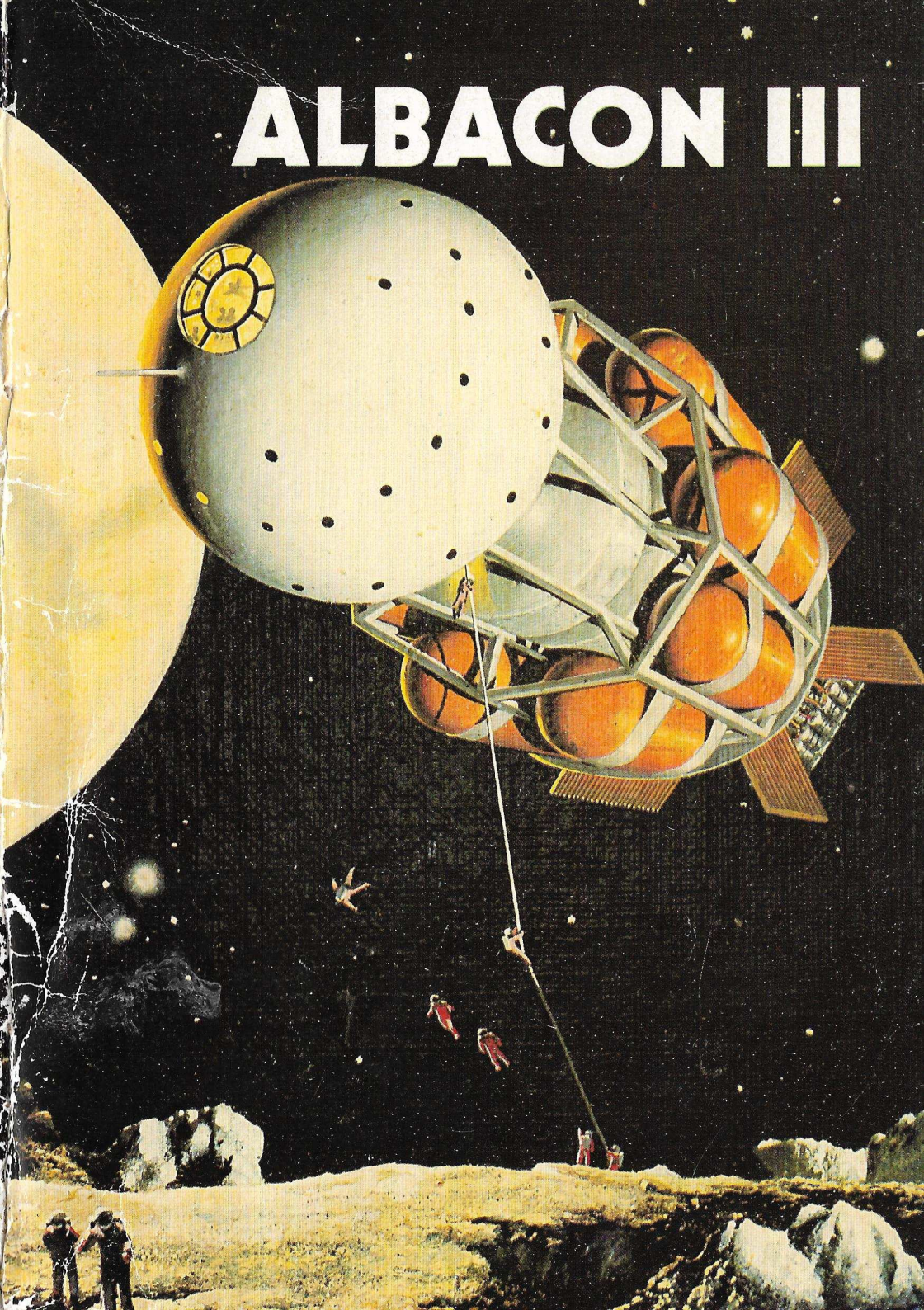


# ALBACON III



CENTRAL HOTEL GLASGOW

28th-31st MARCH 1986

# ALBACON III

THE 37th BRITISH ANNUAL SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION



guest of honour **JOE HALDEMAN**

special guest **CLIVE BARKER**

fan guest **JOHN JARROLD**

guest artist **PETE LYON**

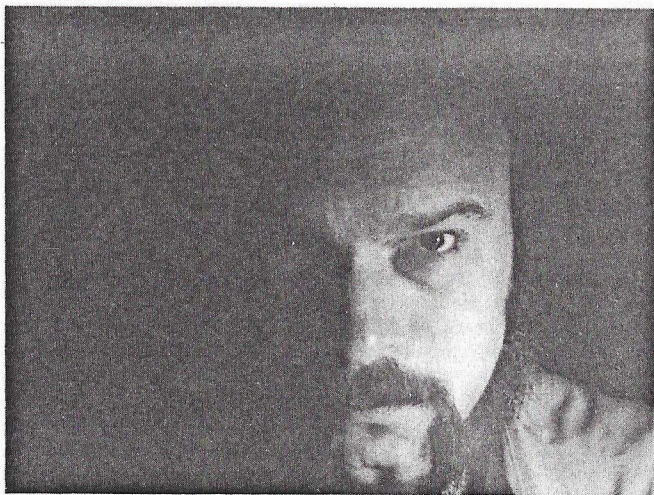


PHOTO - GAY HALDEMAN

## PROGRAMME BOOK

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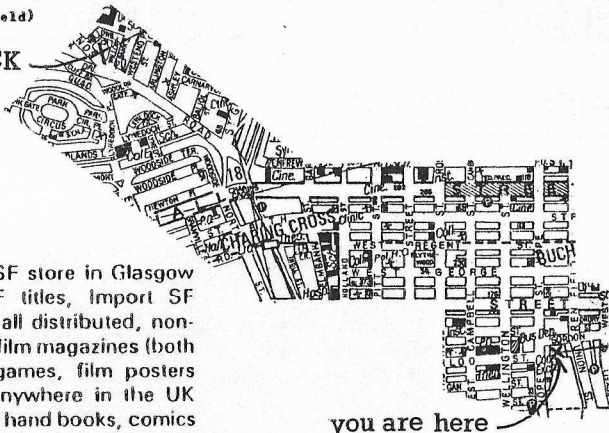
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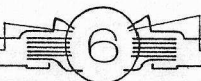
Through-  
out the 4 days of the convention a 10% discount will be offered, in the shop only, to all convention members wearing badges. If you are not a native to Glasgow you can reach FUTURESHOCK by taking a No. 10, 11, or 59 bus from Hope Street, opposite the hotel (35p fare with an exact fare system I regret to say) or follow the map (it takes 20 minutes).

**OPENING TIMES:** Weekdays - 10.30 to 6.00. Saturday - 10.00 to 6.00

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# NEW READERS START HERE

## AN INTRODUCTION TO ALBACON III

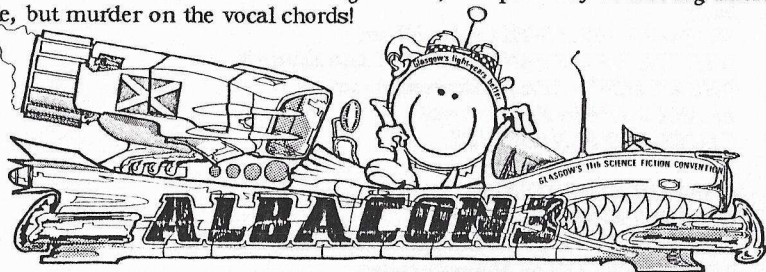
▽ This is not just an introduction to the programme book. This is also, for some of you, an introduction to a new way of life. It is called fandom. To help you get used to it this book has a reference section at the end in which all aspects of science fiction fandom are introduced in a way that makes them, hopefully, fully comprehensible to the newcomer. The most immediately helpful part is a list of the words which make up the language of fans, so that any "in-jokes" by speakers or panellists will make more sense to you.

But you don't want to spend the weekend with your face buried in this book, do you? No, you've come to experience fandom, to see the films, meet the guests, drink the bars dry and have a good time, haven't you? Well, that's easily enough arranged, but what about all the rest of the things on offer? Make sure you visit the bookroom, the art show, the fan room, the computer room and all the rest. And don't forget to talk to someone in each of them.

"What? Shy little me, talk to a complete stranger?"

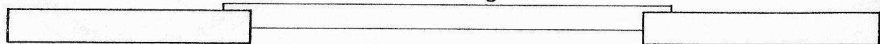
No, talk to a fellow fan. You know them better than you know your next-door neighbour. Look, they've got a badge with their name on it. So you know what to call them. They like science fiction. So you have something in common to talk about. They're attending a convention, which is a place to meet people. So talk to them. They'll talk to you, and before you know it, you've got a friend.

So talk to someone in every place you go: because they're all your friends. Honest. In 1980 I talked to a complete stranger at my first convention and they talked to someone else and soon there were very few people at the hotel I hadn't exchanged a few words with. And now I probably know nearly half of the thousand fans attending Albacon this weekend. Fandom is great fun, a superb way of meeting interesting people, but murder on the vocal chords!



Of course, if you want to keep yourself to yourself and just mooch around seeing what there is to see, you'll still have a good time: conventions are concentrated dollops of delight. Whether you're a spaceflight enthusiast, D&D fiend, film buff or simply an SF reader, you will probably have to miss out some of what's on offer this weekend, if only to eat and sleep. You can never see all of one convention, you have to attend a few to fully experience all that's on offer. So we hope you will come back again in September for XIIcon, or perhaps travel to some of the other conventions listed later in this book.

For the moment, all you have to do is enjoy Albacon III. We hope that the programme we've arranged will make it easy for you to have the time of your life. And remember, it may be a life that's about to change. ▽





# OLD READERS START HERE



## ALBACON III IN PERSPECTIVE

Albacon III, as was explained in our bidding material last year, is the fifth Albaccon. Since Albaccon I in 1980 there have been two "local" summer cons and another Eastercon in 1983. So how does Albaccon III fit with the "tradition" of Glasgow conventions?

That "tradition" is one of seeking out newcomers, predominantly from the Glasgow area, and exposing them to as broad a spectrum of science fiction as possible over a weekend. A glance at the programme should confirm that there is certainly a wide range of events on offer. But have we attracted the newcomers? Only the walk-in rate on the day will confirm it, but conventional wisdom says that we generally double the programme book membership total by the end of the convention. As of the middle of February this stood at 500, so there is a good chance of us breaking the 1000 mark.


Is this a good thing?

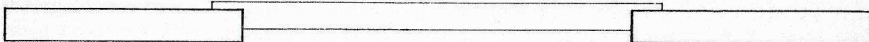
Well, it is for the people who attend. It also assures speakers of audiences. The question is, does having a large attending membership detract in any way from the experience? Is it impossible for large conventions to have the right fannish ambience? To a large extent these are questions each individual must answer for her or himself. The job of the committee is to provide the conditions in which a good atmosphere can develop. This we seek to do in a number of ways. Firstly, we arrange the layout of the function rooms so that there is space to sit and have a drink and a chat in the fan room, as well as in the main bar; conversation is the real mainstay of fandom (fanzines are just conversation at one remove). We try to judge the potential drawing power of items when allocating venues to ensure that a small audience is not sitting in a huge hall, a sure-fire killer of any atmosphere. Lastly, we do try to take into account the lessons of the past.

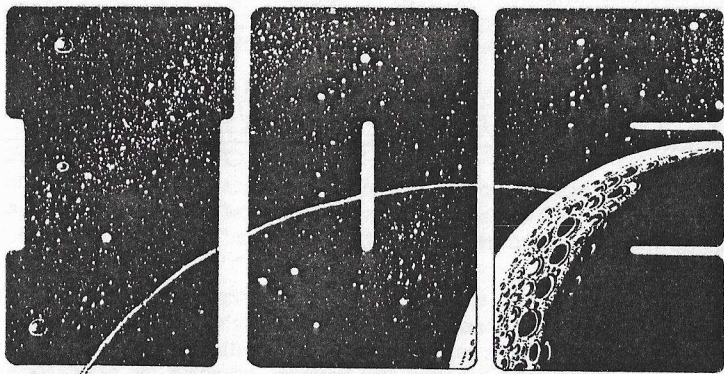
In 1983 we ran, as much by luck as by judgement, a really good Eastercon. Everyone seemed to enjoy it, it worked. Then we had a summer con with only 7 out of 22 films even remotely SF and about a dozen quizzes, not to mention a custard pie fight. We were criticised for the lack of serious SF content, so next year it was nearly all serious SF. That led to charges of the convention being dull and lifeless. So we have tried to regain the balance that Albaccon II had: a large straight SF backbone to the programme, with plenty of good films (and just the one turkey), while the fun items are all mass participation events where everyone can let their hair down and be frivolous for a while.

In the bidding material we published in 1985 we said that we were going to make Albaccon III the ultimate Eastercon. While this may have been taken by many as hyperbole, it has in fact been the deeply felt goal of the organisers. Over the course of the weekend you will no doubt find opportunities in the discussions items in the fan room and elsewhere to let us know how well you think we've done.

We've been at this game a long time and it is easy in such circumstances to lose touch with the ordinary con-goer's tastes. Feedback from the fans attending the convention really is vital; so sing out your praise or condemnation at Albaccon, don't wait for the next Matrix, Ansible or News of the World.

In the meantime, have a wonderful weekend, and remember: an owl in a sack troubles no one. 





**HALDAMAN**

## THE ROCKY ROAD FROM NERD TO GUEST OF HONOUR

The Committee for Filling Up This Publication asked me to write something autobiographical, so I guess I should tell the stirring saga of how I became a science fiction writer. As must usually be the case, this was less a matter of diligent practice and study than of looking up one day and noticing that you aren't anything else, so you must be a science fiction writer.

In those crucible years between the discovery of the printed word and the discovery of the opposite sex (which can be several decades for a trufan), my life was dominated by the related passions of science, space flight, and science fiction. Not abnormal fixations for an American boy, then and now, but I carried them to extremes.

I think a love for astronomy slightly preceded the others, and at any rate outlasted chemistry, zoology, and botany. Perhaps that's because we did study the others in school; they became common currency and lost the romance of the Unknown. I did have a chemistry lab at home with hundreds of reagents, and became adept at putting this and that together to produce a loud noise or an awful smell. (When I finally took chemistry in school the teacher was rather in awe of my weird accumulation of "hands-on" knowledge; none of his other students could tell him off the cuff what happens when you combine calcium perborate with pig's blood in an atmosphere of nitrogen.)

((It lies there in a sodden mass and crusts over.))

Chemicals and glassware, not to mention telescopes and microscopes, do cost money. My parents supplied some of it, and I had a newspaper route, but most of it came from the pockets of other children. My neighbour's parents invariably spent Saturday and Sunday afternoons at the golf club. While they were gone, we ran a casino in their basement, featuring black jack, roulette, and craps. We did even better than Monte Carlo, at least in terms of predictability of income, since the children preferred roulette over games with a more reasonable expectation of return. I augmented this income with Saturday morning "lectures". For ten cents I gave some sort of science presentation I'd cobbled together the night before. Parents were of course glad to lose their offspring for a couple of hours for a dime; the children took innocent pleasure in watching animals being dissected and learning how to blow things up.

This was a few years before the Astronomer Royal dismissed space flight as “utter bilge” and the Russians, always joking, responded with Sputnik. When I told grown-ups that I was going to the Moon some day, the reaction was predictably condescending (though Uncle Harry, bless him, didn’t think it was silly at all; I think he read those nasty pulp magazines). I spent a great deal of class time pretending to pay attention while I drew cut-away diagrams of spaceships, in imitation of Chesley Bonestall’s renditions of von Braun’s designs. Most of the teachers were exasperated by this, but at least one encouraged me. I branched out into starships and space stations and even anticipated the L5-type colony by a generation or so. Of course all this was fuelled by science fiction, and it was science fiction of a particular kind: the Winston juveniles.

