

GREATEST

HITS

VOLUME

TEN

This is the last page being typed, and consequently I can reveal that my duplicator has bugged it self up again, and so I have had to bring the stencils back to University. If pages 15 to 18 are unreadable, I'm sorry, but blame the duplicator, not me. To top it all, I'm using a grotty typewriter which insists on doublespacing every other letter, thus cutting my speed down to ten words a minute. God, life can get on top of you at times. Finally, don't bother 'phoning 01-735-4220 in the next fortnight, because I won't be there. Canterbury is very nice when the sun is shining.

DEATH TO ALL
FROGS!

This is GREATEST HITS Vol. TEN, Produced by Pete Birks, of 39 Handforth Road, London, SW9 0LL, ENGLAND. GREATEST HITS costs one-third of a p a side (a cent a side to Yanks), and is meant to be produced once every three weeks.

Once upon a time there was a silly boy who produced a Diplomacy zine. This silly boy owned a silly duplicator, which tended to go mad at the most awkward time, i.e. in the middle of duplicating. So the silly little boy had to take his zine back to University to get it duplicated, which cost lots and lots of money, and also resulted in the silly little zine being late (or early if you only receive Dolchstoss and Bellicus).

That, in a paragraph, is what happened last issue. Come Sunday night, I was printing page sixteen when the duplicator started pouring out ink, on the floor, me, itself, and worst of all, on page sixteen, which was quite unreadable. The stencil was soaking, so I couldn't take it back with me to Canterbury, and therefore nobody got the results of the Isaac Asimov quiz. This, along with Duncan Rigden's review, and whatever else was on pages fifteen and sixteen are all around somewhere. Damned Duplicators, Grrrrr.

Well, the elections will soon be upon us, unless there are not enough candidates. My manifesto for the post of regular diplomacy secretary is somewhere around page Four. Please vote, even if it isn't for me. Figlet is going for General Secretary, Tony Ball will probably be treasurer again, whilst the only Dippy candidates I know of are me, Sharp, Doubleday, and Holt. If I do get on, I shall be putting forward some proposals that would mean changes in the NGC, consisting of, I am afraid, higher prices. I am saying this now because I feel that it would be dishonest to say otherwise just so that I would get elected.

Dolchstoss at last worked its weary way to my postbox, with the interesting news that Richard Sharp is not standing again, thus meaning that Dolchstoss will revert to being a normal NGC zine of no more stature than Greatest Hits. Oh how the mighty are fallen.

I must confess that my time at University is becoming far more enjoyable now that I am living in college and do not have any exams on my back (don't you envy me Adrien?). So much so, in fact, that I am only coming back to London to produce GH or work in the Bookie's. Every night there seems to be a party of some sort or another, and my friend's birthday last Tuesday resulted in someone drinking 11 vodka and limes in half an hour! (I drank seven gin and tonics in the same period, and the results of that were so embarrassing that I dare not recount them here. I didn't throw up, though.

Now that Chelsea have been relegated, West Ham have won the F.A. Cup, and England have won the home championship, life seems to be slightly bereft of meaning. At this moment I am watching the incredibly boring Essex vs. Glamorgan, and it strikes me what a poor team Essex are, nowhere near Surrey in quality. How does Walkerdine support them?

By the time you read this the results of the Referendum will be known, and I predict a 54-46% vote. This should be the beginning of a falling off of the political comment in GH. I hope to concentrate more on Diplomacy articles, reprinted from American Dippy zines. Especially interesting are Eric Verheiden's stalemate articles, which say a lot about defensive positions.

Science Fiction, of course, will continue on its powerful way, as will the quizzes. I hope that this will be what you, the readers, want. Not that I care a damn.

As for zines, Misteimer is now photocopied game reports only. Frigate has yet to appear. Fifth Column is ceasing to be plagued by 'forgeritis', and Richard Scott is throwing accusations all over the place. Well I know who did it, but I ain't saying.

