interest to me personally aside) Geoff Rippington may in fact be more relevant to present day fandom than Greg Pickersgill. I've no way of knowing whether this is true or not - I've been rather out of touch with fandom, as I suspect you may be - but it's a point worth pondering, I think. Fandom has changed its nature more than once before.

The motives which impel people to produce fanzines are many and various. In my own case it was a combination of my desire for mail and a need to keep abreast of the latest developments in fandom (including receipt of each zine as it appeared) that led to my all too brief publishing career. Surely the same applies to you. (I say that you seem a bit out of touch partly because of the determinedly nostalgic theme of the issue and because of the nostalgia permeates the fanzine reviews more than it ought. You know, and I know, about Dave Womack's crudzine; but will the name mean anything to the average reader in 1976? No, it won't.)

((But, Piggy, when I entered fandom I didn't know what Courteney's Boat was, never bloody mind who sawed it! I still don't, actually, but that's neither here nor there. What I mean is we gotta add to the annals of fannish legendry as we go along, and little Dave is as good an addition to it as any in recent years.)))

The average zine editor, I maintain, has similar motives to those I mentioned above. Only later in a faned's career will there be thoughtfilled consideration of what to print (the natural impulse of the neofan is to print everything he is sent, if only because it is so bloody difficult getting anything at all!) and whether what is said is worth saying. You have reached this stage, in fact you reached it in your second fanzine, and SBD is your ninth major production. Some faneds never reach it, perhaps because it's just too easy to capitalise on the momentum engendered by previous issues in the form of a steady supply of zines in trade and a guaranteed (well, virtually guaranteed)

proportion of locs returned compared with copies sent out. If the formula works, why change it?

\*\*\*\*\*

D. WEST, \* Your contributors have good memories if  
48 Norman Street, \* they can remember what they were doing as  
Bingley, \* far back as 1967. The other day I had the  
West Yorks BD16 4JT \* unnerving experience of waking up with two  
\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* completely different sets of memories. Both  
were the same until I was about ten years old and then they branched  
into alternate universes. Neither was particularly attractive. The one  
approximated to the reality I found when I raised the courage to get  
out of bed. In the other I had become a civil servant and been given  
a large stamp in purple ink on the upper thigh : HM GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL  
SECRETS ACT NOT TO BE EMPLOYED UNDER 9st 7lbs. Starve you half to death  
and then they don't want to know, the bastards. All day I kept going  
to the bathroom and weighing myself, then taking my trousers down and  
examining my upper thighs. Very worrying. So I don't rely on my  
memory. But back in 1967 or thereabouts I think I'd got myself married  
and was thinking about producing a fanzine. I'm still thinking about it.

That question you raise - why do they ever do it? - needs  
some considering. Particularly since I really am about to do it. Once  
a few small technical details have been sorted out the West fanzine will  
make its long-delayed appearance. Ten years in the making. Cast of one.  
Thousands of feet of stencil. Great Art. You have never seen such  
culture. And so on and so on and so on.

But why, why? Particularly since I know that it will be only  
marginally less tatty in appearance than the worst of the crudzines  
you review.

Well, the original impulse doubtless started with a fit of  
pique at something or other. I've forgotten. But like Charnock most of  
my more active moments rise from such discreditable emotions as envy  
or jealousy. So and so has to be shown what's what, the useless pillock.  
And those other sods have to be sorted out, the great smug-faced ponces.  
The effects vary at different times and with different people. Sometimes  
I just sneer politely, other occasions I go berserk. When Graham Hall  
told me I'd never do a thing until I was at least forty I was so livid  
I wrote a whole book. The effect had worn off last time I saw him;  
there was only a feeble twitch that produced one short story. Someone,  
somewhere, is responsible for the itch under the skin that made me  
want to produce a fanzine. You are all guilty.

But really, I've gone beyond all that now. I have been  
purged of all merely human base emotion. I am possessed by a purer  
scientific impulse; the determination to have mastery over an inani-  
mate object - my godfuckingawful homemade duplicator. All this crap  
I've written is just an excuse; you have to have material of some  
sort to print, but the prime objective is to make this machine of  
mine do what I tell it.

A rotary duplicator, mind you. Not any of your cheap

flatbed shit. All you need is a one-gallon paint tin, four furniture springs, a mangle roller, two wardrobe fittings for hanging clothes rails on, a couple of plates for joining bunk-beds together, a mincing machine handle, some felt, a rubber bath mat, half a clothes horse (for the wood), various screws, nails, nuts, and bolts, some sellotape, two pushchair wheels, a pram axle, some draught excluder, and half a baked bean tin. (((Wot, no Swarfega??))) The design is original.