My father had to fly out of town on business once a month or so, and he always compensated for his absence by bringing my brother and me the gift of a book from the airport book store. At first these were Nancy Drew and Hardy Boys mysteries, but he got the most enthusiastic reception from the Winston juveniles, so over the years we accumulated quite a collection of them.

The Winstons were cheap hardbound volumes, most of them adventure pot-boilers typed out by the penny-a-word guys who had done Basic Training on “Sizzling Planet Stories” and the like. They sported titles like TROUBLE ON TITAN and MAROONED ON MERCURY. They were fascinating, hypnotic— pulp fiction disguised by hardcovers. (We were forbidden to buy pulp magazines. Sometimes we took this prohibition literally, and stole them instead.)

For some reason I started making up my own science fiction stories, drawing cartoon serials that eventually grew to fifty or more pages in length. My mother encouraged this, if only for because it was less likely than chemistry to result in my being blown to bits. If she could have foreseen the sad and sordid result of that fixation, of course, she would have bought me a case of potassium nitrate instead.

I don’t recall having had any ambition even then towards becoming a cartoonist or fiction writer. I did want to be a poet, perceiving that one could be a poet and something else at the same time (I’d been writing verse since the age of seven or eight, and filled several small books, since lost). Mostly, I wanted to be a spaceman— the term “astronaut” lay a few years in the future— and decided it would be smart to become a scientist, to that end.

With the perspective of adult hindsight, ie cynicism, I’m truly amazed to see how close I came to having a shot at it. I went off to college in 1961, majoring in astronomy. President Kennedy then made the rather reckless vow that there would be an American on the Moon before the decade was out.

NASA started a program they called “Scientist As Astronaut”. In essence, they had perceived that it was easier to take a scientist and turn him into a pilot than to take a pilot and turn him into a scientist. To be eligible for the program, you had to have a Ph.D in a physical science, mathematics, or engineering, and be athletic enough to be trained to fly jets. I got my degree in astronomy and was accepted to a graduate program in physics.

Unfortunately, the country wasn’t just preparing to go to the Moon in those days; they were also engaged in protecting Vietnam from itself. I was drafted right after graduation, went to Vietnam as a combat soldier, and got pretty thoroughly wounded. When I came back I was in no physical shape to be a jet jockey. (And besides, the Scientist-as-Astronaut program wasn’t working out too well. The scientists persisted in wanting to be scientists; NASA was allowing them only one afternoon a week to keep up with their specialities. There was grumbling. People quit. The military forces were also pressuring NASA to use pilots from their own ranks. As a result, all but one of



the Apollo astronauts were military men. Only Harrison Schmitt, a geologist, came from the Scientist-as-Astronaut program.)

In my last semester as an undergraduate, I'd taken a writing course, during which I'd written three stories, two of them science fiction. The Army gave me a month of "compassionate leave" when I got home from Vietnam; among other things, I used that month to retype those stories and send them out to science fiction magazines. They both sold.

I got out of the Army a few months later and I went to graduate school in mathematics, writing a bit in such spare time as a graduate student can afford. I sent out a couple more stories and they sold as well. It looked like a hobby that could support itself.

In the summer of 1970, Damon Knight invited me to attend a Milford Writers Conference. It was amazing. I met a dozen of the people I'd been reading all my life, and here they were making a living writing sci. Most of them praised my work. I returned to graduate school with rather mixed feelings about mathematics.

I decided to pursue writing more seriously, and cut down school work to half-time, only taking two courses. One of them (Mathematical Simulation of Physical Systems) was central to my projected thesis, and was being taught by a man considered to be the world's authority on the subject. First day of classes, we found that the gent had fled to another university, and the course was going to be taught by a man who had never studied it in depth, but would try to stay a week ahead of us.

So I dropped out of school for a semester, to write. Providence struck: the next week I sold my first novel. My doom was sealed, and here I am. ■

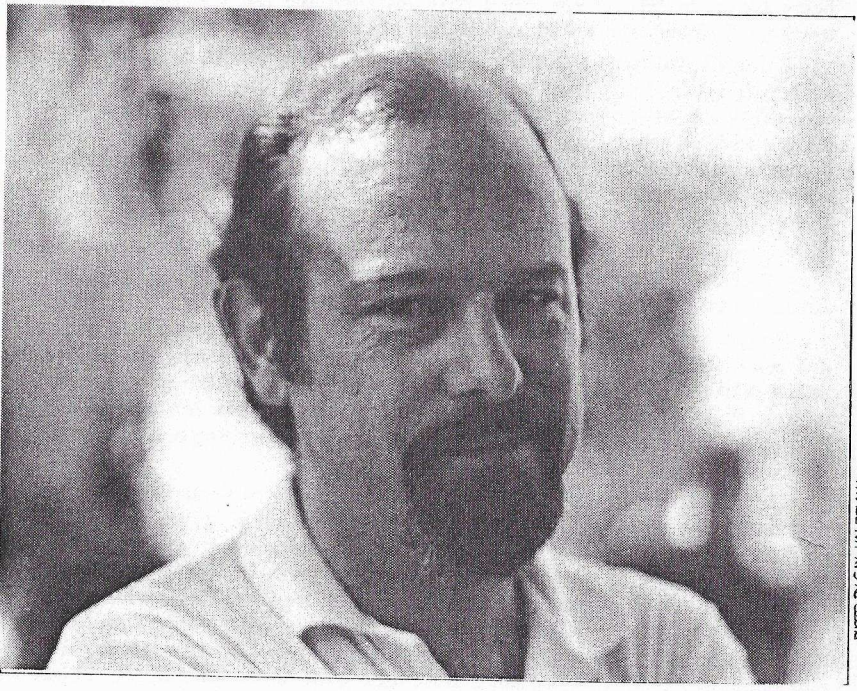
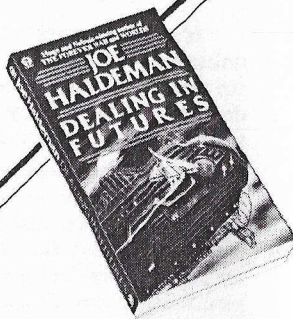
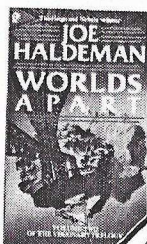
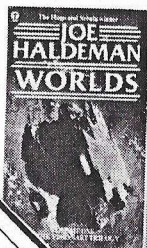


PHOTO BY GAY HALDEMAN

# JOE HALDEMAN

Guest of Honour  
at  
Albacon III

winner of the  
Hugo & Nebula  
awards



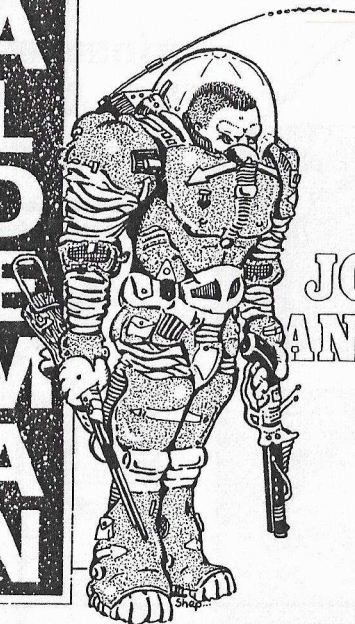
ALL MY SINS REMEMBERED  
THE FOREVER WAR  
INFINITE DREAMS  
MINDBRIDGE  
STUDY WAR NO MORE  
THERE IS NO DARKNESS  
WORLDS  
WORLDS APART

and just published  
DEALING IN FUTURES

all available in Orbit paperback

Futura

JOE  
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## JOE HALDEMAN AN APPRECIATION

It's hard to convey the impact that "Hero" had on the SF readership of the time, unless you were there at the time and had been around for some time. It came out in the June 1972 issue of *ANALOG*, with a cover by Kelly Freas, and I didn't lift those details from the "Encyclopedia of Science Fiction" (which doesn't give them) — I remembered them, and I've checked them, and they're right.

To understand why that was, maybe you need to have been an onlooker for the previous ten years — to have been old enough to stay up for Kennedy's broadcast statement on Laos, and watched in disbelief what built up from there. Just to give one example, the first time we heard the word "defoliation" over here was when Goldwater ran for President on a platform which included the use of the Bomb on the jungles... There was all that footage of planes up in the sky with bombs cascading out of them (which those of us brought up on "Reach for the Sky" were well-nigh conditioned to regard the enemy), fighters making high-speed strikes against jungle targets, machine-guns firing out of helicopters — all that emphasis on high-technology weapons blasting targets which their users couldn't see. Only the occasional outstanding report like "The Anderson Platoon" to let you glimpse what it was like on the ground, and that wasn't exactly reassuring.

I had this friend, you see, an exchange student from Florida, shared my enthusiasm for spaceflight, over here doing astronomy... taking a diploma in computing on the side, red-hot photographer, extremely shy, and virtually blind without his extremely thick glasses. He went home, graduated, was immediately snapped up by NASA, assigned to the Manned Spacecraft Centre in Houston, and then conscripted and thrown into jungle combat. There was a happy ending: at the last minute the Army saw sense and reassigned him to computer duties in the U.S. He never saw the jungle; he couldn't have seen it anyway, after the first shellburst knocked those glasses off. But if it took all that time in training, down to just two days before embarkation, to realise what a mistake they were making in his case, what about the less talented and less obviously unfit? It led you to question the philosophy behind the war, and then the war itself — not necessarily to the violent stuff in Grosvenor Square, but I still remember David Godwin's speech on the ethics of "necessary" war, in a Glasgow University Union parliamentary debate, as one of the major moments of my university career.

And where was SF, that fiercely questioning genre, while all this was going on? Well, Fantasy & Science Fiction published a two-page list of SF authors for and against the war, with equal numbers on both sides. And the definitive novel of high-technology warfare, around which the arguments raged, was Heinlein's "Starship Troopers", of 1959. Was a society built around the military ideal really so wonderful? Was that Heinlein's personal view? And a few dissatisfied voices at the back of the

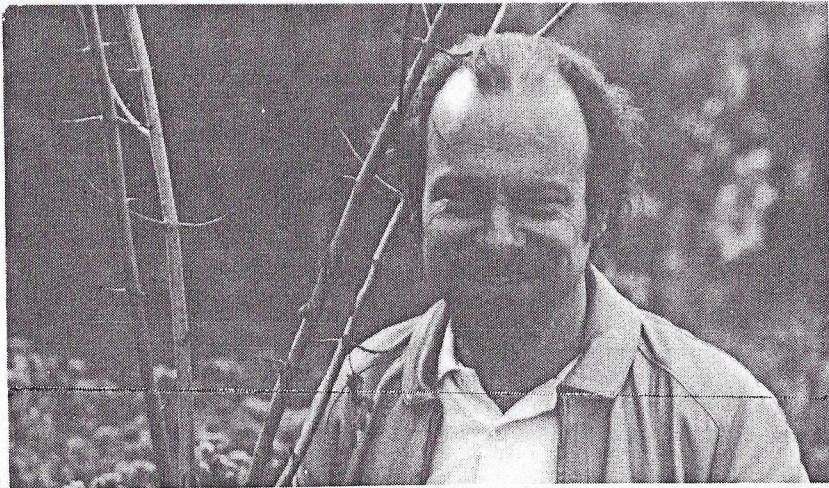


PHOTO BY GAV HALDEMAN

Con Hall saying Don't You Know There's a War On — a real one, going on now? Even if Heinlein didn't really mean it, there was no explicit statement of another point of view.

And then "Hero" came out in Analog, and it took those aspects of the war mentioned above — plus many others even more disturbing — and retold them in a setting remote from the emotions and politics of Vietnam, just to let them be seen for what they are; described without rhetoric, to let their natures speak for themselves. It made an impression, all right. And while the war came to an end, Haldeman went on to write about the alienation of his soldiers from the culture which exploited them. In

their case it was time dilation that did it, the effect of travelling at relativistic speeds, projecting them ever onwards into the future at different rates for different journeys. The major difficulty for the writer who tries this is that the future tends to become a series of progressively less detailed and less interesting snapshots. Poul Anderson's "Tau Zero" falls into that problem, in my view, and I wouldn't agree with the many who think that's the definitive time dilation novel. I think it's "The Forever War".

You get some idea of its influence overall if you look up the cross-references to Haldeman's entry in "The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction". They're all to "The Forever War" except for the two specific ones on Matter Transmission and Colonisation which relate to "Mindbridge". One possible reason for this is that in "Mindbridge" once again the extraterrestrials are a hive-mind and the only real problem is to solve the mechanics of communicating with them/it, by changing the mental nature of mankind. "All My Sins Remembered" doesn't get any cross-references, and that strikes me as odd because I think it's the more memorable book. One of the ongoing problems of Sf is the cypher nature-like nature of so many of the characters. (I was amazed to discover, reviewing Van Vogt's "Quest for the Future", that this "new" novel consisted of short stories from old anthologies run together, and simply making the name of the hero the same throughout sufficed for continuity of character.) Haldeman makes the problem worse for himself by the plot device of giving the hero new identities through conditioning and plastic surgery.

In real life, less drastic changes of role than that can lead to personality disorders, and that is what happens to McGavin in "All My Sins Remembered". The risk the author runs here is that the character could end up without a character of his own — like the actor in Ellison's "All the Sounds of Fear", only not by the author's intent. But Haldeman succeeds: he gives us the underlying McGavin as an individual moved and controlled against his wishes by an organization which demands his loyalty but is beyond his control. But that is also the situation in "The Forever War" and "Mindbridge". Is this mere repetition, or is there an underlying statement, and if so what is it?

I first read "The Forever War" in book form to review it for "The Glasgow Herald", where I said, Joe Haldeman's "The Forever War" runs in the future, for 1200 years, between enemies evenly matched. Time dilation, due to interstellar transport near the speed of light, allows the narrator to see it (in snatches) from beginning to end. The device allows Haldeman (a Vietnam veteran) more realism than the usual interstellar epic: the soldier's ignorance of the overall picture, the indifference of the authorities to his personal feelings, and their total lack of use for him afterwards; but leads to an uneasy let-down, since in future fiction the reader feels he has the right to grasp the Big Picture eventually. Haldeman's war is eventually ended by clones who can communicate only with one another, leaving the characters and the reader in the dark.

"Interstellar war could occur only between races with evenly matched technology, or drastically differing technologies making conflict possible. Consciously or unconsciously Haldeman may realise this, and be making the more serious point that loss of individuality means loss of progress. In that case, the use of time-dilation to bring the war survivors together again is important, not just a slick romantic ending as some critics have said. Their exile in time allows mankind to bypass the cloning dead-end, and try another course."

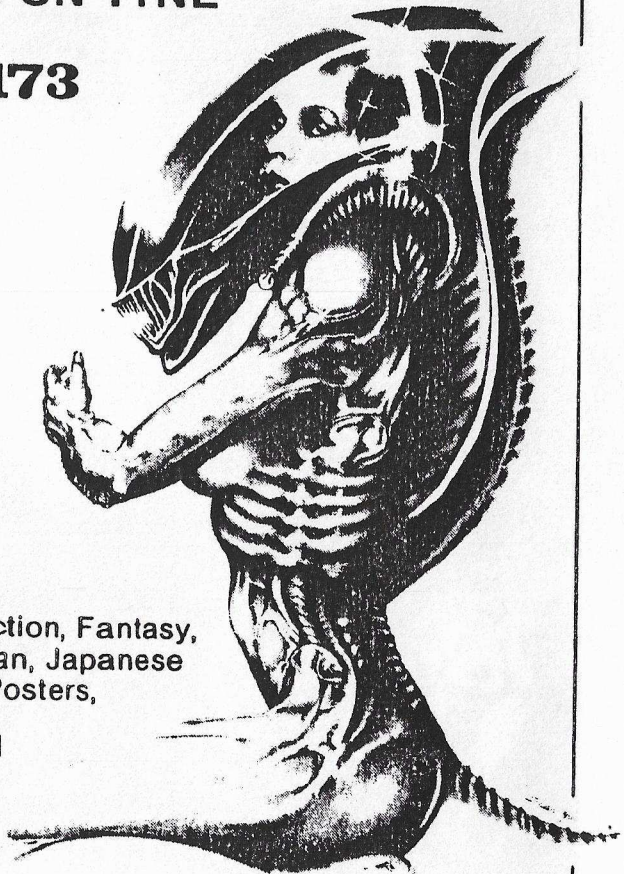
Bringing Joe Haldeman to Glasgow was a good idea; now we can ask him about that.