DesConteny is not far away now, and I expect to see all of you there, even if you do stab me in the Diplomacy Competition. (And that is chronically organised, as many games as you can play in 24 hours indeed! Stupid system, what about the Henley pubs? Oh I forgot, Andy Holt doesn't drink. FIX!). Let's hope that the weather is fine. The Scott mansion is an absolutely superb place, and a good time will certainly be had by all. Please turn up.

I have just been to see 'Tommy', Ken Russel's latest film, and if you are a 'Who' fan, then it's a must. If not, then don't bother. I also saw 'The Damned' at University, which was obviously the precursor to 'The Night Porter'. Could somebody please explain the plot to me?

SCIENCE FICTION

Daniel Galouye: "Dark Universe"

This story is set in a post atom-bomb holocaust which has resulted in humanity being marooned underground in a series of interconnected shelters. But the shelter's power has failed. Two different types of race evolve from the survivors. They have a bronze age society which competes for cattle, plants and water. One reaction to the lack of light was to evolve the upper regions of the eye's spectrum sensitivity, and the other reaction was to click stones and listen to the echoes.

The evolution of a religion based on the memories of the outside world through the agency of the 'great god Hydrogen' and the 'Light Almighty'. This novel won the Hugo award for the best science fiction novel in 1962. The visualisation, if it should be called that, of a world without light is complete.

"See! There was that word again - mysterious and challenging and as obscure as the legends from which it had come." (p106)

The claustrophobia and primitiveness of the situation is emphasised in line after line. Mr. Galouye's ability to evoke this world never fails him. The emergence of the Survivors into the outside world has some beautiful images to recommend it. The action is that of an individual seeking rebirth into a new world of sensual impression. Jared has been too long in the world of the rock-womb.

"A world without a material boundary, save for the flat ground underneath him, and enclosing that world, not an infinity of rocks and mud, but an infinity of semi-darkness enlivened by pleasant points of light and a graceful disk - at the moment. At other times, it was an infinity of bold, loud light dominated by a great harsh thing called the 'sun'" (p170)

The characterisation is quite good, as is the understanding of a primitive tribal-type society. The characters strive and achieve their limited objectives in the circumscribed limited world of aural perception. The society is a sort of tribal conglomerate, with the individuals having some aspects which are reminiscent of schooldays (hunting expeditions), that are carried out individually. Perhaps one should say, rather than the society being convincing as a tribal society, that it convinces the reader that it could happen the way he said. Rather like the small enclosed world of the island in "Lord Of The Flies", the smallest happening receives a symbolic and painful clarity.

Steve 'What about some food'
Doubleday.

With DesContent only a fortnight away, I hope that everyone is making preparations for their journey into the wilds of Reading. I have just heard about the rules for the Diplomacy Competition; God are they insane! As many games as possible can be played in the 24 hours from 9am Sat to 9am Sun. The players with the best performance as a particular country qualify for the final. That means that people who play Dippy non-stop from Saturday to Sunday have a far greater chance of qualifying. What about drinking time? Why should Diplomacy mad players and non-drinkers have a better chance of qualifying? Is the Committee going to stand for this blatant prejudice against alcoholics? Yes, no doubt.

Last Saturday saw a poker game at Lothair Road, the abode of John Piggott. This is recounted elsewhere, but I must say that I enjoyed it immensely. Thank you very much, John, for an enjoyable evening, night, and morning. I'm only sorry that not every one can win off Yare.

Final spacefillers, don't any of you forget to vote in the Committee elections, since it looks as if there are going to be fights for some of the posts. By the way, you can vote for me if you like. Other candidates are Steve Doubleday, Dave Allen, Les Paley, Andy Holt, and Richard Sharp. Four of us six can be elected. The choice is yours. USE IT.

LETTERSCRAIG NYE:

I don't know why I should write letters to your zine, when you won't write to mine. But my inconsistency is legendary, so here I am. Anyway, I can't stand it any more.

First of all, please stop sending crummy faked 'dastard' letters. Els keeps thinking her luck has changed.