It works. It works I tell you. There are just these few small problems like the way it tears stencils in half after about ten copies. But I'll have it sorted out in no time at all.

You people who go out and buy these readymade duplicators make me sick. No enterprise. No initiative. You should be ashamed of yourselves, the lot of you.

I am going to show you how it really should be done.

\*\*\*\*\*

JOSEPH NICHOLAS, \*  
2 Wilmot Way, \* Charnock's article really touched off some  
Camberley, \* sympathetic chords in me. Not because I went  
Surrey GU15 1JA \* through what he was going through at the  
\* time, of course, but because I remember so  
\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* much of 1967 myself; it was My Big Year. The  
year I turned onto the world and began to groove (and there's some  
archaic jargon to prove it).

As I remember, back in the days when it was always summer and the days were ones of golden dreaming lasitude, 1967 was the year in which I discovered two things - Rock Music and SF. (I capitalise Rock Music to a. emphasize the effect it had on me, and b. distinguish it from the MOR slop being churned out on the old Light Programme at the time that I erroneously thought was true pop music - whatever true pop music is. I vividly remember the very first time I ever heard Jefferson Airplane's 'White Rabbit' and the tremendous impact it had on me - the very fact that here was a song that wasn't about love or somesuch dumb crap, and was packaged around one of the most amazing voices I'd ever heard up until that point - Grace Slick (and fo my money her voice is still amazing). Looking back on the song now it's evident it was the seminal breakthrough in what was later to become known as Acid Rock, the sound that was to replace groups like the Mamas and Papas and Beach Boys from their positions of dominance, and bring in groups like the underrated Moby Grape and the legendary Grateful Dead. But none of us knew that at the time; it was just a totally different song with a totally different meaning - the hymn to glory for the hippy culture and the new Mecca of Haight-Ashbury.

I grooved to the West Coast sounds as never before (and never again since, since the importance of the area died as the hippy culture died); and suddenly my universe seemed to be taken up with the Airplane, Quicksilver Messenger Service (now back together again, can you believe it? Nothing like the original, of course, but then

you can't have everything...)and anything else that I could get my cars within listening distance of. My future seemed to have arrived; I wanted to be a rock guitarist. Jimi Hendrix would have nothing on me.

Needless to say I never took up the guitar; money was, for me, still at school, pretty tight in those days, and I could never persuade my parents to cough up enough money to get me even the cheapest box. By the time I had the money, the mood had long gone; I finally bought a guitar in 1972 but still haven't learned to play it properly. There it sits, almost untouched except for the times when the need to do something noisy with my hands is upon me.

And I discovered SF - the likes of Asimov and Clarke and Wyndham, and later Blish and White and God knows who else in my local library - except that in those days there was no such division as SF in libraries (or not in mine at any rate) and you had to go hunting through the rest of mundania to find it - a process guaranteed to put off any but the most confirmed fan. I guess I must have been persistent. So off I charged, out into the galaxy, along with the Brain-Cell Powered Biplane, fighting off the Martians along the way.

In one way or another the World Out There finally impinged on my conscience in 1967; young as I was I became contrary in the accepted adolescent way - answering back parents. I was at the Middle Earth when Fairport Convention did the live recording that was later to metamorphoze into 'Si Tu Dois Partir'; and I became hooked on Sandy Denny as well. I remember the raving that went on when 'Sergeant Pepper' was released; it seemed there wasn't a person at school who didn't but love it.

And I remember more, much more, but it would be pointless to continue; the reminiscences that I would enumerate are mine, and mine alone; no-one else can share them because they hold value for me alone. I remember the time with such sweet clarity - the mini-skirts and flower-power and the long, long summer. Would that one would return; but then that which you remember best in the Hereand Now would be exposed for the cheap and nasty thing it was, not for the gorgeous has-been that your mind gives it. A pity, a great pity, but there you are. Time is truly the traitor.....

I get the vague feeling, from the tail end of Simone's article, that you lot, stuck out there in your super hotel, won't be so much removed from 'the vortex of cosmic happenings' as creating a few of your own, one towards which any BNF worth his salt will instinctively gravitate. All of Ratfandom, it seems, will be in this hotel; one wonders if you won't hold your own room-parties in it and thus restrict the attendance to those you know personally. But then I guess I'm just acting slightly paranoid as a newie who wants to meet old-timers and who finds they've taken themselves off somewhere and made themselves inaccessible.

(((Rest assured that there are no plans afoot for room-parties at our hotel. Because we won't have a base at Owens Park we will be trying to get into other



fans' room-parties there every night. Any invitations will be gratefully accepted. We certainly expect to spend all our non-sleeping/eating time at the convention ))))

\*\*\*\*\*

IAN WILLIAMS,  
6 Greta Terrace,  
Cester Road,  
Sunderland SR4 7RD  
Tyne & Wear.