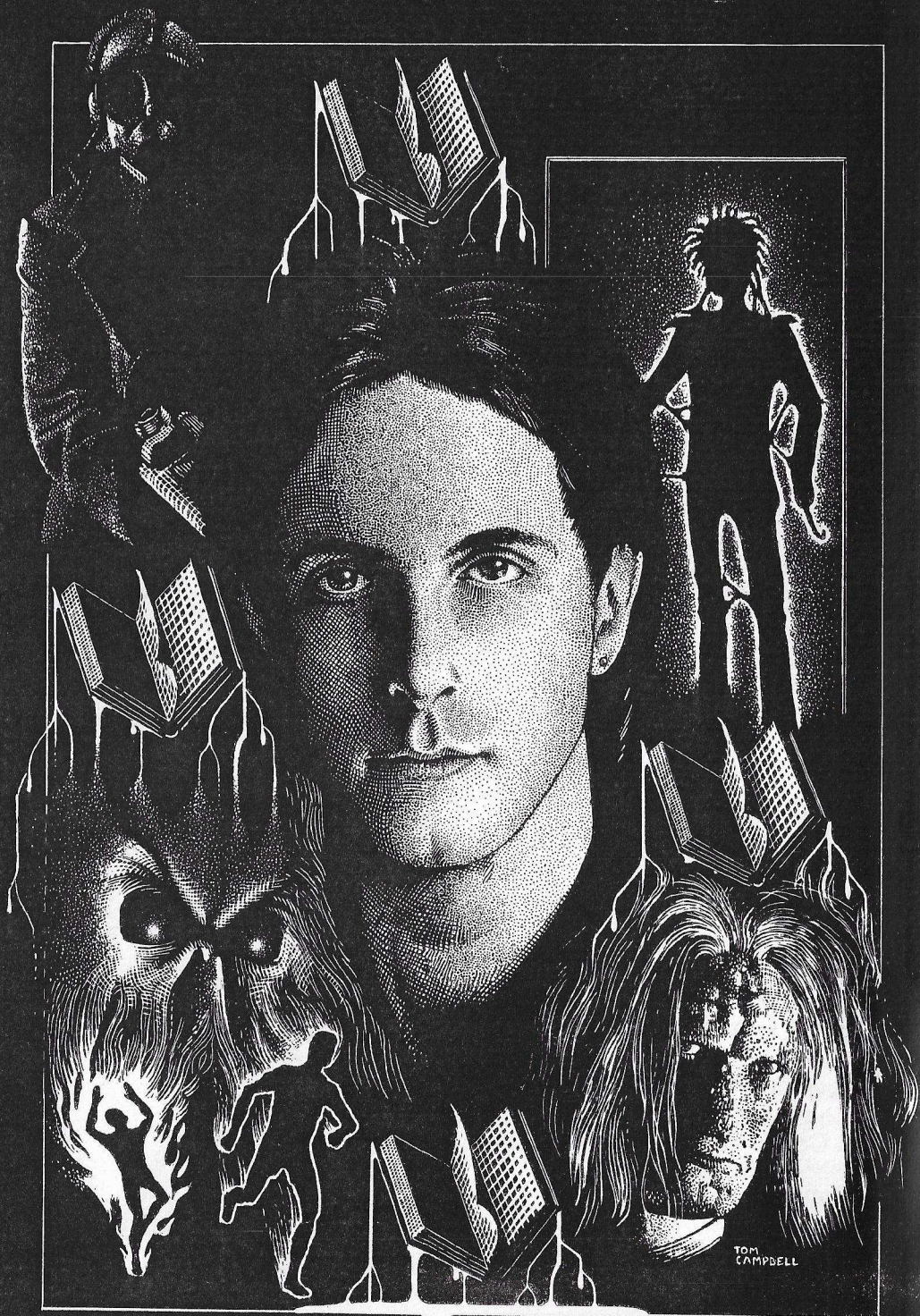
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ramsey campbell

## A BARKER WITH BITE

Helen Clarke began it all. She was a teacher at Quarry Bank High in Liverpool who invited me to give a talk on horror to the fourth-year pupils. The kids were delighted when I suggested that one might take Machen's "White Powder" to deal with venereal disease, and some (by now restive) members of the teaching staff beat a dismayed retreat when I played Frank Zappa's parody of Schoenberg from "Absolutely Free". The only statement I recall word for word is my final rallying call: "Horror is all we have not yet come to terms with."

In the next year or two I kept encountering one of Helen's pupils here and there in Liverpool, roaring with laughter at the slyer bits of William Klein's film "Mr Freedom" in a Continental cinema that was later to become a shrine of the Blessed Sacrament, editing "Humphri", the alternative school magazine whose unbound pages came in a plastic bag. Once I met him at one of Helen's parties, and he asked me to recommend markets for some excellent short stories. My impression just then was that there weren't many markets, and while I don't think I was rude, I can't imagine I was encouraging.

Most of ten years later I heard from him again, when he rang to ask if I could advise him about the publication of books of horror stories. Now, having been encouraged very early in my career by August Derleth, I do try to help fledgling writers, but Christ, sometimes it's a chore: whenever a new edition of one of my anthologies appears, I can expect an unsolicited story or several shortly after, by the equivalent in my field of the kind of writer who would end a science fiction story by revealing that the characters are called Adam and Eve. Still, the guy on the phone was a friend of Helen Clarke's, and so I went to meet him in Liverpool. His name was Clive Barker.

The rest you know, or soon will. I don't want to make any particular claim that I helped him get started: the truth is that by then he was well on his way. He'd only wanted my advice on details of the contracts he had already signed for the first three "Books of Blood". "Frankenstein in Love", "The History of the Devil" and "The Secret Life of Cartoons" had already been staged, and the best of these is now bound for the West End. Since that first publication the Books of Blood have doubled, and there's his novel "The Damnation Game", which offers such quintessentially Barkerish pleasures as a character who carries on putrefying throughout the book. I see no reason to change the opinion I based on his first books: Clive is the first true voice of the latest generation of horror writers, the first to write horror in Technicolour, the man who lets the monsters speak for themselves and for us. The movies botched his "Underworld" script, I hear, but perhaps the film "Rawhead Rex" will make up for that. In any case, Clive will be writing and directing a couple of films, one for the producer of "Alien". And I haven't even mentioned his skills as an artist. Perhaps you'll have a chance to see for yourselves.

So much for introductions, now you should meet him. I think you'll be charmed and delighted; I am. Long may he continue to astonish us.



# YOU ARE HERE BECAUSE YOU WANT THE REAL THING

The 1983 World Fantasy Convention was not one of the best. There are only three things I remember clearly: first, that my wife left the second night with a raging strep infection and a temperature of a hundred and two; second, that it was held in New Haven, a Connecticut city with all the charm of a rat-infested cellar in a James Herbert novel; and third, (the only good one), it was at that convention I first heard about Clive Barker.

Some science fiction writer or other has advanced the concept that there are "times": Robert Fulton may get the credit when it was "steam-boat time", but there may have been forty other people working on the idea at the same time, and four hundred saying "wouldn't it be nice if...?" In the same way, there may have been "electric light time," "hot-air balloon time," "atomic bomb time"... and (one thought leads to another) "Clive Barker time."

Does that sound silly? Perhaps. All I know is that at the 1982 WFC (held in Someplace, Maryland, as I recall), the name of Clive Barker was never uttered. At the 1983 WFC, everyone was talking about him.

Was Ramsey Campbell the fellow who said Barker was about to revolutionise horror fiction "as Stephen King revolutionised it in 1975"? Seems logical, as Campbell read and did an introduction for Barker's "Books of Blood" and would have been familiar with the contents in the fall of '83. But I cannot say it was, because I'm not sure Ramsey was at that convention (remember, we're talking New Haven here). All I'm really sure of is that it was one of "you Brits." And that most of what one heard in the huckster room during those three days was "What do you know about Clive Baker?" and "What do you know about "The Books of Blood"?"

In the world of films and pop music, the golden tones of such advanced heralds usually signal the coming of a colossal gas-bag disguised as a singer or an actor. In the world of books— especially in the small and busy sub-worlds of genre fiction— this is less apt to be the case. Most writers, particularly most unknowns, do not have press-agents, and word of mouth, while not always trustworthy, is usually sincere.

On the first night of that convention, Peter Straub recounted a story from "The Books of Blood", although whether he was telling it as it had been told to him (as in a fairy-tale opener, don't you know) or whether he had actually read it is something I also don't recall (keep telling yourself New Haven, New Haven, and drunk, drunk). The story, of two villages whose populaces formed themselves into a pair of gigantic gladiators who did ritual battle with each other, "astonished me with its originality and audacity," Peter said. He paused and then added reflectively, "I was fucking jealous." The laughter from the audience attending the panel seemed to startle him.

I was also startled by the laughter, because I felt the same way. Just hearing the idea of "In the Hills, the Valleys" was enough to convince me that someone almost as large as one of those rural titans in Barker's story was probably coming. On that same panel I mentioned the number of times I had heard Barker's name, and mentioned Jan Wenner's comment: "I have seen the future of rock and roll, and his name is Bruce Springsteen." What I said that night was that I had heard Barker's name enough at the convention to suspect the same might apply.

An appreciation of Clive Barker

Not long into the following year, my wife and I lectured at a writing seminar in London, and I picked up "The Books of Blood" at Forbidden Planet. And I discovered it was no hype, no case of the Emperor's new clothes or fuck ya now, see ya later. Barker was not merely good; he was great. Not great in the way mainstream critics are liable to appreciate for a good many years, not great in a way academicians are ever going to like very much, but great in the only way that matters: he doesn't just have the goods, he is the goods. At the beginning of Bob Seger's first live album— — "Live Bullet", the good one— — you can hear the stage announcer telling an audience almost delirious with excitement, "You are here because you want the real thing." The same might be said of Barker's audience.

"I have nothing to apologize for," Frank Norris— — a far less sensitive artist than his naturalistic contemporary Theodore Dreiser — remarked following the almost universal critical outcry at the brutality in his novel "The Octopus". "Should I fear? What should I fear? I did not truckle. I told them the truth." And although the stories in "The Books of Blood" are fantasies, Barker also tells the truth, and tells it with a complete ecstatic savagery that is not grace in its hacking urgent falling-downstairs progress but becomes grace by the force of his personality and vision. He does not breathe grace into these stories; he beats it into them. You want to feel the way Clive Barker felt when he wrote the best of these? Maybe not. You might well die of the high. We're talking about high explosives.

Good fiction is always the truth inside the lie; for fiction to be otherwise is to be immoral, and immoral fiction is always bad fiction. The writer of good fiction must never truckle, as Frank Norris never did, as Dickens never did. Old Charlie may have been a bit soppy in the clinches, but when clobbering time came, he had dynamite in both fists.

So does Clive Barker.

Never— — never— — in my life have I been so completely shaken by a collection of stories. Never have I actually put a book aside because I was alone and knew I must soon turn out the lights... or at least turn in. I have never experienced such a combination of revulsion, delight, and amazement. The first encounter with Clive Barker's work was a little like eating anchovy ice cream. That's really the only way I can put it.

At first glance (or grimace), Barker's work may seem no more admirable than that of any other writer of what the British call "nasties" (a term I like a lot)— — Shaun Hutson, let us say, or the redoubtable Guy N. Smith, with his terminal case of the crabs. But there's more to Clive Barker than crabs and claws; he is observant, witty, satiric, and possessed of a clear moral vision— — which is only to say he finds the truth inside his lies. And oh my God, can the man write. No matter how gruesome the material, you are witched into the story, hooked, and then propelled onward.

Since "The Books of Blood", Barker has published a novel ("The Damnation Game") and is, I believe, on the verge of visiting another "Books of Blood" on an unsuspecting world. A good thing for us (some of us, anyway, he chuckled). Barker's tales, both surreal and naturalistic at the same time, represent horror fiction at its best.. which is also its worst: nasty, insane, brutal, breathtaking, allegorical, asymmetrical, deeply revolting and deeply challenging. Here are all the freaks and weeping children. His unabashed glee in what he does is his best recommendation, the sledgehammer effect of his tales his best card of identity. Are you here because you want the real thing? Then you are here to meet Clive Barker. ■ ■

stephen king

WINNER OF THE WORLD FANTASY AWARD  
FOR THE BEST ANTHOLOGY

"I have seen the future of the horror genre and his name is  
Clive Barker"

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MINE HOST!  
ANOTHER GINGER  
BEER AND LIME  
IF YOU PLEASE!!

John Jarrold



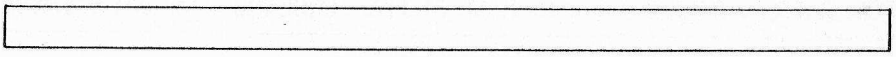
Dave Langford  
WITH ROD AND GUN FURTHER

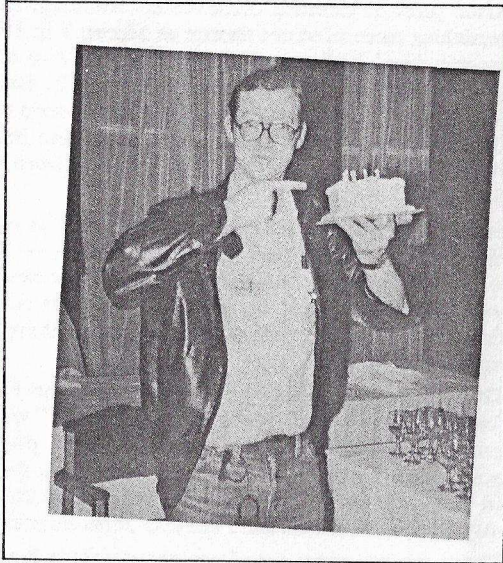
Tolkien has a lot to answer for: the present spate of six-book trilogies, endless volumes of posthumous and not very well embalmed fragments, Stephen Donaldson, Terry Brooks, and John Jarrold.

Yes— — travel back in time with me to 1972, and see the infant Jarrold discovering fandom through one of its least trendy portals, the Tolkien Society. I like to imagine him painfully tracing elvish script, and taking the lead in frenzied debates as to whether Frodo's later malaise could best be diagnosed as TB, leprosy or herpes. Even now, any casual mention of the Land of Mordor fills John's eyes with misty nostalgia and his glass with beer, as he drinks to forget. (Admittedly, other stimuli can produce the same effect— — words like "SF", "Mexico", "America", and "the".)

I was first introduced into his awesome presence in 1974, during an early Pieria writers' meeting at Rob Holdstock's literary pigsty. We each took turns to read a story, after which everyone else would explain how utterly worthless, cliched, unsaleable and otherwise quite good it had been.

The Jarrold contribution was called "The Deathbird". He frankly admitted that there was some other little-known SF story with this title, which he'd been careful not to read for fear of Influence. As I remember it, the unfortunate hero was endlessly pursued across a broken landscape by this vast malignant bird whose only goal in life was to track him down and crap on him. (Luckily I forget the details. Come to think of it, I'd forgotten them by the time I was supposed to comment on the story, only five minutes after hearing it.) Most of the people at that meeting later became professional authors, but John valued his street-credibility too much to fall into this common trap.