Next, Steve Doublecross: I don't love Heinlein, I just prefer him to jumped up, overrated, pretentious birdbrains like Aldiss and Ballard. I don't change the subject when Steve mentions "I Will Fear No Evil"; it's just that experience has taught me that discussing a Heinleiner with someone who dislikes it is pointless. (Riddle me this, Piggott; who uses the name 'Heinleiner' for starships, and in what book?).

Steve's memory must be slipping; the lifestyle bit comes after the BT bit. I hope that "is that a quote" was ironic (whoops! almost started getting poisonal.)

Now one of the nice things about Heinlein's characters is that you can never be sure how they are going to react. Taking my pet peeve; Asimov - you always know that his characters are going to employ an unusual property of the radio-active decay of...to get out or in to anything.

"What the fuck"? Peter, your subbers will think it's Retief or Misteimer coming through the postbox.

IDA: Thanks for the OED definition of traitor.

'To stand on Zanzibar and defend Barry McManus'. I hasten to add that I don't know Barry; no come to think of it I have a vague recollection of sitting in a pub and talking... Anyhow, the display of arrogant snobbishness by your two resident SF buffs is a typical example of the sort of behaviour that has alienated me from conventional SF fandom. Steve's crit was acceptable, given that Barry rather overshot the grounds of reasonable behaviour. But John's! 'Science Fantasy' is as good a term as 'Science Fiction'. Just because it wasn't coined by Campbell or Gernsback.....

Brunner has a philosophy, one that is better defined than most of the big name SF writers. He is deeply concerned for the state of the planet, he is pessimistic about the future and he lacks all faith in human nature. Make a damn good Dippy player! Incidentally I had better add that I found 'The Sheep Look Up' unreadable.

Zelazny is violence obsessed. I have sometimes thought that he is a near relative of James Hadley Chase. His religious reworkings are a valid concept, sadly now played to death. 'Lord Of Light' is the outstanding book in this series; 'badly written'? Huh, please supply examples of well-written SF in that case, John. You too Pete.

Fiat Voluntas Mea; If you think my beard is grotesque - you should see my chin!

((I got a dastard letter too, but did not mention it because I found it in bad taste and unamusing. I would like to know who 'Cuddles' really is, so that I can bite his head off.))

((Asimov's characters always predictable? Surely you jest! What about 'Nightfall'? Or even better, "It's Such A Beautiful Day"? Both of these had nice twists at the end, quite unpredictable. Asimov's characters are certainly as human as Heinlein's, if not more so (Heinlein's 'baddies' are absolute pearls, 'Space Cadet' for example.))

((No comment on the IDA until I have had full conversation with Edi Birsan, but I will state now that I want the IDA/UK and NGC to merge, with the 'new' NGC having affiliate status with the IDA and vice-versa; unfortunately I can't afford to waste 80p on nothing at all.))

((I always liked 'Scientifiction', but that crud Gernsback got rid of it. People have said that Gernsback was the father of SF. I'd put it another way. SF is Gernsback's illegitimate son.))

((Brunner may have a philosophy, but he suffers from the handicap of not being able to write good SF. After all, Benn has a philosophy, but that doesn't mean that we should award him a Hugo or Nova, does it?))

((Unless you have a prior knowledge of Buddhism, 'Lord Of Light' is confusing and vague. I found it very hard to read, I must admit, and for an example of good writing, what about 'Protector' by Niven? He gets over some very difficult concepts (being inside another brain) very well. Zelazny does not succeed in this manner.))

GEOFF CHALLENGER:

I must agree with Steve Doubleday on Heinleib. "I Will Fear No Evil" was one of the hardest books to read that I've ever read. It's so BORING. After that, I've not managed to gather up the courage (or 90p) to buy "Time Enough For Love". He's right to say that everyone should be allowed to hold and express an opinion, however ill-founded. However, he should therefore be quite happy to see criticism no matter how stupid/incorrect it may be. But as he and Barry McManus are merely stating their own opinions then there is little hope of coming to agreement or wasting space in GH on pointless argument.

