

FANZINES 26

By Ted White

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HEAD! #5 (Doug Bell & Christina Lake, co-editors, 12 Hatherley Road, Bishopston, Bristol BS7 8QA, U.K.; e-mail to head@headwest.fsnet.co.uk; available “on whim, or for letters of comment, artwork, contributions, other fanzines and, of course, alcoholic beverages for llamas.” Some money to cover postage would no doubt also be appreciated)

Head! has within five reasonably frequent issues become one of the better fanzines around. It has accomplished this without pyrotechnics or even glitz, but the accomplishment has been noted by a Nova Award (voted on and handed out at the UK’s Novacon, held every November).

The fanzine has two things going for it: its editors. Christina Lake has been an active fan for two decades, is a past TAFF winner, and a celebrated fanwriter whose own fanzines are always guaranteed good reads. Doug Bell is a relatively new fan, who brings with him the enthusiasm and energy which powers *Head!* – and is no slouch as a fanwriter himself. Between them they set standards to which the fanzine’s other contributors live up.

Head! is an attractively produced (computer typeset, as are almost all fanzines now, in a double-columned format using a readable san-serif typeface) 26-page fanzine. Beyond Brad Foster’s cover there isn’t a lot of interior art, although there a number of photographs relevant to the text they accompany.

But a sense of Art pervades the fanzine. It crops up most overtly in the first article, Gary Wilkinson’s “Medicine Men,” which is all about the art of the last and current century, and has “Art” as its running head. But it crops up again in Doug’s “Pil Pil, I Love You Still,” about his travels in Basque Spain and France, although now the running head is “Travel.” Doug spends several pages on the Guggenheim art museum in Bilbao.

This sets the tone for the rest of the issue. Christina opens the issue with a one-page editorial, writes about fracturing her arm in the course of a long bicycle ride (running head: “Health”) in “It’s Not Quite Straight, Is It?” and offers some insightful musings into fandom in “Where the Neo-Fans Graze” (running head: “Fandom”). Nick Walters, a Dr. Who novelist, gets to meet his favorite Dr. Who actor at a poetry reading in “McGann,” (running head: “Media”) and is as thrilled about it as any fanboy while managing not to sound like one. Five pages of letters (running head: “Letters”) round out the issue.

Head! is solid without being pretentious. Like most well-written fanzines, it addresses a small and intimate audience with informality and humor while occasionally dealing with important and serious topics. And, like most of the better fanzines, it evokes a sense of the fannish community from which it springs and to whom it speaks – most explicitly in Christina’s “Where the Neo-Fans Graze.” This is by no means a closed or snobbish community and *Head!* is a good way to gain access to it.