## UP JOHN JARROLD

Instead he won a name for himself in London fandom as generous and pissed. Fanzines of the period awarded him the title "bemused drunk" (Graham Charnock, Vibrator), and mentioned in passing that "we'd all love him just as much if he didn't buy so many rounds, but I hope no one tells him so" (can't trace this one, but probably it was Leroy Kettle).

Soon he began to publish his still current and still infrequent fanzine *Prevert*, of which it has so often been said "Isn't that a typo?" No, it's a deeply subtle allusion to *Dr Strangelove*. I was much impressed by an early issue in which the editor smugly described how he'd been to a *Worldcon* and mingled with Larry Niven. Envy, envy, I thought, this being a long time before my final illusions were shattered by reading *The Integral Trees*.

Since we're wallowing in history, let's look at a contemporary review of the first-ever Jarroldzine, in *True Rat* 6:

Friendly young drunkard John Jarrold put down his large whisky just long enough to get out *Prevert* 1, which, with its smutty white paper, poor duplication, inverted middle page, layout and stapling bears an unnatural resemblance to *True Rat* 1, or, of course, to any partially apt first ever issue. Highlight is Bob Shaw's excellent-as-usual article "Allies in Wonderland", arts and farts in chilly Newcastle. Lowlights are the book reviews... If John can establish a less hurried and less self-conscious editorial presence and can coincide that with a few moments of sobriety, he might do ok. Send him an article. I'm sure he buy you shome drinksh. (Leroy Kettle)

This review must have had its effect, because these days "John Jarrold" and "self-conscious" are concepts it's pretty hard to get into the same room, let alone the same sentence.

After years of carefully orchestrated obscurity, our hero came into his own with an astonishing piece of street theatre at Silicon 7 in 1983. Silicon traditionally ruins its unwary members' bodies and minds in a marathon of games with which fans should not meddle: that year, the key challenge was *The Brothers Karamazov* (one of Stanislaw Lem's lesser-known space operas). A recorded dramatisation was provided, with gaps in the dialogue which aspiring thespians were invited to fill with their own emotive interpretations. Fan after fan read the lines from the script, and betrayed a deeply sensitive lack of talent.

When J. Jarrold was placed in the hot-seat, the convention reeled in unison at his panache and his well stirred mix of accents— including Bogart, Vladivar, von Stroheim, Lower Slobbovian and, above all, Mexican. Deafness luckily saved many of my brain-cells; the rest of the gathering was less fortunate, as proved when for the first time in the history of Silicon Silly Games, there was a mass request for a repeat performance. Arribal

Thus, somewhat indirectly, was born Mexican Fandom (We don' need no steen-kin' badges," etc.); and Mexican, which put "written science fiction" back into conventions— in the form of Russell Hoban playing with clockwork mice, Geoff Ryman in drag, and Alasdair Gray conducting his famous horizontal meditation seminar in the entrance to the con hall. And, of course, Mexican's committee included not only two papier-mache cacti but also John Jarrold.

There are lots more anecdotes about John's legendary cool, as when after Mexico he impressed visiting US punk fan Lucy Huntzinger by a pub crawl during which he sank nineteen pints without turning a hair. She was still more impressed as, still not turning a hair, he nonchalantly showed her the contents of his stomach on several consecutive stations of the Piccadilly Line.

More recently he's been seized by wanderlust. "I confidently expect to be living in New York by the end of 1986"— believe this if you like. In late 1985 the American TAFF administrators, Patrick and Teresa Nielson Hayden, were alarmed by a transatlantic phone call in which John announced his intention of ending it all. It was around 3am, New York time. "I can't stand Britain any longer," he approximately cried (it is not known whether "Britain" is here a euphemism for "Margaret Thatcher"). "I'm going to... take the first plane from Heathrow! See you tomorrow!"

Then he hung up.

An alarmed Patrick phoned his UK counterpart Rob Hansen, who rang the Jarrold house: no John. Hours went by in silence and suspense. Was JJ poised in airborne transition, like someone in a particularly bad Dune sequel, about to make the evolutionary quantum leap and become Supercool USA?

Later, quizzed by Mr Hansen, he explained: "I couldn't get a flight so I came back home."

For contributions such as this to fandom as we know it, John walked off in 1985 with the Nova Award for Best Farzine (Prevert again), to massed cries of enthusiasm, admiration and disbelief.

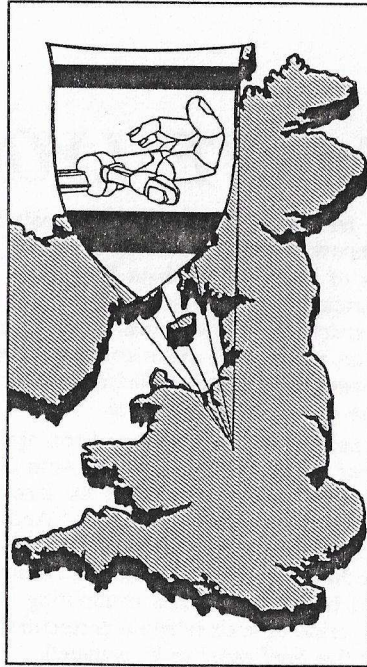
A man of legend, as you see. Treat him with the care he deserves: buy him lots of nice tonic water. When at 3am he enquires about buses to the airport, discourage him with the committee's treasured bondage equipment. And beware of asking for a repeat performance of his famous ethnic impersonations... there's the terrible danger that he might do it. Frankly, I don't know that English-Scots relations could survive John's version of a Glaswegian accent. ■

# BECCON

# 87

## A BID FOR THE 1987

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## PETE LYON GUEST ARTIST

# *LIFE OF PETE LYON (1950-)*

As those who are familiar with the Leeds Analysis of Renaissance Data (L.A.R.D.) project will know, Giorgio Vasari's "Lives of the Artists" has already yielded astonishing depth of information about Florentine fandom during the 16th century. Although the Sunday Times has yet to verify our work, I had intended to thank Pete Lyon in this article for his invaluable assistance on the project. However, during a recent analysis an amazing 25 point congruence appeared on our screens, suggesting that Vasari himself had already anticipated this rising star of fanish and professional art through his own divinatory studies.

Ever cautious, we examined our data on Pete Lyon again, yet it still seemed evident that Vasari, a member of the "Ordo Bianco del Artis Illuminatus Mysteriis", had disguised a prophetic vision of Pete's career under the innocent title "Life of Antonio Corregio". As we had already determined that "Life of Andrea Mantegna" was a shallow anagrammatical cipher for his famous lament "Fan Art - O! A flaming nude!", it was no surprise that something was hidden within this companion essay, but I was fascinated to see that Vasari had indeed risked committing to paper the results of his arcane practises during a period of such religious persecution. Equally fascinated, Pete Lyon gave permission for this brief paper to be prepared.

To understand the congruences, we need only extract a few sentences and see how closely they describe Pete Lyon himself. By the second sentence we see Vasari's skill at work:

"..an outstanding and superbly accomplished painter who acquired the modern style so perfectly that within a few years, through his natural gifts and practise in art, he became a craftsman of tremendous distinction."

I am sure no reader will deny how well this matches Pete's own progression from infant doodler to mature artisan. Vasari continues:

"He was a very mild man and all his life, for the sake of his family, he was a slave to his work, which brought him great distress. He was motivated by his inherent goodness of soul, but in supporting the inevitable sorrows of his fellow men he did more than was reasonable."

I myself have often seen Pete doing more than was reasonable to support the sorrows of his fellow men, and he admitted, when questioned closely on this point, that his sense of fairness and his dislike of duplicity was often his undoing. When asked whether he felt Vasari's description of him as "a slave to his work" was accurate, he

accepted that he sometimes showed a bizarre level of dedication to his art - how appropriate, then, that Vasari should say:

"Moreover, "Corregio" was very melancholy in the practice of his art, at which he toiled unceasingly."

There, a clear reference to the number of times Pete had refused to come down to the West Riding because of the amount of work he had to finish! Vasari, of course, had to see through and ease, darkly, and we cannot know whether the veil of years or political necessity forced him to embroider the next part of his work, in which he describes the artist's religious works. Pete was quick to deny that he had ever painted a fresco at the cathedral or the Franciscan church in Parma, but his voice shook a little as he admitted that he had produced similar religious pieces, such as the notable "Mural in Woolworth's Brown" executed on a wall at Alan Ferguson's old house.

"It did include elements such as Christ nailed to a hang-glider" he said cautiously.

Further revelations about his fascination with the imagery of bombed cathedrals and ruined gothic buildings led me to believe that once again Vasari was close to the mark. Descriptions follow of "Corregio's" work in red chalk, a medium which Pete has also used (Pete's insistence that he also used chalks of other colours was clearly pre-variation), and of notable female nudes:

"..so soft in colouring and with the shadows of the flesh so skillfully painted that they looked like flesh and blood rather than paint."

If the readers are familiar with Pete's recurring use of organic symbology and his delicate interpretations of the female form, then I need not comment further. The references at this point to one Fedingo, a patron for whom the artist did many and various pictures, are clearly a thinly-veiled mention of Ferguson, Pete's fannish patron and publisher of his work in such journals as "Second Hand Wave", where his drawings led to a wider recognition in fannish circles. Let Vasari tell more:

"Indeed, he had no great opinion of himself nor, knowing the difficulties involved, was he persuaded that he could attain the perfection he wished for as a painter. He contented himself with very little, and led a good Christian life."

At this point I admit that I fell into doubt, yet as Pete spoke to me of his early drawings for RE homework, his position as a devout ex-Catholic and the corrective moral influence of his girlfriend, I was reassured. Finally, I came to the end of Vasari's description:

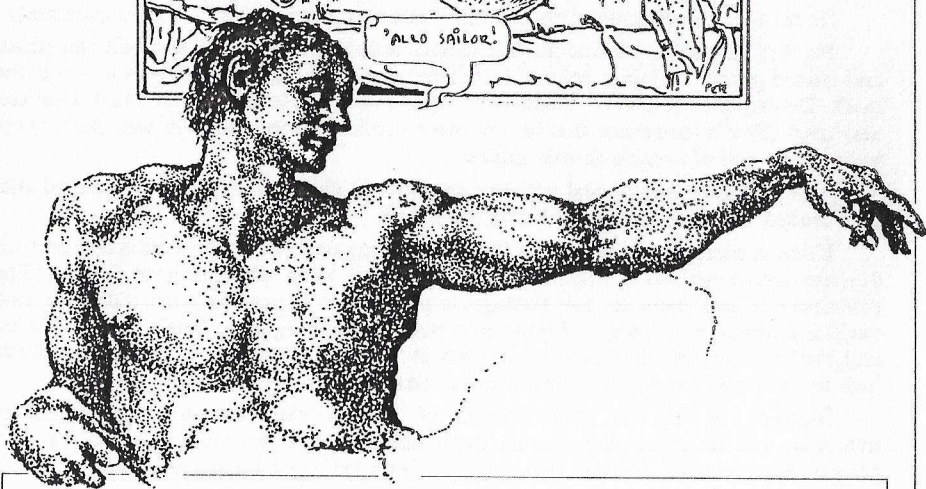
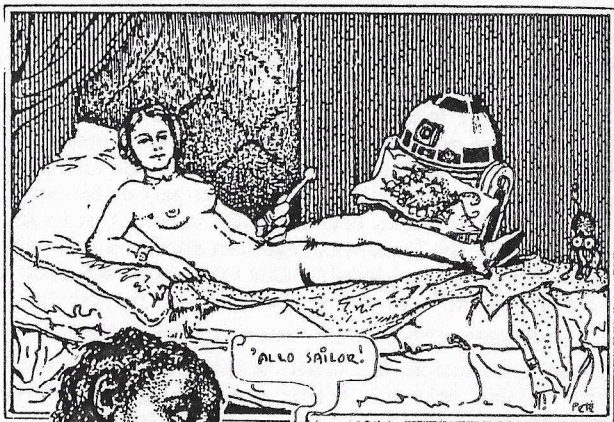
"Burdened as he was by family cares, (he) was always anxious to economise..."

Pete had described to me the difficulties of early years, neither amateur nor professional then, and those times when he had starved to buy canvas and paints, and again I understood. I felt deeply grateful that I had been granted such an insight, and felt sure that Vasari's contemporaries must have marvelled at his gift - to conceive such a biography almost 400 years before the birth of the artist is remarkable indeed.

As I placed the "Lives" down, I noticed one last, telling point. The supposed "Corregio" is given the dates 1489-1534; harmless deception one would think. However, as I idly added the digits together, I realised they came to exactly Pete Lyon's age! Astonishing, isn't it?

Nota Bene: Other authorities have suggested that "Life of Antonio Corregio" is an anagram of "I of Gor - or Iceflow Nation" and that it was Vasari's manuscript that inspired John Norman's famous series. As Pete Lyon is the more notable artisan of the two, L.A.R.D. have discounted this weak theory. ■