On a more general note, aren't you a bit wrong to put Mad Policy in your list of 'quick' zines. After all a fortnight isn't too good a record for a zine with little more than a few game reports too knock up.

((I agree that everyone should be allowed to express an opinion, but if it is 'ill-founded' then a reassessment of the 'foundation' of the opinion may bring about in the change in the opinion itself, if you see what I mean. This is what I feel that Steve was doing. I certainly do not feel that they are merely stating their opinions. Rather they are swapping facts to establish a proposition, which is the basis of reasoned argument.))

((Mad Policy gets my vote as a quick zine because it normally is very prompt. Just because there was uproar when it took ten days to come out shows that the standard it has set for itself is very hard to live up to. Anyway, ten days to bring out a zine is better than many, and I would say better than average.))

GREG HAWES:

I must admit that your column in Diplomacy World volume II issue I was very clear and well-written, and gave on the whole a very clear and accurate picture of the hobby on this side of the Atlantic. One or two of your statements were inaccurate, though, for instance not all NGC zines run "stereotyped postal Diplomacy games on efficient three-week deadlines", whereas some independents do, though admittedly no NGC zines are as bad as running games as the worst of the independents. Independents are, on the whole, more interesting to read, due mainly to the presence of a large amount of 'chat' and articles, surveys, etc, but it is my opinion that the quality and content of a zine reflect the publisher and not whether it is an NGC zine or independent.

Your point about it being easier to start an NGC zine is very true, and probably explains why the NGC mob are outnumbering the rest.

I disagree that the NGC will have a monopoly over British Diplomacy in the future, because there will always be a few first-class independents (MB, 190laa) who prefer to go it alone and do so with great success. Anyway, who cares if we do end up with just NGC zines? The NGC imposes hardly any restrictions on its publishers; it even apparently lets them run non-NGC games (as you are doing with the DK orphan!) The NGC publisher can print what he likes, and as Richard Sharp pointed out in a recent Dolchstoss there's only one thing an NGC publisher cannot do, and that is fold his zine without regard to his players. Surely this is a more preferable system to the independent one, in which case a publisher can drop out without fear of recrimination or even prosecution, and just leave Les Pinley to clear up the mess.

I was very sorry to see that you omitted the Poker column and a report of your Con from the last GH, and instead chose to print (again!) a load of political letters that about 10% of your publishers might read. A letter column is fine, as long as it devotes itself to letters relevant to the hobby or of general interest or of a humorous nature. Devoting a huge amount of space to topics which only a minority of your readers will appreciate is a waste of time and money.

So let's cut down on the long dissertations and get down to something interesting, like the report of your Con, and how to insure yourself against losing at Monopoly (Logan again!)

Apart from the letter's column worst bits, GH is a first-class zine, but I must agree that it could do with less of the "Czar Of All The Russias" press, and more of the calibre of Crinklecrud, Wiggles, and so on. Still, as you say, Figgott should help you there.

((For other readers, I am the British correspondent for Diplomacy World, an American Diplomacy zine, owned by Games Research Inc, and edited by Walt Buchanan R.R.3, Lebanon, Indiana 46052, USA. Subscriptions are \$4.00 a year, and it appears quarterly. Each issue is litho-printed, with a coloured cover, and 40 or so A4 reduced pages. I recommend it. As for my column, I never claimed that all NGC zines were 'stereotyped', but it is true, I feel, that people who branch out into independence-land, usually, are those who want the 'chat', even if they have been getting it already in the NGC zine that they started playing Diplomacy in. Blaaah, that isn't very clear, is it?))

((I maintain that since the NGC 'took off' not one good independent has got going. Even Lemming Express is fading away from its promising beginnings. MP and 1901aat were established before the NGC was as large as it is today, and their 'growth' period was during the general Dippy 'explosion' of 1973, which was before the NGC could cope with such an increase in interest. Now that there are such a large number of NGC zines, a recurrence of such a 'boom' could easily be absorbed by the NGC.))

((NGC publishers can do just what they are prepared to risk getting away with. The DK orphan is the first example of an NGC zine running a non-NGC game that I know of. Let's just wait and see what the repercussions are!))