\* On a point raised by Simone, about the  
\* Rats not staying on the campus. I think this  
\* is a very negative thing indeed, even if you  
\* are dubious about the competence of the Man-  
\* con committee. (And, I admit, the signs are  
\* not too good. Their Progress Reports have  
\* been atrocious, and from what I gathered at Boakcon no committee member  
\* seems to know what any other is doing, especially with regard to  
\* Partington and Nadler). But MaD Group is organising the Eastercon and  
\* so I think any fan that cares has a duty to back them, support them,  
\* and help the convention as much as possible. To arrange an alternative  
\* hotel and thereby remove yourselves will only detract from the con.  
\* This is a very unworthy thing to do. I'm not fond of the campus idea,  
\* but they are organising the con and I intend to support and help them  
\* as much as possible.

I think you and the others are doing a great disservice.

(((How can you be so dense? Didn't you read my article? If you had you'd know I didn't express any lack of faith in the Manconcom, and the fact that I'm attending the con demonstrates my support for it. My article clearly stated why I don't want to stay at Owens Park, which is because of my desire for a private bathroom, choice of eating arrangements etc. The only time I shall be 'removed' from O.P. is when I'm in bed, bathing, eating, or changing. If you're going to miss my company at those times there's no answer is there?)))

(((Brain not working again Williams? As you so completely missed the point of Simone's article I'm not surprised that you fail to appreciate that what those who are prepared to pay for something a bit more lavish than the O.P. accommodation are doing is nothing more than electing to stay in an overflow hotel. Something that a lot of con-attendees sometimes have to do whether they like it or not. You could, I suppose, cast your mind back to the 1972 Chester Con (a Manchester Group triumph of yesteryear) which was an occasion when a very large proportion of the attendees bloody had to stay at far-flung 'overflows' not of their choice. It did no damage to the convention at all, only to those who had to walk miles in the rain sorting out concom incompetence in the field of double-booking etc. As I recall those seemingly incommunicado gentlemen Nadler and Partington loomed large in that convention also. Though, Ian, I don't expect you would remember that, as you were one of the twenty or thirty fans who were actually booked into the convention hotel proper.)))

PETER PRESFORD,  
10 Dalkeith Road,  
Reddish, Stockport.  
(Address to be changed  
after Easter '76)  
(((!!!!)))  
\* \* \* \* \*

I enjoyed Simone's article, but there is no need for her to apologise about not staying at Owens Park.

I have had letters from fans asking for info on the conv; they have also said I must be annoyed because some folk are not staying at O.P.

Why should I be?

O.P. is only the reverse of a Hotel Conv. A lot of folk stayed away from the De Vere in Coventry because they could not afford it (including me), so if fans can afford to stay away from O.P. good luck to them.

(((What a perceptive Presdorf! You have revealed me in all my guilt! I suppose I do feel I have to justify and apologise for not staying at O.P. I feel deep down that I should be roughing it there instead of pampering myself. But I'm glad to see that the Concom doesn't feel undermined by people choosing to make their own accomodation arrangements.))))

(((All I'm sayin' is that I'll be pleased when it is all over; at last the 'Great Experiment' that some people (mostly notorious pennypinchers) have been harping on for many years will have been tried. Myself, I have little faith in the Campus idea; from what little I've seen of University surroundings I reckon Owens Park will turn out stark, temporary, and nowhere near as pleasant as a hotel. Still, it's the spirit of a con that makes it memorable; it is not beyond belief to think that a superb con could take place in an abandoned Civil Service office-block.)))

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MALCOLM EDWARDS,  
19 Ranmoor Gardens,  
Harrow, Middx. HA1 1UQ.  
\* \* \* \* \*

Nice little fanzine. Enjoyed it.  
Good for a firstish.

No, but seriously, the problem with nostalgia articles, which are the body of SBD, is that it's hard to respond to them, except with another nostalgia article. All three of them are good, in their different ways, but it's hard to say more than that. Of course, everyone could respond to Graham's by letting on at what age they discovered masturbation, but that doesn't, somehow, seem relevent. I must say that I laughed like a drain at Rob's piece, and am looking forward to the second installment of autobiography that you promise for SBD 2.

(((Christ what's wrong with more nostalgia? Especially about masturbation. Why, I remember how I became a great hero in the Haverfordwest Grammar School in '67 or thereabouts by being the first person in a notoriously pretentious and posturing sixth-form

to admit that not only did I masturbate, but actually enjoyed it, and what's more did it because I found it damn near impossible to get into close bodily contact with what were in fact entirely mythological randy schoolgirls. This was major shit indeed in the provinces at a time when popular supposition was that the entire population over the age of puberty were fucking like jackrabbits. The open-mouthed adulation I recieved for this (fairly) casual admission went a long way to making me the outspoken bigmouth and self-interested shit I am today.