*Simon Polley*



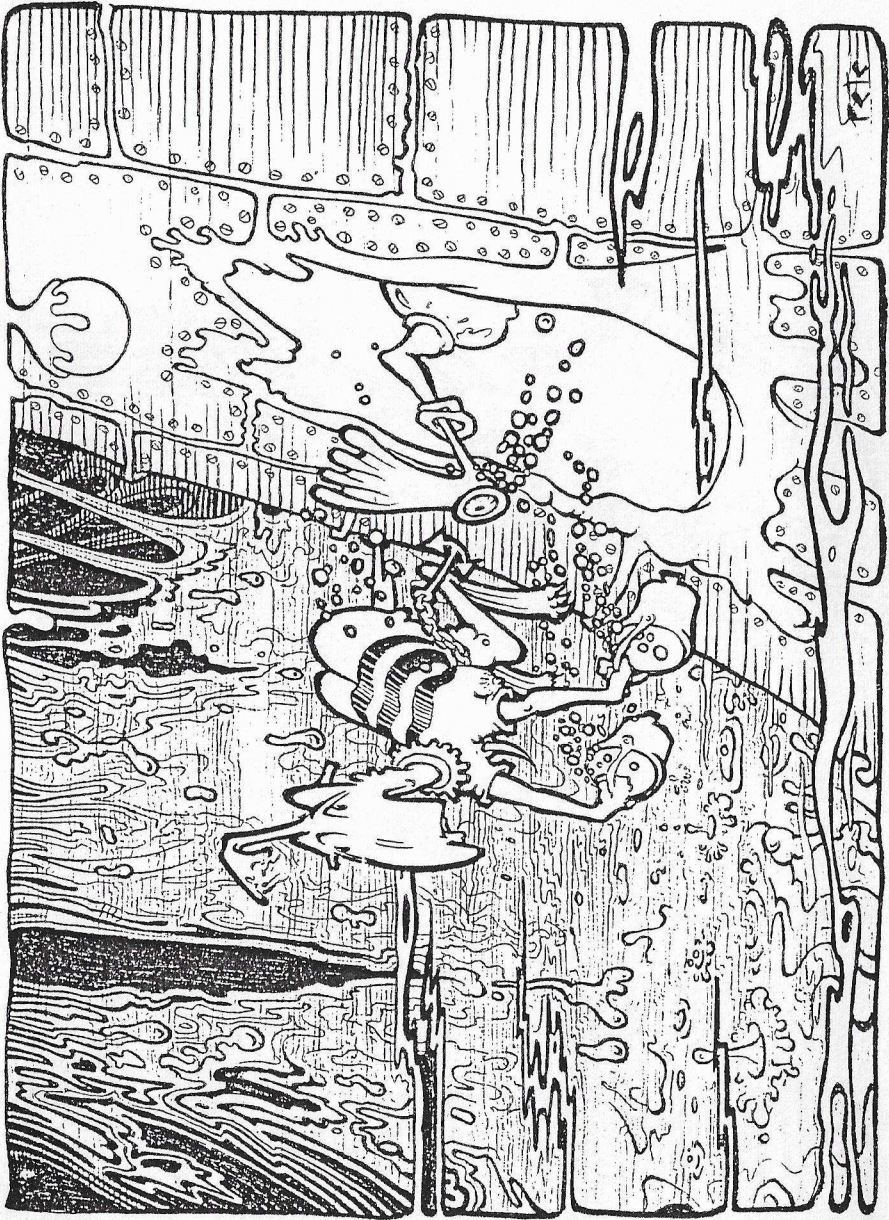
# the LYON gallery

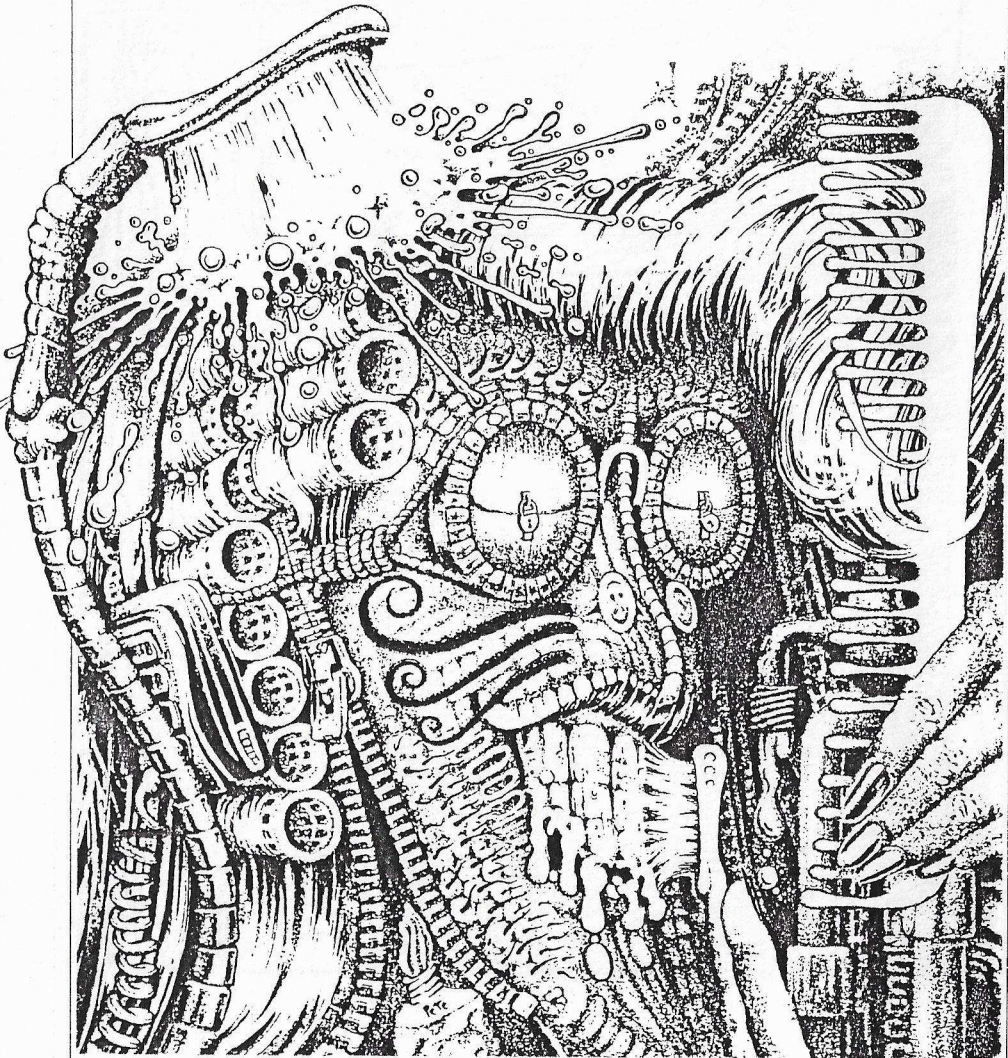
Here is a small selection of drawings by Pete Lyon. If you want to see more, then visit the art show!

# Maggie T















# interzone

SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY

## ITS PLACE IN THE UNIVERSE

Look in any newsagent and you'll see dozens of magazines about computers, plenty on cars, lots on every leisure interest from sex to stamp collecting. But you won't find a British magazine of science fiction. You might see one with full colour pin-ups of Gremlins and advice on making plastic models of the Starship Enterprise, but I'm talking about science fiction here, the root of it all — the written word which spawned the dreams which spawned the wide-screen SFX, the micro, the space invaders, and the Zombo House-Tidy Home Robot with Integral Cassette Player (batteries not included.)

Perhaps such things would have come into being anyway. We might well be living in a world of skyscrapers and digital watches even if Hugo Gernsback had stuck with short-wave radio and H.G. Wells had written westerns. But science fiction is still important to the world in which we live. It is very much a part of our modern world-view, not as much as sex perhaps but certainly more than stamp collecting. So why is there no magazine on the stands?

The last readily available British SF magazine to survive longer than a few months was New English Library's ingeniously titled SCIENCE FICTION MONTHLY back in the early seventies. But its mentors seemed more interested in reprinting cover artwork and thereby giving publicity to N.E.L.'s paperback range than in finding decent fiction to publish. And obviously the publicity didn't work well enough, because N.E.L. dropped it after a couple of years.

More recent efforts to establish a magazine: VORTEX and EXTRO, perished at the idle whims of all-powerful inherently evil alien life forms — W.H. Smith and the Midland Bank respectively. The latest entry into the field, INTERZONE (I must declare an interest here. I am a co-editor) has deliberately started small so as to avoid putting itself at the mercy of such creatures. We haven't borrowed money and we haven't gone for wide distribution, which is why you won't find the magazine on most news-stands. But we do exist, honestly, and we've survived for four years now, publishing a good standard of fiction and slowly evolving from a slim, rather spartan publication into the bulky, feature filled magazine with full-colour cover you can buy

today. I don't really intend to lapse into sales patter for the rest of this article so I'll refer you to the INTERZONE leaflet you'll find in your Albacon programme package. This gives full details on how wonderful we are and how LOCUS thinks we publish "fiction so powerful it will make the hair stand on end." What they actually said was "fiction so powerful it will make the teeth rattle and the hair stand on end" but we thought we'd leave out the bit about the teeth in case people got worried about their dentist's bills.

You can use the leaflet to subscribe or you can — no doubt — buy a copy here in the Albacon bookroom. And reading the magazine will tell you a lot more than I will by droning on about it. But of course I'm going to do that anyway. (This isn't sales patter, you understand, this is being subtle.)

INTERZONE is edited and published by an unpaid team, which means that we work on it in between earning a living, washing up, putting out the cat, watching DR.WHO etc. etc. The magazine appears four times a year and features five or six SF and fantasy stories per issue, along with illustrations, book and film reviews, news, and interviews with writers. (That wasn't very subtle, was it? I'll try harder.)

The magazine has been likened to Michael Moorcock's magazine NEW WORLDS back in the sixties. This is probably our own fault, because the first issue featured four stories by former NEW WORLDS writers, but the comparison is rather misleading. Rightly or wrongly NEW WORLDS is remembered today for its avant garde, experimental writing and while INTERZONE has published occasional such pieces, the bulk of our material consists of conventional, linear narrative stories, which are meant to entertain as well as boggle the mind. In another respect, the comparison is more welcome. INTERZONE, like NEW WORLDS before it, is looking for new ideas, not re-workings of old SF notions. But of course this means that we are looking for what is new in the eighties, not for what was new twenty years ago.

"Do you feel that John W. Campbell is looking over your shoulder?" asked Ian Sorensen, when he suggested this article. "Would Hugo Gernsback consider INTERZONE to be good 'scientifiction'?" The answers are "No" and "It doesn't really matter." Science fiction has been backward-looking for too long, taking too many of its ideas from previous "golden ages", instead of looking as far ahead as, well, even the present. Tradition is a dangerous thing for a genre which should be concerned with — and more able than any other kind of writing to cope with — the present and the future.

This is not to disparage SF's past. There is nothing wrong with it. Some knowledge of it is even necessary to prevent us constantly re-inventing the time machine. But INTERZONE is seeking writers who are willing to look at the world around them and the technology which dominates that world, and to interrelate them into the future with a fresh original mind, even if it's only as far ahead as tomorrow.

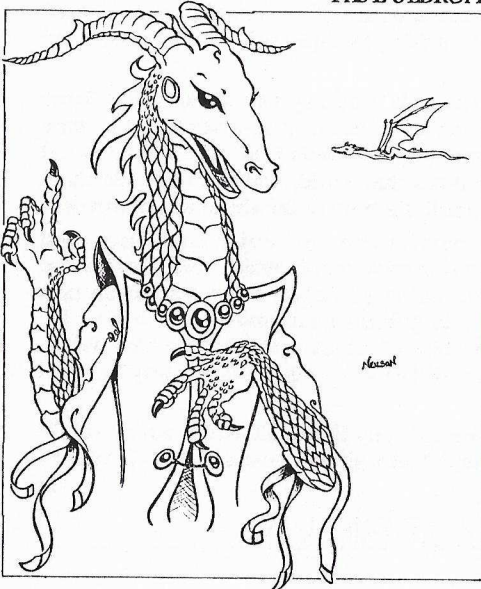
And INTERZONE is also looking for new writers. We enjoy publishing good work from established names but it's discovering new people which really makes the enterprise worthwhile. In our first four years, we've published some two dozen new and emerging writers and we hope to go on to publish many more. We believe it's vital for a short story market to exist in this country, so that new writers have somewhere to publish as they develop. That's why INTERZONE is here and why we want it to stay around and grow in popularity.

Give us a try. Fill out the subscription form or buy INTERZONE at your local SF specialist. Send us a story. Have another drink. Make gibbon noises. Just DO SOMETHING. ■

**YORCON 3 FINAL ACCOUNTS**

Item	Income	Expenditure
Registrations	5753.49	
Hotel Deposits	1648.00	
Games Machines	152.50	
Art Auction	26.55	
Book Auction	64.10	
Book Room	290.00	
Advertising	140.00	
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>8074.64</b>	
Publications		589.41
GoH Expenses		760.01
Films		841.01
Postage & 'Phone		757.77
Sundry Materials		86.97
Equipment Hire		260.60
Stationery		80.38
Travel		294.62
Prizes		135.25
Insurance		273.00
Art Show		6.80
Fan Room		118.21
Badges		57.02
Main Programme Expenses		619.45
Room Hire		615.39
Creche		170.00
Disco		25.00
Hotel Deposits	1648.00	
Gratuities		80.00
Refunds		45.00
Novacon Party		40.00
Games Machines		30.00
TAFF & GUFF Donations		50.00
<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>7583.89</b>
<b>Surplus</b>	<b>490.75</b>	

PAUL OLDROYD



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Gwyneth Jones

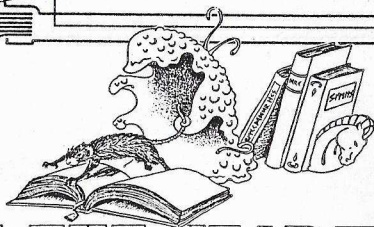
Graham Dunstan Martin will be signing copies of  
*Time-slip* at the Convention

Also available by Graham Dunstan Martin is *The Soul Master*  
and by Gwyneth Jones is *Divine Endurance*, both in Unicorn



**ORION**





## ▽ 1985 BOOKS OF THE YEAR ▽

1984 saw many of Britain's leading science fiction writers producing impressive work — Priest's "The Glamour", Holdstock's "Mythago Wood", Kilworth's "A Theatre of Timesmiths", Shaw's "Fire Pattern", not to mention Ballard's "Empire of The Sun", Moorcock's "Laughter of Carthage", Angela Carter's "Nights At The Circus" and Gwyneth Jones' astounding 'debut' "Divine Endurance". In 1985 Holdstock wrote the novelisation of John Boorman's "The Emerald Forest", Shaw revised an earlier novel and Angela Carter produced a collection of short stories and another collection of radio plays — the rest were silent. By comparison, 1985 almost has to be the weaker, yet it stands up remarkably well to its better-endowed neighbour; in fact there is reason to argue that in science fiction terms 1985 has been a far more important year.

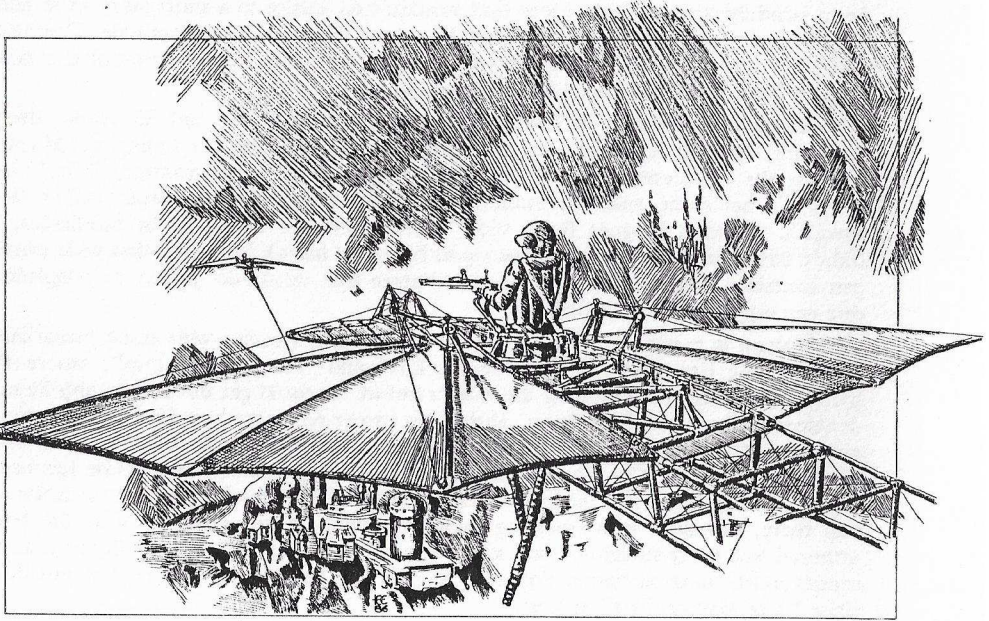
The most significant event of the year has surely been the emergence of feminist science fiction. Not exactly a new phenomenon, far and away the best books on the Women's Press science fiction list are reprints — the work of Joanna Russ standing out particularly. But now, for the first time, the specialist feminist publishing houses have taken note of the potential of science fiction and produced their own imprints. And it's not just The Women's Press doing this, for Onlywomen Press has followed suit with Caroline Forbes' "The Needle On Full", a collection of "lesbian feminist" short stories, and more recently the novel "Altogether Elsewhere" by Anna Wilson.

The pity of it is in science fiction terms these publishers haven't yet found new writers, or new work from established writers, where the commitment to a cause and the commitment to science fiction are properly married. This was quite clearly demonstrated by the clumsily titled "Despatches From The Frontiers Of The Female Mind". There was promise in there, but little of it fulfilled. However, one only has to look at what has been achieved in other areas of feminist literature to realise that the promise will be fulfilled, and probably quite quickly. And when that happens, we are in one of the most exciting and invigorating periods sf has gone through for a long time.