((I get the message about politics, and the amount of politicisation in GH will decrease in the future. I am certainly more interested in letters that have something to do with Diplomacy than with any others.))

BARRY McMANUS: (A reply to Steve Doubleday)

Dear Steve,

In reply to your letter, a number of preliminary facts before we get to the heart of the matter.

Firstly I had no desire to draw a "pedigree" or anything so narrow, from you. Your credentials are as you say - being an avid SF fan wishing to write - which is precisely why I objected to a pedigree being given for you. In any case I do not accept that the most qualified person is always dictatorially right; he may perhaps be less wrong less often. Unfortunately our Universities have as yet found no way in which to teach, or work, open-mindedness.

If you must have a "pedigree" from me (and after decrying their necessity you were pretty emphatic in asking for one), I have possibly read more books than you. Since I chose to take Maths and Computer Science at University, I can't wave a relevant dissertation back at you.

Secondly, nowhere in my letter do I say anything about Heinlein's latest works. I point out however that there is a philosophical content, and class them, by virtue of that content and its nature, with, among others, "Stand On Zanzibar", as within a clearly delineated group. I couldn't agree more with you about the books from an "Eng Lit" point of view - rubbish.

Since, if you recall, I mentioned a Heinlein form of 'apparently superficial writing (used) in order to get the message across....', it should not have escaped you that I was not, in this instance, concerned primarily with his grammar and structure.

Thirdly, it is fundamental both to my own philosophy and to the philosophy of the "school" to which I referred that no-one is denied the right to express an opinion on anything.

However that opinion, once expressed, is open to criticism from any standpoint, including that of the basis from which it was formed. Indeed, if someone has sufficient logic to extrapolate reasonably correctly from a given basis, then any intelligent disagreement is almost certain to be with that basis.

I said I would come to the heart of the matter, but on re-reading your letter I find that you have not in fact answered, or attempted to answer, any of the points I made with regard to your review. Your point about "an essentially perfect work" is a truism, applied to any novel (or at least I hope it is) but which of my points does it answer?

.....cont.....

So I must close by saying that I enjoyed your irrelevant and immensely space-consuming parody. It's a pity you didn't actually reply to my criticisms, but that's your right.

(I notice that Mr. Piggott has also had a go, to whom I say -) my use of the term "science fantasy" was obviously okay since he understood what I meant by it.

I am more worried by his failure to understand the word "philosophy" or worse still, to allow SF authors to understand it either.

Regardless of his own personal opinion of them, I find it difficult to take seriously anyone who dismisses award-winning authors of the stature of Brunner and Zelazny in such a way.

"Widely misunderstood" may be a euphemism in the literary world for "badly written" (is Mr. Piggott in the literary world?) but I say "widely misunderstood" when I mean "widely misunderstood" and "badly written" when I mean "badly written".

((I disagree with you Barry, in stating that Steve did not answer your criticisms of his review. I felt that he did do so, and well at that. But I will leave the rest of your letter unanswered since I am not qualified to answer it. As, however, for Piggott, you have really laid yourself open to trouble by asking him if he is in the literary world. Let's put it this way. He is half-way through his first novel, which I fully expect to sell. He lives in the same house as John Brosnan, who has written a couple of books and received a Nova award for contributions to the fandom of SF. John produced a Dippy zine for a couple of years which had many SF contributions. He has also, I believe, edited an SF fanzine. These are his contributions to SF, and I reckon that they place him squarely in the literary field. Oh, I almost forgot, he was on the committee for the annual SF con this year, and is on first-name terms with many SF writers, including (I guess, Mickey Moorcock, Harry Harrison, and maybe John Brunner.))

GLYN PALMER:

Barry McManus is a bit rash to argue with Steve about SF; like arguing with Muhammed Ali and likely to lead to the same result! The only bloke with SF knowledge approaching Steve's is John Piggott in whose quiz I was only able to attempt nos 4, 6, 7, and 14; too bloody difficult for me.