Anyway, You Lot Out There, let's hear more of what you were doing before you knew better. Come on Mal, tell us about yer Magic Pudding. (Sorry, old jokes always the best, ask any Leroy Kettle.))

Also enjoyed the fanzine reviews, which were more mellow by some distance than those I remember from FOULER and RITBLAT. At times I used to think you were a bit unkind to rotten fanzines than was necessary; now, if anything, you lean a little bit the other way. Not (obviously) that that will prevent the Geoff Rippingtons of the world from taking immense umbrage.

Which leaves me arguing with Simone, something I'm reluctant to do, being frightened of her. Surely I can't be the only person in the world who likes modern hotels? I really thought the De Vere was a smashing place, and I don't think that's because of any bias on my part. The Royal Angus wasn't quite in the same class but I thought it was OK nonetheless, apart from the lack of a staircase, which made me feel insecure; I don't much like lifts and would far rather take the stairs. The main problems were not really anything to do with it being a new hotel; the management needn't have tried to freeze us out, and they should have left the lounge properly set out as a lounge (the way it was rearranged on the Monday morning) and served drinks from the circular bar. I've only been to two conventions - that Novacon and the Ompacon '73 - which mainly relied on makeshift 'convention' bars and in neither case did it work. (In the interests of accuracy, let me point out here that Christine did not obtain her Pernod by fluttering her eyelashes at the barman; she got it by losing her temper and storming off in a rage.)

Modern hotels may be more standardised, but I, for one, find them more comfortable to stay in. I agree, the Royal Station in Newcastle had several fine features - like the huge staircase - and was a generally good con hotel. But our room was dingily furnished, looked out directly onto a brick wall, and had a very uncomfortable bed. Both the De Vere and the Royal Angus (and, going back to '71, the Giffard at Worcester) were streets ahead of it in that respect.

(((As you can see, Malcolm, Greg's reviews did provoke the Geoff Rippington of the world into taking umbrage.

I grudgingly admit that modern hotel beds are super-comfortable and the rooms are usually better than those in old hotels, and I have to admit also that

you are not alone in liking modern hotels. Joseph Nicholas said he does as well. 3% of our readers like modern hotels, if that's any comfort to you. At the last One Tun I put my complaints about the Royal Angus to Rog Peyton. He agreed that the breakfast should not have been just toast, and said the committee had arranged with the management for a full continental breakfast to be provided. He also agreed to take up the possibility with the management of keeping the circular bar open so that Christine won't have to rage (sorry, not flutter) for her Pernod, and the rest of us can get a decent selection of drinks and better service as well. The heating complaints had been taken up previously at the con when many people complained. Couldn't I settle for a combination of the bedrooms and bathrooms of modern hotels and the socialising areas and bars of the old ones?))))

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PETER WESTON,  
72 Beeches Drive,  
Erdington,  
Birmingham B24 ODT

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Simone's piece wasn't too bad, for a woman, although I realise the best bits were probably due to your rewriting. But I'm very pleased at last to see someone saying something I have been mumbling about for the

last six months, namely, what a Godawful place was the Royal Angus. It's a waste of time saying that to the other Brum fans like Roger and Stan Eling who think it was Really Great, but that hotel completely spoilt Novacon for me and made it a completely flat weekend. I was the idiot who stood up at the business meeting on the Sunday morning when the committee was whittering about the choice of hotel for '76 and said "What about going back to the Imperial?"

All right, the Imperial was pretty dire last time we used it, but that was right at the end of the tenure of the Centre Group, who admitted to using the Imperial as the dumping ground for all their problem staff and management. Not it is under private ownership again and I really think someone could negotiate a good deal. The biggest problem was the filthy eating arrangements; remember the superbly mad 'Buffet' when Jack Cohen collapsed in a tangle of up-turned table, broken plates, and greasy chicken bones? That could be put right and the Imperial was in many ways ideal for a slightly scruffy con; lots of corridors, stairs and odd nooks and crannies. Although the smell of decorator's paint was known to put off a certain ~~lady~~ lady one year. (((Can't think of who you mean.)))

Trouble is, with the opening of the National Exhibition Centre we have lost much of our bargaining position in the Brum area. With all these thousands of foreigners pouring in, they are block-booking hotels up to thirty miles radius out. Gone are the days when managements were desperate for trade over a quiet November weekend.

MIKE GLICKSOHN,  
141 High Park Avenue,  
Toronto, Ontario, M6P 2S3,  
Canada.