We may already be seeing the fruits of that in the virtual rebirth of Josephine Saxton. Josephine Saxton is a writer's writer, whatever that means; a beautiful stylist with a vivid imagination whose work has always been extravagantly appreciated by a coterie of devoted followers. Unfortunately that coterie has tended to be just too small for the majority of publishers. Three novels came out between 1969 and 1971, then silence until the short lived flourish at Virgin Books produced "The Travails of Jane Saint" in 1980. Then silence again, until this year. However, Chatto's publication of a collection of her elegant stories, "The Powers Of Time", is the harbinger of a spate of Josephine Saxton publications that should make 1986 an especially attractive year.

There was something of a rebirth, too, in what was for me the best book of 1985, "Kiteworld" by Keith Roberts. After "Molly Zero" in 1980, Roberts declared ringingly that he had stopped writing, and that resolve held for a dishearteningly long time. But slowly it began to crumble, short stories started to appear, including a couple from the world of "Kiteworld" in Interzone which form the beginning of this new novel. It

is a typical Roberts production: a string of stories providing a mosaic rather than a continuous narrative. There are strong echoes of "Pavane" and the "The Chalk Giants" in the pastoral landscape, the loving and lingering descriptions of arcane machinery, and his evocation of ordinary life in a world ruled by the church and riven by religious dissent. Roberts the stylist continues on top form, particularly in stories



like 'Kitecaptain' where he does what he's best at, examining in detail a soul in torment. Moreover, as with Josephine Saxton, Roberts' rebirth is the harbinger of more to come, a sequel to "Kiteworld" is in the works, as is a collection of short stories.

What of new writers? 1984 had Gwyneth Jones following a handful of books for children with a first adult novel, "Divine Endurance", that is one of the most powerful, difficult and ultimately rewarding novels of the decade. To set against that, 1985 produced "The Warrior Who Carried Life" by Geoff Ryman. Ryman has already attracted considerable critical acclaim for his story 'The Unconquered Country', and his dramatization of Philip K. Dick's "The Transmigration Of Timothy Archer". In 1985 he followed these with the story 'O Happy Day' in the "Interzone Anthology", and with the novel. Ryman's is a raw and disturbing talent. His work overturns normal sexual mores and roles: in 'O Happy Day' women have overthrown the status quo and are busy destroying men, except for a small number of gays who operate a way station en route to the death camps; in "The Warrior Who Carried Life" a woman transforms herself into a very masculine warrior who sets out to wreak a violent revenge on the forces that have destroyed her family. Ryman's work is full, sometimes to overloading, of graphic images of violence, which doesn't always make it easy or pleasant to read; but it is never less than worthwhile.

Both "Divine Endurance" and "The Warrior Who Carried Life" were published by Allen & Unwin who have finally, over the last couple of years, realised that there is more to fantasy than endless rummagings through Tolkien's wastebasket. The result has been a lot of crap, but a few real gems. I would probably add Guy Gavriel Kay's

"The Summer Tree" to that category. One can only hope that their forthcoming specialist science fiction line will have the same effect.

One of the least welcome features of science fiction over the last few years has been the proliferation of trilogies. Some multi-volume works, most notably Gene Wolfe's "Book Of The New Sun", have been eminently successful, but most have been unadulterated rubbish. Ideas that wouldn't do justice to a short story have been stretched way past their breaking points by talents of astonishing ineptitude. That said, however, one must pay homage to two trilogies that have reached triumphal conclusion in 1985: those by Brian Aldiss and Ian Watson.

Aldiss has produced at least one book per year for the last 25 years, always matching his work remarkably to the mood of the times. I didn't think I could claim that in the Helliconia trilogy he's at his best, but the final volume, "Helliconia Winter", has some splendid moments. Aldiss' talents are for depth rather than breadth, so when he goes for a wide canvas there are bound to be infelicities, (I didn't think the characterisation was up to his usual mark). But when that wide canvas can contain a synoptic history of Earth's future that would do justice to Stapledon, one can only sit back and admire.

Watson is a different kettle of fish. He began his career with three remarkable books, "The Embedding", "The Jonah Kit" and "The Martian Inca", where the pyrotechnic ideas overwhelmed the reader before he could get through to any literary deficiencies there may have been. But as his career progressed his ideas became more grandiose, sometimes ludicrously so, while the real literary deficiencies became more obvious. Now, with "The Book of Being", he is back on as fine form as he has been. Indeed, this could well be his best book to date because although the pyrotechnics are still there, especially in a sparkling middle section, he keeps the body of the book tethered to a fairly straightforward sf adventure story with which his ability as a writer seems much more at home. For me, he gets the balance right as he has not done since "The Martian Inca" at least.

Onto a somewhat different series with M. John Harrison's brilliant "Virconium Nights". Harrison is a writer I admire tremendously. He has a dark, uncompromising vision, and an obsession with the grimy, rotting side of human existence, yet he writes about it with a magic that is enchanting. "Virconium Nights" brings together stories set in that infinitely mutable city of the imagination and they clearly demonstrate that within this eternally fading city, chronology and the distinction between fact and fiction are as changeable as the landscape. Powerful, satisfying stories that show us our greatest stylist at the peak of his form.

Here familiar themes and realms still seem capable of generating freshness and variety; but in the books that have made their weary way across the Atlantic this year, more of the same seems to be the order of the day. Isaac Asimov stirs a yawn of surprise by finally bringing together "Robots and Empire"; Frank Herbert displays mind-numbing originality in concocting "Chapterhouse Dune"; Harry Harrison wrings yet another minor variation from a minor theme with "The Stainless Steel Rat Is Born"; Piers Anthony continues to astonish the world with the sheer quantity of drivel he can mass-produce; Frederik Pohl turns the clock back over 30 years with a second rate sequel to a first rate original, "Merchant's War"; Philip Jose Farmer stretches a short story, "The Sliced Crosswise Only-On-Tuesday World", into a novel, "Dayworld", that just can't stand the strain; Niven and Pournelle stamp mindlessly over anything that shows any inkling of sense with their latest jackbooted epic, "Foot-fall". To see so much trash being generated by one country in one year is enough to make a grown man weep.

Fortunately there are exceptions. Some new talent, like Kim Stanley Robinson in "The Wild Shore", is emerging; some old talent, like Kurt Vonnegut in "Galapagos", is returning to form. And then there are books like "The Anubis Gates" by Tom Powers and "Free Live Free" by Gene Wolfe.

"The Anubis Gates" is, I think, the first chance the British public has had to read anything by Tim Powers, and I just hope Chatto realise the talent they have on their hands and bring out some of his other books. This novel is a romp, a great game with history, and I suppose anyone who wished could pick holes in the whole thing. But I didn't wish, I was enjoying the show too much. Singlehandedly, "The Anubis Gates" restored my faith that science fiction could be fun.

"Free Live Free", on the other hand, is the latest in a long line of books by Gene Wolfe, and now that "Peace" has at last got a British paperback edition all of them have been published in this country. Which is only fair, I don't think Gene Wolfe could write a dud sentence if he tried. His followup to "The Book Of The New Sun" is a light, whimsical fantasy set in contemporary New York, and it is really only towards the end that anything even remotely fantastical occurs. It is also extremely funny, with an extended section of misunderstandings in a lunatic asylum that could be straight out of Thorne Smith.

Which brings me neatly to the thin line dividing science fiction from the mainstream, a line that's getting thinner all the time. If the controversy over whether "Empire Of The Sun" was eligible for the BSFA Award last year did anything, it made us all aware of that thin line even as it grew more blurred. In 1985, we may not have had such a cause celebre as "Empire Of The Sun", but we did have Philip K. Dick's "In Milton Lumky Territory". Not sf, a realistic examination of born losers in the mid-west in the mid-fifties, full of typical humour and even more typical obsessions. Isn't it strange how the obsessions we identify in sf can still be clearly identified when that author moves away from the genre?

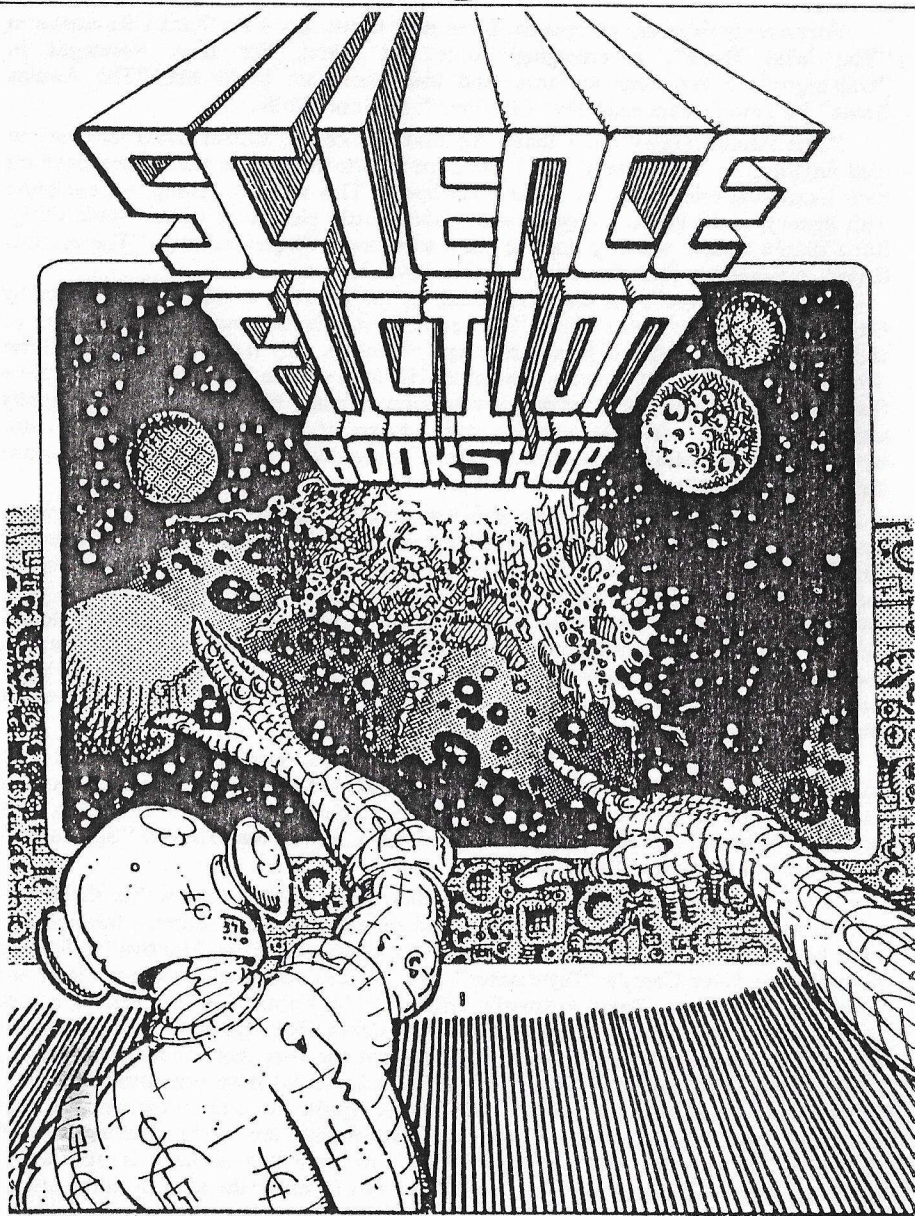
In the opposite direction, Geoffrey Household, 85-year-old author of "Rogue Male", set "Arrows Of Desire" in the year 3000. It's really part of his continuing examination of the British character, and far too slight a book for all he tries to load on it, but light and readable nonetheless. And Snoo Wilson has followed "Spaceache" with a second sf parody, "Inside Babel".

More interesting, though, are those books which work solidly within the mainstream while using images or ideas that could only have become current through science fiction. At their best these are some of the most exciting and innovative fictions around, like Peter Carey's "Illywhacker" with its 130-odd year old embroiderer on Australian history, or Peter Ackroyd's brilliant "Hawksmoor" where echoes across time join two characters in a haunting dance of death about Hawksmoor's churches in the East End of London. And while 1985 was not the best year for magical realism, where fantasy and reality are inextricably entwined, we did have one towering example of the genre at its best in "The House Of The Spirits" by Isabel Allende. Not that all these cross-overs between sf and the mainstream are worth reading, David Ireland's "Archimedes And The Seagle" with its twee dog narrator is well worth avoiding, as is "The Interview" by Howard Stevens in which the afterlife turns out to resemble an out of season seaside resort.

This brief survey of the sf of 1985 has perforce been partial and I've had to leave out a lot of books. Some of these are actually a lot better than many books I've mentioned, others are far worse, but I'll have to leave it to you to decide which is which.

PAUL Kincaid





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# ARTHUR C CLARKE AWARD

The BSFA have been invited to join forces with the Science Fiction Foundation and the Science Policy Foundation to run the Arthur C Clarke Award.

The award will be for the best Science Fiction novel published in Britain in the given year — the same eligibility as the present BSFA best novel award and hence would replace it.

The method of selection will be slightly changed: A panel will draw up a short list and the final selection will be by votes from the members of the three co-operating bodies and attending members of the Eastercon. The panel will consist of two nominees from each sponsoring body, plus, only if Arthur C Clarke wishes, a chairman nominated by him. Half the panel members will change each year.

Each sponsoring body will also nominate one person to be responsible for administrating the award.

The shortlist will be drawn up in time for the voting forms to go out with the December BSFA mailing and with Eastercon progress reports. The ballot will close as it does at present, for postal votes the week before Eastercon, and for personal votes on the Saturday night at the convention.

The award will be presented on the Sunday night at the Eastercon with the other BSFA awards. The winner will be presented with a cheque for:

1000 pounds !

donated annually by Arthur C Clarke.

The major difference between this award and the existing BSFA best novel award is that the first ballot will be selected by a panel. The other awards will remain unchanged.

This change will be discussed at the AGM at Albacon III when the BSFA members will be given a chance to voice their opinions and the change will be voted on.

Meanwhile please do not forget to vote this year. The ballot boxes can be found near the registration desk, in the fan room and in the book room.

Remember voting closes at 6pm on Saturday night.

The awards will be presented on Sunday night.

mike moir



# KEN MACINTYRE AWARD

Ken MacIntyre was an artist whose work appeared in New Worlds, Nebula and Science Fantasy during the fifties, and who also contributed to fan publications for many years until he died of a heart attack in 1968. In his memory it was decided to inaugurate an award for the best fan art appearing in any year.

The Ken MacIntyre award is presented annually to the artist who produces the best work to be published in an amateur publication during the preceding year. The rules are simple:

- 1 — a panel of judges selects the winner by studying the original artwork and the publication in which it appeared.
- 2 — The subject of the work must be, in their opinion, Fantasy or Science Fiction.
- 3 — The artist must be resident in the UK.

If you want to submit any piece of artwork for consideration you must hand it, along with the published version, to the Art Show desk at the convention by 6pm on the Saturday.

keith freeman

# DOC WEIR AWARD

Doc Weir was a fan who, in the late fifties, helped get the BSFA on its feet and who contributed much to conventions and fanzines of the day.

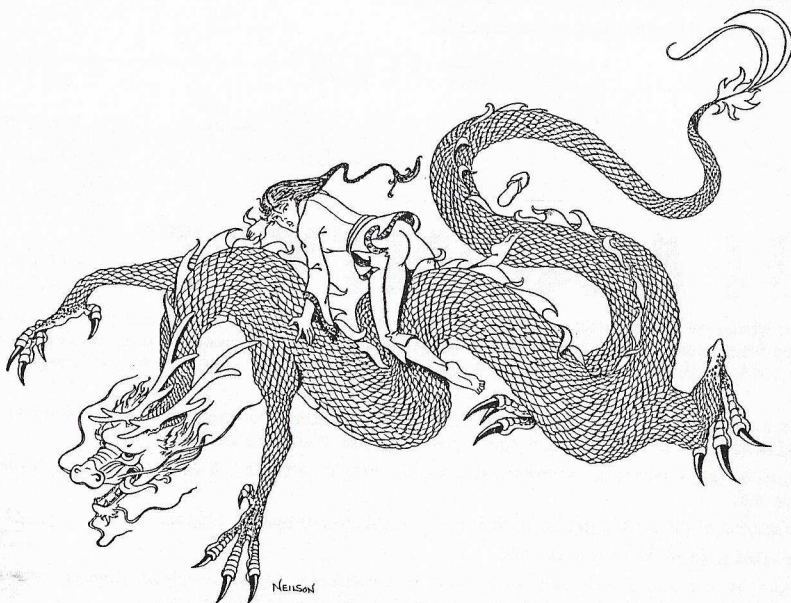
The Doc Weir award is a goblet inscribed with the names of the previous winners, to be held for one year, and a signed certificate suitable for framing.