I've told Mick Bullock he owes you £1! What happened was; I suggested to Adrien the column idea complete with the title and non-de-plume at the Pub we went to in Loudwater Con in February; you may have noticed us huddled round a table while Adrien consumed six Ploughman's suppers. On giving Adrien a lift to the station after Richard Sharp's poker con he remarked during the journey that 'Fiat Lux was alright' in the hearing of Dave Allen whom I suspect jumped to conclusions. I suspected John Piggott until I read Fiat Voluntas Mea - that's him alright; no-one could imitate that languid elegance of style! Is the Fiat Lux bloke a Dippy player anyway? Adrien refuses to name him, or at least I think he does, I've never asked him!

((I'm beginning to suspect Adrien himself, were it not for the fact that Fiat Lux is so well written, and Adrien can't speak decent English! (not like wot I can). Maybe he types it up and gives it to an undergraduate friend who turns it into the decent style that it undeniably possesses.))

((For someone who has been reading SF since 1952, you never seem to say much about it, Glyn. Is this natural shyness, I ask? I reckon that you know a lot more than you let on.))

((As for Fiat Voluntas Mea, yes, of course it was Piggott. I was pretty certain even though it was unsigned. He finally admitted it last week but I haven't yet received a dazzling contribution this issue. But where there's life there's hope.))

((How's the £53 profit from last Saturday, Glyn? I must confess that I spent much of my winnings on clothes and other luxuries (I've got through over £50 since last weekend!) but I enjoyed myself, and that's all that matters, isn't it?))

RICHARD WALKERDINE:

What's with all the anti-IDA nonsense? Criticise all you like, of course, but you might at least try to get your facts right. Allow me to correct your errors:

All the money collected by IDA/UK stays in this country - to be exact, it stays at Lloyds Bank in Addlestone. Not only that but some \$50 collected in the USA has also found its way here. Okay?

IDA/UK is called IDA/UK because that's what its members decided to call it when the British region was first formed. If the Canadian region, or one of the US Regions wanted to call themselves IDA/West Coast or whatever, they're every right to do so. The central body (comprising representatives from all the regions) is just called IDA simply because it is the central body. There isn't an IDA/US because there is no IDA/US, just the IDA (IDA/world if you like) and the various Regions. Where's the problem?

But all that's so much spacefiller. The real reason for this letter is your classic statement, "Nobody joins it, simply because it does buggar all"! Christ! Who do you think is going to do the work except the members? You join a service organisation, you stay in for a year and don't do so much as lift a finger to help out the existing projects or suggest new ones, and then you leave and complain it does nothing! Who's to blame then? You, mate, and thirty others like you!

And anyway, it's not true to say that it does nothing - thanks to the efforts of just 10% of the membership (me, Patterson, Swanson and Nye) it's already doing quite a lot in several fields: subsidies, novice packages, QVF itself, etc. You might not think any of its activities amount to much, and I wouldn't disagree too strongly with you there, but just think how much more it could do if the other 90% of the membership really supported it actively instead of adopting the attitude of "I want some benefits but I don't want to have to do any work for it". That rather smacks of the "honest day's work for an honest week's pay" attitude of the Trade Unionists.

To quote memberships of the IDA and NGC means nothing, your'e not comparing like with like. The NGC runs games, the IDA doesn't. Any fool can run games - and Turnbull, Patterson, Bullock, myself, etc have been doing it a lot longer than the NGC - that's easy. But it takes a good bit more to attempt to actually put something back into the hobby without expecting any tangible reward for it.

If you think the IDA/UK is failing in its objectives of serving the entire hobby in ways beyond the scope of individuals, then why not tell the members themselves, through the pages of QVF, where they are going wrong and what they should be doing instead? In other words, criticise constructively rather than just grumble into thin air. And if you think others are doing less than they should be, then show them the correct path by your own example. But don't compare the inactivity of others if you're not prepared to do any work yourself!

((I merely mentioned that the IDA treasurer was meant to be American "for legal reasons". I dispute that fact.))