\* \* \* \* \*

The outside contributions to this issue are uniformly excellent. And hard to say much about. How can you react to a piece like Graham's except by telling where you were in 1967? And even if I could remember as much as Graham does, which is a patent impossibility considering the rate at which I've systematically been destroying braincells over the last five years, no-one would be the slightest bit interested. My 1967 was about on a par with the nightlife of a lighthouse keeper. I was still a year away from losing my virginity, living at home, doing nothing more creative than finding new objects to masturbate with; at least in that regard I was ahead of Graham, but compared to the rest of his experiences it was dull. If he plans on doing a year by year retrospective, though, keep me on the mailing list. My 1973 was a zinger!

Like personal history, fan-history is best responded to by that old 'That reminds me of...' technique which I'm sure you're not interested in hearing. (((Even you, Michael, a wise man like you, you have the aggravating habit of thinking you know what I'm thinking. Only one person knows what I'm really thinking, and he's not letting on most of the time.))) Perhaps the most interesting aspect of Peter's column for me was that it started me wondering what in hell's name has happened to my old copies of MOR-FARCH. Because I knew Labonte well back then, and he was Peter's agent, MF may well have been the first overseas fanzine I ever saw, and was undoubtedly the first I ever had communication with. Perhaps somewhere among the dozen big boxes of old fanzines I haven't unpacked since I moved here two and a half years ago there are mouldering copies of old Peter Roberts fanzines in which I call Bryn Fortey a fugghead. Then again, maybe I lost them along with many other items of fannish memorabilia when I moved around a lot at the end of the Sixties. Goshwowoboyoboy; the First Contact with British Fandom! It's enough to make even an Old and Tired fan wax nostalgic. Then thoughts of the things we wrote in those very much less than halcyon days dash across the mind like drops of icy water and brutal reality reasserts itself. I'm not sure I'd want to see a 1968 fanzine with anything I wrote in it. I suspect that's one reason why those boxes are still gathering dust.

Other than the fact I find it difficult to admire anyone who brags of cheating, the Holdstock article is an entertaining reminiscence once again somewhat removed from my own sphere of memories. I got to dissect a fish in Grade 10 Biology but that's about the end of it. When I was in graduate school a pre-med student told me of the time when they got to make their first incisions in a human corpse, and was amazingly graphic in describing how the first cut released certain constricting muscles so that the corpse shit all over the table, with people fainting right and left.

Greg to the contrary, Simone's column is a damn well crafted piece, one of the better-written sections in the fanzine. I especially enjoyed the last page, even though it reinforced my opinion that it's practically impossible for two people to produce a fanzine together when they're in close personal contact. There are so few North American cons held at older, more comfortable hotels that I've few personal

experiences that relate to the points Simone makes in the first part of her article. There have been cons here in older hotels, but invariably the sheer size of the con has swamped the facilities and resulted in bad publicity for the con hotel. Or the nature of an sf con has been so opposed to the basic attitude of the older, more conservative hotel that there have been many hassles with the management, and the next year the con is at a shiny new plastic chain hotel. One of the few exceptions was TORCON; that was the first con I've ever been to where the hotel got a standing ovation from 2000 people at the banquet. I agree with Simone's points, but regrettably size now works against us. There have only been one or two cons I can think of here with a dorm arrangement, so I'll be very interested to see the reports that come out of MANCON. On cost alone it ought to be the wave of the future, but I expect the restrictions will prove too inhibiting to the nature of a con.

I suspect I'm more tolerant of mediocrity than Greg where fanzines are concerned, not because I think one should 'inefficiency, illiteracy, and lack of inspiration' but because I go along at least partially with whatever English faned recently suggested that the mere act of attempting to be creative is worthy of some commendation. Unlike that particular editor I don't agree that the attempt alone should mitigate against criticism, but I'm willing to accept a certain amount of inexperience and incompetence in a beginner. There does come a point, though, after which mediocrity is no longer acceptable. I get many crudzines, and while I try to point out areas that could be improved I'll also commend things that have been done tolerably well, considering the nature of the faned. I don't think I'm hypocritical in doing so; I wouldn't let Peter Roberts or Greg Pickersgill get away with shoddy work because they know better and are capable of better.

I suspect, too, that Greg has forgotten that most crudzine editors don't know they are crudzine editors, hence they can take inordinate pride in something someone else thinks rather little of. When I look back at the first four issues of ENERGUMEN (which were nominated for a Hugo, for what that's worth) I'm painfully embarrassed by their ineptness. Yet when I published them I know I thought they were the best thing since the invention of the printing press, and a lot of other people thought they were pretty good too. We learn as we grow older, but it helps to remember what it was like to be uneducated.