The award is given, not for any specific activity in the fannish area, but to the person who you think is most deserving of recognition for their contribution to fandom as a whole. It is generally awarded to someone who has not previously been a winner.

The award is decided by secret ballot, administered by the BSFA, and ballot boxes will be in the Fan Room and elsewhere at the convention.

## Past Winners

1963	Peter Mabey	1971	Phil Rogers	1979	Roger Peyton
1964	Archie Mercer	1972	Jill Adams	1980	Bob Shaw
1965	Terry Jeeves	1973	Ethel Lindsay	1981	John Brunner
1966	Ken Slater	1974	Malcolm Edwards	1982	No award
1967	Doreen Parker	1975	Peter Weston	1983	No award
1968	Mary Reed	1976	Ina Shorrocks	1984	Joyce Slater
1969	Beryl Mercer	1977	Keith Freeman	1985	Jim White
1970	Michael Rosenblum	1978	Greg Pickersgill		



# ALBACON III COMMITTEE

**Jim Campbell** — is involved in re-enactment societies where he says he hates "people who hit him before he can hit them." Over the weekend he will be seen in the costume workshop and the bar.

**Madeleine Campbell** — As well as the difficult job of being married to Bob Jewett, Madeleine obtained the adverts you see in this programme book. Her hobbies include archery and fencing. She likes "chocolate and Emol Flynn"

**Joyce Craig** — Organised the fancy dress competition and the costume workshop. She is a "part-time Viking who likes wearing clothes that have been out of date for over 400 years."

**Neil Craig** — will be found in the bookroom or the bar. Likes "anything by Alan Moore".

**Oscar Dagleish** — has been doing things with publishers on our behalf in London for the last 6 months.

**Vince Docherty** — The membership secretary and treasurer. Vince has been saying for almost a year how he hasn't got the time for all this Albacon stuff because of his University workload, whilst taking on greater and greater responsibilities. Naturally, the rest of the committee have not stood by and let this go un-noticed. They have added to his burden, giving him progress reports to write and programme items to organise. Despite all this, Vince continues to be one of the people who contribute most of the good ideas on running the convention more smoothly. The snarl up at the registration desk is all his idea.

**Michelle Drayton** — is our resident Star Trek fan and medico. She prefers to be called Cuddles.

**Iain Dickson** — says he hates "being on committees." Iain is involved in the operations side of the convention.

**Dave Ellis** — Whilst waiting for bell bottoms to make a come back, Dave is in charge of the programme. He has been doing this job since the first Glasgow convention, so he should be getting quite good at it. You'll recognise Dave by the sixties timewarp he moves around in.

**Kevin Henwood** — Spent a few months co-ordinating the committee activities before deciding that designing micro-chip circuitry was easier, and more likely to keep him out of hospital. He is "young, free and tired."

**Bob Jewett** — acted as chairman of committee meetings for a while before succumbing to married bliss. He will be seen humping things around the convention.

**Duncan Lunan** — set up and helped judge our short story competition. He also organised the Ceileidh and is president of ASTRA who are making their usual large contribution to our spaceflight program. When not doing all that, Duncan is a writer of science fact and fiction. If not for Albacon commitments we feel sure Duncan would have stowed away on one of the Halley's Comet probes.

**Bruce MacDonald** — Is a media buff who enjoys mucking in to help in any capacity. He will no doubt be seen around the convention fetching and carrying.

**Mark Meenan** — A workaholic who enjoys "spending weekends on a desk". Mark has acted as Vince Docherty's deputy when Vince was out of town and as Albacon's correspondence secretary. Mark has involved himself in every aspect of the convention, we suspect, so that he can continue his plans for world domination in the autumn with XIIIcon.

**Michael Molloy** — Has been the co-ordinator since Kevin retired. He is the driving force behind Albacon III, getting ideas and suggestions implemented by dint of much persuasion and violence. In addition, Michael has been responsible for the layout and design of all Albacon's publications. He also drew the covers of the Progress Reports which have received much acclaim. During the weekend he'll be running the Art Show.

**Chris O'Kane** — Chris is another committee stalwart who swore he'd do one job only — providing technical support — and has foolishly taken on publicity and programme work as well. He will no doubt be working all hours as a film projectionist (another job he gave up) and complaining afterward that he's never going to do it again.

**Ian Sorensen** — is in charge of the fan programme and the repro room at the convention. Despite his considerable intelligence he was stupid enough to undertake editing the last progress report and this programme book. During the weekend he will be seen introducing programme items and lurking in the fan room. He also wrote all these potted biographies.

**Mark Turner, Jacqueline Robinson, Bruce Saville and John Campbell** all helped out at various stages. **John Wilkes** organised the bookroom, **Colin Speirs** organised the wargaming, and **Nick Rosser** organised the computer room.

As that well-known and eloquent lad from Alloway put it, the best laid plans of mice and men get rubbished by circumstances outside their control, frequently.

There I was all set to produce a scintillating bit of prose, more or less like I try to do for Glasgow conventions (I mean, cultural fandon centres on Glasgow, don't it ?) when the biological war-fare of MEXICON II hits me. Next thing I know the deadline has arrived, and I'm not ready for it. I am still coughing and sneezing, and the typewriter has a temperature. Or maybe it is just a head-ache; whatever, it doesn't want to co-opearte, as this now is the fifth bit of paper and it still can't spell 'co-operate'.

However, I don't suppose it really matters. Mostly people don't read the program booklet until long after the convention, and by then it has become a historical document rather than hot news so I don't imagine that if I fail to list all the new titles we can offer you, it will really matter.

Basically, so far as I see it, the Convention Bookroom is a bit more than a marketplace for dealers to display their wares, and for readers to make purchases. It is a social event as well, I think, and an area where people congregate and discuss ideas as well as books. If you didn't get to it this convention - and I have recently met someone who proudly claimed not to have been into the bookroom in their last three conventions - make sure to do so next time. No-one will force you to buy a book or magazine or even a comic, but you may get an opportunity to take part in a small impromptu discussion of some event or book, or enter a fact into some misremembered recall of fannish history, or get some bit of hot news for a fanzine.

Then again, you can quietly browse. Or whatever. But do drop in. Gets terribly boring if you don't.....

Incidentally, we have St. Andrew's Day, St. George's Day, April Fool's Day, and Christmas Day. On the other hand, we have Guy Fawkes' Night, and Burns Night. Then there is Walpurgis Night. I wonder why some people/things get "days", and some get "nights"; should this be investigated by some Equal Opportunities Board ?

*Ken F. Slates*

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# fandom section

## introduction

Up until a few years ago there were only usually two conventions a year in Britain: the Eastercon, held in a different place each time, and Novacon, held in Birmingham in November. Fans rarely saw one another outside of the local fan group or at these conventions. Fandom was, in those days, largely held together by the writing of fanzines. These were either group or solo efforts, duplicated and sent around the country or abroad to let other fans know what was going on in the writers' neck of the woods.

Many fans still produce fanzines as a form of extended letter, or as a way of practising their writing. Many current authors began by writing fanzines — Harlan Ellison, Bob Shaw and Dave Langford amongst others.

In this section you will find out a bit more about fanzines and the international fandom they have fostered. The world of APAs will also be explained for you, in all its perplexing glory.

A fair amount of the articles in this section will be incomprehensible to the newcomer without the aid of the glossary of terms used in fandom which is provided. You may find the list of words also quite useful when listening to panellists talking on some programme items. ■

### FANNISH AS SHE IS SPOKE AND WRIT

APA	Amateur Press Association. A regular pint publication.
CONSPIRACY	The name of the 1987 Worldcon to be held in Brighton.
DUFF	Down Under Fan Fund. It pays for a fan to travel from Australia to the USA and vice versa.
EASTERCON	The British SF convention held every Easter.
FANDOM	What fans belong to.
FANZINE	A publication by a fan or fans.
GENZINE	A fanzine with several contributors.
GOPHER	A person who helps out at a convention.
GUFF	Going Under Fan Fund. It pays for a fan to travel from Australia to Britain and vice versa.
LETTERCOL	The letters page of a fanzine.
LOC	Letter Of Comment to a fanzine.
LOCCOL	Lettercol
NOVA	Award given by the Birmingham SF Group convention Novacon.
PERZINE	A personal fanzine.
SEFF	Scandinavia/Europe Fan Fund. It pays for a fan from Scandinavia to travel to a convention in Europe and vice versa.
SERCON	Serious and constructive.
TAFF	Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund. It pays for a fan to travel from Britain to America and vice versa.
WORLDCON	The World SF Convention held every year.
ZINE	Hugos are awarded at Worldcons. A fanzine

# GUFF STUFF

GUFF is a fan fund. A way for lots of people to put some money together to send one lucky sod on a free holiday and give her/him a free convention. At its base that's the truth but there must be something more to explain the plethora of funds around today — TAFF (the most venerable), DUFF, FFANZ, SEFF and, of course, good old GUFF (well, as the 1985 winner I might be just a wee bit biased here). GUFF — Going Under Fan Fund or Get Up-and-over Fan Fund depending on your departure point — is aimed at establishing further contact between Australia and Europe by sending a delegate from one to the other alternately. I went to Australia for the Worldcon (Aussiecon II), and now know why GUFF is something worthwhile and deserving of far more attention than it gets at the moment as the poor relation to TAFF.

I think it's fair to say most of us are in fandom to meet people; people from different parts of the UK and as many different countries as possible. With the distances involved, however, contact can only be maintained by the written word — fanzines being the easiest method to talk to each other on a more than one-to-one basis. Over the past decade Australia has been pretty quiet on the fanzine front as seen from Europe. Only a few have been making it across the gulf, and those mainly of one genre — sercon (serious and constructive). Hence not much contact between the bulk of European and Australian fandom. Having gone this year I can report that Down Under has a very active fandom, full of interesting people I'd never heard of before, and never would have without the trip because they aren't active in areas that communicate with the world at large.

There is quite a lot of transatlantic contact already, so some people say TAFF is defunct (especially with cheaper flights etc.) Australia's different, though. There is very limited contact at the moment, and if left to chance it is likely to stay that way. GUFF gives that impetus to change — to gradually expand contact. I hope I succeeded in my ambassadorial duties, in my attempt to meet as many people as possible and give them an insight into British fandom. I hope those people I did meet will establish contact over here on a much broader front and we can all start talking to even more people.

After all, that's what it's all about isn't it?

In 1987 we'll have an Aussie over here to attend our Worldcon, Conspiracy 87, and I sincerely hope we can welcome, entertain and impress him/her as much as the Australians did for me.

Oh, and I did have a *fantastic* holiday, thanks. ■

eve harvey

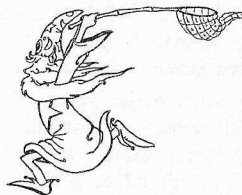
# TAFF

TAFF — the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund — was created in 1953 for the purpose of providing funds to bring popular and well-known fans who have helped promote and sustain the relationship between our two fandoms across the Atlantic. Since then, TAFF has regularly brought North American fans to European conventions and sent European fans to North American conventions on an alternating basis, with each TAFF winner becoming the administrator of the fund in their respective countries, thus ensuring its continuation. The winner is chosen during a "race" where fans get to vote for the candidate of their choice from among the duly nominated contenders, while TAFF itself is sustained financially by the voting fees collected during such races and through the generosity of those who donate money and material that can be auctioned.

There are TAFF ballot forms available in the Fan room. Please vote, or make a contribution. ■

# SEFF

SEFF is the Scandinavia/Europe Fan Fund. It is the most recent of the fan funds and its purpose is to foster the growing links between Scandinavia and the rest of European fandom by sending fans from one country to another. The winner of each "race" becomes the administrator of the award for their country. Jim Barker won last year. Votes, accompanied by a 50p voting fee, should be placed in the ballot box in the Fan Room or sent to Jim Barker, 113 Windsor Rd, Falkirk, FK1 5DB ■



## FRIENDLY FANZINES

### INTRODUCED

For the newcomer to fanzines there can be a bewildering variety, and perhaps the most surprising thing is that there are few "sercon" zines — fanzines dealing with matters directly related to SF: critical articles, book reviews, fiction etc. In fact, I can't think of any which are entirely devoted to sercon material. A few make this the backbone of their zine, however. **THE MENTOR** is an Australian fanzine with a lively lettercolumn, generally about 14 sides of book reviews, 2 stories and a few poems, also articles on Australian fannish matters. It is perhaps the most solid, regular fanzine currently being published, with a bi-monthly schedule. **RON'S RAYGUN** is a much smaller, more informal zine but with a much friendlier "atmosphere", generally containing a couple of stories, an article by Bob Shaw, letters and other articles. **CRYSTAL SHIP** is an impeccably produced, somewhat irregular zine, produced by someone whose idea of a small zine is everyone else's idea of an enormous zine. The current CS is 36 sides long, a fine mixture of thought provoking articles on racism, being a Samaritan, public speaking, and one man's view of loc-writing, plus a 12 page lettercolumn. Normally, CS contains a few heavy critical articles, so the current issue is not typical.

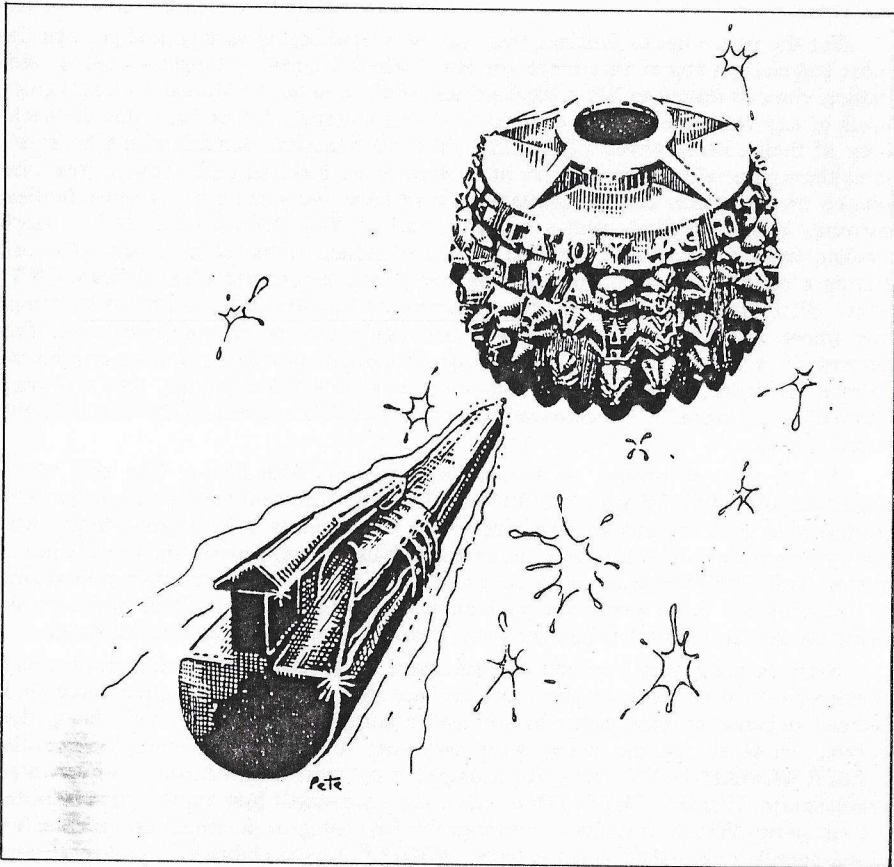
At the time of writing, no fanzine deals entirely with fiction. One zine which should be around by Albacon is **ZERO HOUR**, which will deal mostly with fiction and poetry, plus book reviews etc. The zine to get which prints a lot of good fiction and poetry plus reviews of fiction and poetry zines (plus others) outside the fanzine mainstream, is **IDOMO** which generally runs to about 70 sides. The other main review zine is **FACTSHEET 5**, an American publication. A **FOREIGN FANZINE**, which previously was mostly sercon has become more generalised with the most recent issue.