((Why didn't we have a vote on what to call ourselves, or wasn't I a member at the time?))

((The IDA in America treats themselves as the centre and us as a region, and, deny it as you wish, if the IDA/UK is so different and separate from the IDA, why is it called IDA at all?))

((When I joined the IDA I paid 80p because I thought that the 80p would be used constructively in helping the hobby. I never had any intention of paying 80p for the privilege of being castigated for doing nothing! Am I an IDA officer? NO! Why, therefore, should I pay 80p per annum so as I can keep the hobby together when I can contribute just as much to the hobby by paying nothing at all? The fact is, yes, I do want some benefits from my 80p, even if it is for the hobby as a whole rather than for me in particular. I pay my money, and I take my choice, and I think that my 80p is just so much waste paper in QVF, typed honk sheet that it is. Sorry, but it ain't worth my money.))

((Finally, I didn't send a letter to QVF for two reasons; firstly, I sent a long letter some months back, of which one line was printed, and a pretty unimportant line at that. Also, GH has a readership of three times that of QVF. Isn't that reasonable?))

PHIL STUTT:

I look on in awe at some of your correspondent's views. Some of which must qualify for the long lost award for naivety, how can any reasonable person bind himself or herself to a political or social scheme without reservation (perhaps the answer hinges on the word reasonable). But I digress, I really wanted to echo your reaction to Duncan Rigden's letter. Until I began japhidrew recently I did not really appreciate the trouble taken by GMs to produce their zines. Even a sloopy issue is hard work, however to work all your spare time to bring about a neat issue like GE8 and still receive petty and inconsiderate criticisms must be heartbreaking (GM's Lib?). The final word must rest with the GM. It is his zine, the product of his pen and imagination. You have a responsibility to provide game reports as a GM, but nothing else. Any extra is included because you want to produce an interesting, readable, enjoyable zine. The subscriber, in the final analysis, has no right to dictate to you. The only right the subscriber has is to stop subscribing.

Having said all that we all know that GMs will usually go out of their way to be helpful. Still, it is annoying if someone doesn't realise how much effort goes into each edition. From personal experience I can say that I spent pounds producing issue 2 of japhidrew when I was suddenly let down about having it copied by a friend. As you rightly said not only do you lose 'free' time but you also subsidise the readers and miss out on whatever social life you used to have (before spending every fourth weekend getting yourself covered in dupor ink.) I usually say a silent 'Thank-you' when I receive a zine in my mail. Having started publishing myself I can, hopefully, be more tolerable towards 'wayward publishers'

((It certainly is a tough job producing a zine. I wouldn't dream of denying it; but I always try my best to make people happy and give them what they want. I hope I succeed, and by the number of letters I receive I think that I do. Thanks, thanks very much.))

DAMNATION ALLEY by Roger Zelazny

A review by Duncan Rigden.

The story is set after the Third World War, as a result of which the skies are full of hurricane winds that rip the tops of mountain, suck the seas into the skies, and deposit the debris randomly about the globe.

The Alley is a wasteland of radioactive mutations. There are almost constant storms. Other hazards include whirlwinds in Multipul, giant lizards called Gila monsters, butterflies that lay their eggs in flesh, giant bats and spiders, and radiation pockets, all this is known as Damnation Alley.

Hell Tanner is the last Hell's Angel in California, and naturally he's in trouble with the people and police. He is arrested and offered a full pardon if he runs the Alley with some serum for Boston, which is struck by the Black Plague. He is captured in flowing colour and intricate detail by the authors pen, and his adventures in the Alley make this a book you just don't want to put down. Whether Hell Tanner is a monster or a saint you must decide for yourself. In my opinion, a very good book.

SHOCK NEWS! No elections for the NGC. All candidates for Committee elected unopposed. John Figgott unopposed in General Secretary Hurdle. Sharp to continue to edit Dolchstoss. So Birks is on the Committee, as is Dave Allen, Andy Holt, Les Pimley, and Steve Doubleday. Now watch the heads roll!