Part of Greg's problem with the fanzines he receives is tied to the fact that even in fandom the percentage of really talented people is small, too small by a factor of at least ten to fill all the fanzines that are published. So irrevocably many fanzines are not going to be brilliant, regardless of how many good fanzines are around to show them what they should be striving for. You could take me around art galleries for weeks showing me the most brilliant paintings ever produced but if I sat down at an easel I'd produce worthless junk. Luckily most fanzines aren't that bad, but it's equally true that most of them will never reach the level of a MOTA or EGG, or TRUE RAT. ((or a.....or a.....ahhh, fuck it!))) The contributors simply lack the necessary ability to achieve at that level. That, I think, is part of the human condition and something that we have to accept in fannish

circles.

Why do I publish my own fanzine when I can clearly tell there are a hundred writers in fandom who can write rings around me drunk and blindfolded? Because I don't think what I do is really junk, even though it isn't gold either. Because I like the satisfaction that comes from creating a coherent entity out of a motley collection of articles, drawings, and snippets of trivial information. Because I enjoy having the opportunity to present the work of people who are fine writers in a manner that is attractive and enjoyable. Because even though I may not do it as well as some others I am communicating, as well as I can. And because it's more fun than standing beneath elephants catching turds to keep the streets clean. That's why I do it.

I can't agree with your basic stand on the Nova because I feel that 'No Award' is a vital part of any award system. To give an award without any requirement of basic competence is to demean the award entirely. It couldn't happen, I know, but suppose for economic or personal or fannish reasons no-one in England published a fanzine for a whole year except one incredibly hurried and totally illegible issue of FANZINE FANATIQUE. You'd give the award to Walker, would you? Sorry, but there have to be some standards, even if they are rarely if ever needed.

I've got the impression that English fanzine fans aren't in any way enthusiastic about the new FAAN awards which is a damn shame, because they represent a real chance for top quality English fans to get a little much-deserved recognition. I've nominated Kettle as Best Writer, for example, and I'm hoping Bell gets on as Best Artist even though I'm not qualified to nominate him myself. The next to last SHREW would be a deserving winner in the Best Single Issue category, and would have a reasonable chance in English fans supported the idea and did so actively. The system may still be in the formative stages but it's a damn sight more meaningful than the current fan Hugoes.

((Okay, any genuine creativity is worth some praise; but most fanzine shit is plainly derivative drivel in which creativity hardly figures at all. Simply, if neofans familiarised themselves with the field beforehand they wouldn't serve up so much dross. No-one for a moment believes a non-SF writer can produce a good SF book if he's unfamiliar with the genre (if anyone does so believe I'd appreciate reasons, proof, and examples) so why should anyone unfamiliar with fanzines be able to produce even a quarter-good one without the same effort?

That's a terrible pose of yours about early NERGs. Whilst what you say of the jaundiced backward look is true I'm sure that on an objective level they're head and shoulders above 90% of fanzines. Besides, I'm sure you had specific standards in mind when you produced them; after all you weren't exactly Little Jimmy Fan. Trying to justify neofan crudzines with a line like that is damned unrealistic of you, Michael. You're right about one thing tho'; no way is Keith Walker going to win any Award.)))

LEROY KETTLE, \*  
43 Chesholm Road, \*  
London N 16 \*  
\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*  
Despite Jim Linwood being Dean of In-Depth,  
Instand-Death One-Line reviewing and you  
one of his followers (me too, I guess -  
Yassuh Boss) you were pretty kind to Dave  
Rowe's views. Ok, you were fair enough on  
what Dave did with K 2 (apparently; I haven't received a copy, but  
more of that later) but though you thought him a vicious cretin  
and find it understandably hard not to see him still as a 'brainless  
leaper to conclusions' you kept too much control over your familiar  
vituperative critical approach when dealing with his opinions. I  
hope to see a little more scalpel in the future.

Back to Dave Rowe, upholder of fannish standards.  
Upon receiving a copy of K 1 I failed to respond as I had every  
intention of commenting on it in TRUE RAT (and was struck LoCless  
by apathy anyway) but as far as I was concerned we traded so that  
was OK. Apparently, after not receiving K 2 I discover we trade on  
a one-to-one basis - one fanzine for one issue of K unless I loc -  
not on the all-for-all basis I assumed was the fannish norm. I  
would defend, until I woke up, Dave's right to send copies to whom,  
and when he wanted, but I can't agree with him about it. I send  
TRUE RAT to people who send me letters or fanzines. On occasion -  
very few - I have forgotten, because I have failed to amend my mail-  
ing list. I also send it to people who never or rarely respond because  
I like them or I think they'd like TRUE RAT. I also give it to anyone  
who asks if I happen to have spare copies. This is what I do. I'm  
not trying to put it to Dave that he has to do this. My complaint is  
that if I give Dave every TRUE RAT (five at the time in question) -  
as I have - and he's given me in response two BLUNTS, one LoC, and one  
K (four replies in all) then I've been more than reasonable on his  
terms. OK, he's never asked me to do that. He's laid down his own  
mailing rules. But I'm not going to be blackmailed into locating a  
fanzine (even though I'd like a copy) nor am I going to put out twice  
as many half-sized TRUE RATs so that I can get a one-for-one trade.  
I'm sure he doesn't give a fuck.

Taking Dave's logic of one-for-one even further you  
reach the point of page-for-page trades, or quip-for-quip, or oafish  
idea-for-oafish idea. I reckon I put more creative energy (even if  
wasted) into half a page of TRUE RAT than was put into K 1 by that  
lump of fatuousness Bernie Peek, supposed co-editor, who had the gall  
to write his first ever fannish article, in all its incredible medioc-  
rity, straight onto stencil. If we traded on an erg-for-erg basis and  
Peek was the point of comparis I'd be nicely in credit, thanks.

Maybe K 2 is a lot better. I'd probably have located it. I  
might even have said more than 'Thanks' which would, surely, on its  
own have earned me the super bonus of K 3. Dave seems to think that  
no LoC or no immediate trade means no interest (and certainly no K).  
If he feels so strongly about wasting his own resources by sending  
K to uninterested fans I'd have thought a person of his strong moral  
integrity would have helped me save my resources by telling me to  
take my little RAT elsewhere as he had no intention of sending a LoC  
or a fanzine in exchange for every issue. He seemed perfectly happy  
to receive it. I was perfectly happy letting him have it. In fact  
I'd like to let him have it right now.



(( Well, Rowe just slips further into darkness all the time as far as I'm concerned. Retrospectively I admit I considerably overrated his work in K, and also failed to pick him up on a lot of specious logic, eptly fielded here by LRAK and by Ms Char-Nock elsewhere. The reason for this failure of judgement is that I was badly spooked by the appearance of a fanzine, from someone I basically have no sympathy with at all, which appeared to be doing exactly what we intended with SBD, maybe slightly better. K 2 was a good fanzine, I still believe, but Rowe has a long way to go before he's as good a writer as I made him out to be. Plainly his mailing rules are nonsensical. If he intends cutting everyone not responding to each issue he's going to have a printrun of about thirty going to a continually-changing audience. Which may well produce a fantastic proportion of response to copies sent, but will be a bit limiting, I think. I too believed the norm was all-for-all trading, the exceptions (so I'm told by a Wise Old Fan) being extremely frequent fanzines or very ambitious ones. K is manifestly neither, and Rowe seems unnecessarily bloody minded not sending K to people he probably expects to send him their output, infrequent or irregular as it may be. Come to think of it Rowe's record of four co-edited fanzines in five or six years is no big deal either, and I've certainly not had an each-issue response on fanzines I've sent him. What response I have had (not counting most of the fanzines) was totally fucking cretinous. LRAK and other threatened faneds should note that by sending copies to Rowe and co-editor Peek (who does not make any especially frequent appearances in WAHF columns either) they can build up one-issue credit. This is Magnanimity, K-way. We at SBD referred this little contretemps to our local Wise Old Fan; Peter Roberts (for it is he) went so far as to say "This is silly." We were given to assume he was referring to the attitude of D. Rowe, prat of this parish.))

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KEEP ON PUSHING \* GRAHAM BOAK; I must admit being surprised.

+++++  
we also heard from \*

\* \* \* \* \* BRIAN R. TAWN; I think you take fanzines too seriously in some ways.

TERRY HUGHES; Do you prefer urban or country blues? I dig them both and have heard a large number of artists of both persuasions. I've seen Son House, who was almost as influential as Robert Johnson, Mississippi Fred McDowell, Mance Lipscombe, and a large number of other country blues artists who paved the way for the emergence of urban blues. I'm sure you too were upset by the death of Howlin Wolf. He was one of the giants.

I think Fleetwood Mac (with Peter Green & Jeremy Spencer) were one of the top rock blues bands ever.

((Now here's a man of taste I could get next to easily. Wolf rules OK))

IAN R. BUTTERWORTH; Just saying something is rubbish isn't going very far to improving it. Is it true that SF MONTHLY has folded?

: :

JOHN JARROLD; I am back in fandom now. Is it true SFM has folded?

: :

RICHARD MCMAHON; You gave my ego a boost that made me unbearable to live with for a day. I hope I can live up to your expectations of me. Has SFM really ceased publication?

: :

HARRY WARNER jnr; Your editorial mumble is the kind of soul-searching I normally associate with fanzine editors in Australia.

: :

MERF ADAMSON; I have never re-written WAR OF THE WORLDS. Is it true SF MONTHLY has folded?

: :

PAUL RYAN; I'll remember you when ORYAN reaches its height in the world fanzine scene and you're the under-dogs of fandom.

: :

BRYN FORTEY; Your fanzine reviews are as erudite as ever and show yet again why you are without rivals in this particular sphere. I must get on to Richard McMahon though, he obviously sent me a different version of his third issue, a real shitty version that shows no promise whatsoever and definately does not seem like a fanzine of potential. Funny that. Is it true that SF MONTHLY has folded?

: :

also RITCHIE SMITH, PAUL HUDSON, DAVE LANGFORD, and anyone else whose letter arrived after April 10 1976. Thank you all.

!!

PEOPLE SAY ALL SORTS OF NASTY THINGS

One day Leroy Kettle was talking to Malcolm Edwards.

"At the last Novacon," said Leroy, "Peter Presford told me about the 'Fan of the Year' Award Mancon are going to insitute at Easter. I thought it was a good idea and said so. I also asked what things would be taken into consideration when they choose the lucky recipient. Peter reckoned they should chose some-one who represents British Fandom a lot abroad, someone who gets lots of letter published in fanzines. Someone, really well known."

"And who did they have in mind?" asked Mal, innocently.

"Oh, Presford suggested Dave Rowe would be a real good choice," said Leroy.

"Oh," said Malcolm. They were very quiet for a long time after that.

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NOSEY-PARKER DISCOVERS EVIDENCE OF POSSIBLE RUMBLE AT BUG-EYE FAN GATHERING; second-rate newsvole Ian Maule, of the continent-spanning newszine CHECKPOINT recently let slip (in his sinisterly casual way) the fact that there may be a bit of aggrevation at Mancon. Quite who was likely to be involved, and what the cause of this difficulty was likely to be, Mr Maule leaves to our imagination. One trusts this is merely the product of over-indulgence in silly children's games, and that all the jolly fans at Mancon will be great friends.....ASSUMING THE WHOLE CON doesn't dissolve into room-to-room warfare a new addition to convention fun is likely to take place. This is a football match organised between a London team (Ratfan Dynamo) and a Newcastle aggregation entitled Gannets Disorganized, or somesuch. No-one knows when, or where this is going to take place, but there's bound to be a patch of open ground somewhere near a University complex, and there's usually one programme item no-one wants to see. As the star half-back of Ratfan Dynamo I look forward to this event with a mixture of excitement of sheer horror, particularly as Rob Jackson claims half the Newcastle team tried out for Newcastle United in their youth.....BRITISH SCIENCE FICTION GETS SECOND CHANCE; unknown to many people the NEL magazine S.F. MONTHLY collapsed recently. Our undercover reporter in the NEL bunker (Robert Holdstock, if you must know) tells us that some two months ago NEL top-brass decided that all their magazines not making a substantial profit would be summarily killed off. As far as SFM goes, the two issues currently at the printer were to be printed and sold, but Vol. 3 No 5, then at the final editorial stage, was completely swept away. All SFM staff were immediately dispersed to other departments, and no SFM desk is currently in existence, so that's why you've got no response to your 'Dear Sir, Eight months ago I sent you my manuscript entitled...' enquiries. Vol 3 No 4 is the last issue of SFM proper, though there are rumours that a digest-sized one-shot is to be put out some time in the near future, the main purpose of which is to use up the remaining crummy stories NEL had bought in advance. It has not, though, been entirely ruled out that if this one-shot does well it could be continued. Despite the generally poor quality of SFM - due mainly to the fact that no-one associated with it editorially gave a single shit about SF - it did get a bit more entertaining in its later issues, and I suppose I'll miss it. Meanwhile, Graham Charnock has refused the chance to edit a small-circulation SF mag for a very obscure publisher indeed. Can't say I blame him, as something done on a £500 budget, printing 1000 copies, and paying its writers on a profit-sharing basis doesn't sound too fantastic. Myself, I'm waiting until I win the pools.....THE FINGER -- despite the incredible response to SBD 1 some people didn't manage anything constructive. A lot of them will eventually discover they have not been sent this issue. Others have been given a second chance. If you are one of them you will see a nasty mark next to your name on the back. Unless you respond, by trade (if you haven't sent your last fanzine), letter, or just show of interest, you will be casually lost sight of for the time being.....IT'S THE WAITING I CAN'T STAND, SARGE; right now it's less than five days to Mancon. All SBD readers are encouraged to enjoy the con, and any names without faces who care to meet us and claim to read this fanzine with pleasure will very likely be bought at least one drink. The very best of luck.