Most fanzines that I receive are genzines, zines which deal with pretty much whatever the editor wants to print, and thus are more difficult to describe, since their interest depends at least partly in the reader being interested in what's being discussed. However, people being what they are, trends are definitely noticeable. **WEBER WOMAN'S REVENGE**, for example, is concerned almost totally with human relationships. **HOLIER THAN THOU** has a leaning towards humorous material. Others are more difficult to define — perhaps the best thing to do would be to list a few zines, together with their main articles. **NEOLOGY** is a clubzine; latest issue contained book reviews, letters, article on "Burger Cultural Imperialism", conreports, a report on the state of Soviet fandom, and club politiking. **SIKANDER** has grumbles about the way Worldcons are run, an article on visiting Table Mountain, the true story behind Corflu (the American fannish convention), plus the editor's attempts to get into film production. **STOMACH PUMP** has an article by the editor on why he prefers American fanzines most of the time, Michael Ashley on why he doesn't like fandom, Tony Berry on nits and insects... **SP** is far more fannish than any of the other



genzines mentioned so far, fannish in this context meaning a lot of discussion of what fanzines should be about and strong words about people who disagree. OK if that's what you like, the thing to do is remember that these people are a minority who can easily be ignored if you want. This is not an exhaustive listing of genzines — an exhaustive listing would be very longwinded as I received over 200 zines this year.

The other major group of fanzines are perzines — zines written by one person only (with perhaps letters and art by other people, perhaps not). GEGENSCHIEN is by Eric Lindsay, talking about his life and computers most of the time. DILLINGER RELIC, by Arthur Hlavaty talks about his life, books he has read, and has a wierd view of news items. HELPMABOAB by Jim Barker talks about his work (he's a freelance artist), passing his driving test, strange things that come in the post, and why he's going off fandom.



Then there are specialist fanzines, devoted to Star Trek, Dr Who, gaming etc. I know practically nothing about these so I'm not going to stick my neck out. In gaming, 20 YEARS ON is the zine to get, since it's a major review zine and talks about the other "hobby services". The only gamezine I get is QUARTZ. There's a Star Trek room at Albacon, so ask there if you want to know about Star Trek fanzines. The only Dr Who zine I know of is TIME MEDDLER.

APAs are another way of getting to know people by post. Each member sends the necessary number of copies of his/her contribution, which are then collated with other member's contributions, sometimes bound together, and each member gets a copy of everyone's work. Cost and frequency vary, these are the British APAs I know of at the moment:

**THE WOMEN'S PERIODICAL** - comes out every 6 weeks and membership is open to women with a basis in British fandom. Costs about #8 a year, new administrator is Hazel Ashworth, 16 Rockville Dr, Skipton, N. Yorks. About 37 members.

**PAPA** - comes out every 2 months and membership is open to men. Costs about #10 per year, current administrator is Malcolm Davies, 79 Dando Crescent, Kidbrooke, London, SE3 9PB. Membership limited to 30. 24 members at time of writing.

**FRANKS** - comes out monthly, membership open to anyone. Currently about 15 members. Difficult to say how much it costs, since it doesn't collect annual dues like TWP and PAPA, you only pay for your own postage and a small sum towards the administrative pages. Current administrator is Ron Gemmell, 79 Mansfield Close, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 6RN

**THE ORGANISATION** - Birmingham based but open to anyone. There are few rules about contribution size or frequency. Further information from Eunice Pearson, 32 Digby House, Collet's Grove, Kingshurst, Birmingham.

Hope this has been of some use to you. Please ask if you want to know anything else.

#### ADDRESSES

As far as I know all these zines are available for letter of comment, trade, contribution or polite request (preferably accompanied by a stamp or International Reply Coupon), except QUARTZ and 20 YEARS ON (40p each) and TIME MEDDLER (\$2).

**THE MENTOR**, Ron Clarke, 6 Bellevue Rd, Faulconbridge, NSW 2776, Australia

**RON'S RAYGUN**, Ron Gemmell, 79 Mansfield Close, Birchwood, Warrington, Cheshire.

**CRYSTAL SHIP**, John Owen, 4 Highfield Close, Newport Pagnell, Bucks, MK16 9AZ

**ZERO HOUR/QUARTZ**, Geoff Kemp, 73 Caledonian, Glascoth Heath, Tamworth, Staffs.

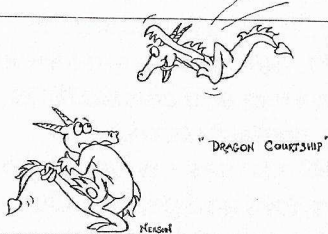
**IDOMO**, Chuck Connor, Sildan House, Chediston Rd, Wissett, Halesworth, Suffolk, IP19 0NF

**FACTSHEET 5**, Mike Gunderby, 41 Lawrence St, Medford, MA02155, USA.

**A FOREIGN FANZINE**, Roelof Goudriaan, Noordwal 2, 2513EA, Den Haag, Netherlands.

**WEBERWOMAN'S REVENGE**, Jean Weber, PO Box 42, Lyneham, ACT 2602, Australia.

**HOLIER THAN THOU/TIME MEDDLER**, Marty and Robbie Cantor, 11565 Archwood St, North Hollywood, CA 91606-1703, USA.



**NEOLOGY**, Box 4071, Edmonton, AB, Canada, T6E 4S8.

**SIKANDER**, Irwin Hirsh, 2/416 Dandenong Road, Caulfield North, Victoria 3161, Australia.

**STOMACH PUMP**, Steve Higgins, 20 Basingstoke Rd, Reading, Berks, RG2 0HH.

**GEGENSCHIEN**, Eric Lindsay, Box 42, Lyneham, ACT 2602, Australia.

**DILLINGER RELIC**, Arthur Hlavaty, 819 W Markham Avenue, Durham, NC 27701, USA.

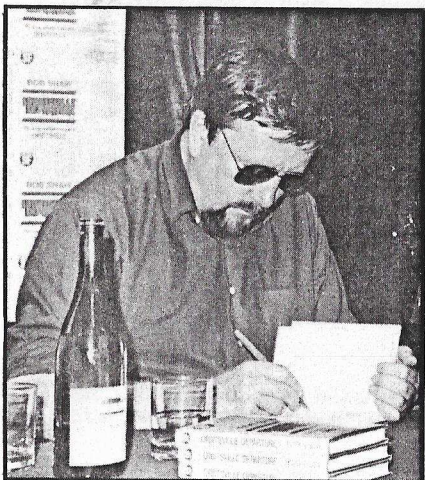
**HELPMABOAB**, Jim Barker, 113 Windsor Rd, Falkirk, FK1 5DB.

Joy Hibbert

**WHEN IN LONDON WHY NOT VISIT ...**



# **FORBIDDEN PLANET**



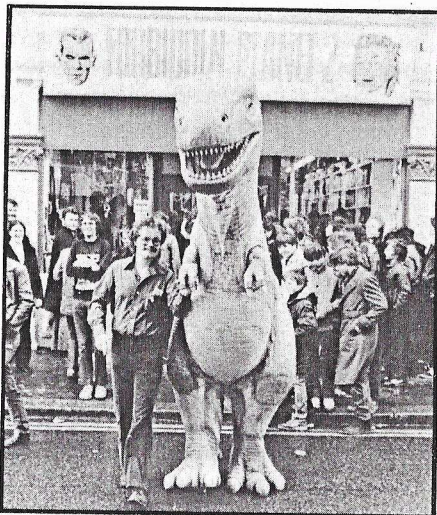
Above: Bob Shaw at a Forbidden Planet 1 signing of *Orbitsville Departure*.

**FORBIDDEN PLANET 1  
23 DENMARK STREET,  
LONDON WC2H 8NA  
01-836 4179**

*Forbidden Planet 1 is Britain's largest and most comprehensive fantasy and science fiction bookshop. Accessibly located near Tottenham Court Road Station, the shop is also London's leading stockist of American, European and British comics. Our fantasy and science fiction stock includes all U.K. paperbacks in print; imported American titles; hardcovers; and second-hand books.*

**FORBIDDEN PLANET 2  
58 ST. GILES HIGH STREET,  
LONDON WC2H 8LH  
01-379 6042**

*Forbidden Planet 2, the Film and Television shop, is literally around the corner from FP1. Selling a varied stock of material on current and classic films and t.v. shows, primarily books and magazines, FP2 also has a wide range of stills, posters, toys and games. Our knowledgeable and helpful staff specialise in fantasy, s.f. and horror in the media, notably Star Wars – Return of the Jedi, Dr. Who, Star Trek, James Bond and Blake's 7.*



Above: Another two happy customers emerge from Forbidden Planet 2.

**ENGLAND'S PREMIER FANTASY STORES!**



“Look” says Ian in best programme book editing voice, “I’ve got LOTS on conventions but almost nothing on fanzines for this wretched publication. So as the local fanzine bore, write me something on them. For Thursday.”

“But you said in PR3 that you already had the programme book at press....”

“Look, I wrote that at Christmas. You should know better than to be deceived by the publicity”

“Well, what sort of thing?” says I, playing for time.

“You know. Why We Write Fanzines. The usual Christina did me 1200 words yesterday, and none of this shilly-shallying,” he adds, with a faint sneer.

“But I’m rotten at analytical articles. Ask anyone. Ask Paul Kincaid even.”

“It doesn’t have to be generalised — it can be personal.. why YOU write fanzines.”

# why we write fanzines

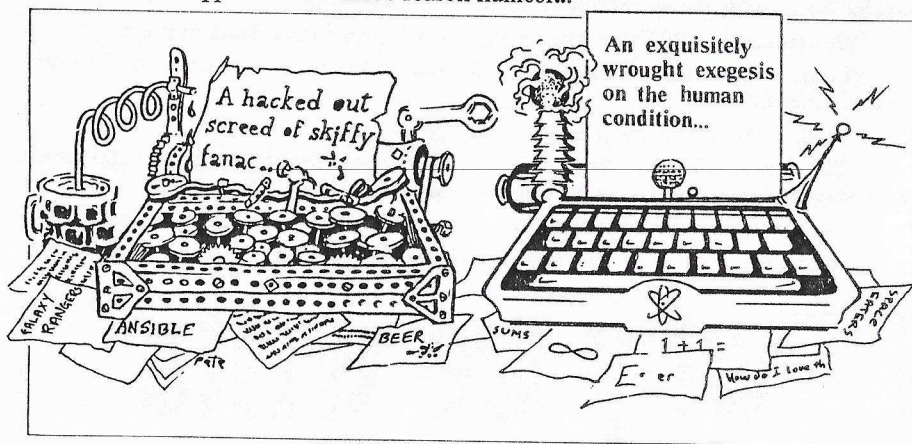
Why I write fanzines? That’s a novel and somewhat disquieting thought. It’s been a long time since I thought why I do fanzines. I just DO. God (or even Ghod) willing I should be handing out the 8th issue of my co-edited fanzine THIS NEVER HAPPENS at this very convention (the one that hasn’t happened yet) and apart from that I’ve done a fair few one-shots, apazines, review columns and articles for other people’s zines. I’ve been on this kick for five years now. What makes me run?

Luckily, being a parasitical student these days, I have ample time to consider these alarming ponderances. In the course of a very dull accountancy tutorial I jot down a few reasons...

1. “To get other fanzines.” Well, let’s face it, that’s why most people do their first

fanzine. If you've picked up a fanzine or two at a convention or had them given out to you by friends or at your local fan group, then the chances are good that if you're at all intrigued by fandom as something more than a place to get drunk or watch films, then you've found something in those tatty little bundles of green or pink paper with their back pages always falling off that interested you, and made you want to see more of them. This is easy enough for a while; you can write letters to any fanzine you like, so you'll get the next issue (some, though not all, faneds will accept stamps for further fixes of your fancy (most faneds are so pleased to have got their latest issue out in time for, say, the Eastercon, that they'll be happy to give it to ANYBODY. Even you.) But after a while people get tired of writing locs all the time, and besides, they start to bubble with this desire to get their side of the argument in print FIRST, or to start their own arguments, not just to respond to someone else's, or even just to tell the world what THEY think about Thatcher, orange Andrex or Greg Pickersgill without having to wait (and hope) for someone else to print it. In short, they want to initiate communication, not just reply.

- Which is really a new reason, isn't it? (said a passing schizophrenic alter ego)
- Yes, I suppose so. So that's reason number...



2. "To say something." Which is one of the most cliched statements in the history of fanzines, but still essentially true. Fanzines are the perfect blank state, a medium within which you really can say what you like, how and whenever you damn well please. So long as there are duplicators and cheap photocopying available, there can be very few people who really can't afford to do a fanzine, and the technology (two-finger typing, handling a Getstetner) is pretty easy to get the hang of. Aside from that, the limits are the limits of your own imagination and desire. And when I say "say something", I don't necessarily mean anything particularly profound. For me, one of the particular joys of fanzines is finding out what people think or feel about little or personal matters, things that wouldn't perhaps often come up in conversation. It's often startling how alien a friend's norms and perceptions can be, how similar a stranger's. Some people, on the other hand, like to deal with more conventionally "weighty" subjects like politics or even science fiction. Some like to devote themselves almost entirely to the world of fandom itself, which you may see as an entirely trivial or perfectly appropriate approach, depending, perhaps, on how involved in fan-

dom you are. Of course, what you choose to write may influence, or be influenced by, the forum in which you choose to write. Many people prefer to restrict their more personal material to the more comfy and less inhibiting confines of an apa or a small circulation personalzine. (Others are more brazen.) You may feel a genzine is more appropriate for weighty material. That's unlikely to be your major reason for putting out a genzine though...

— You're going to talk about artifacts, and gestalts and the general joys of editing now, aren't you?

— How right you are. (And how good at spotting contrived links.) So...

3. "To create an artifact" (I hate the phrase "work of art".) If you used to like watching Blue Peter as a child and turning sticky-backed plastic and empty Fairy Liquid bottles into amateur doll's houses, then you'll LOVE putting together a genzine. Or if you like making a complicated recipe or putting together a large and complex jigsaw. Doing a good genzine is like all of these and better than any of them. There's two components to this: the (shall we say) literary pleasures of obtaining good contributions, turning them by editing into better pieces, mixing and matching them and at the end producing a clutch of writing that stands as something well worth reading; and the more physical (no rude comments please) work of layout and artwork. How much you do in this direction depends, of course, on your format — but if you have photocopying at your disposal, then again, your experimentation is limited virtually only by your imagination and (hopefully) your good taste...

— Not according to Paul Kincaid.

— Well that's his problem. Anyhow, when you combine the two aspects, the editorial conception and the cut-and-paste-and-draw bit, you get your actual gestalt. Or even artifact. S'easy, innit?

— And where did the Cockney accent come from? Yes, yes, I take the point. But it's straying a bit from why we write fanzines, isn't it? And there's one very major reason you haven't mentioned yet...

4. "Contacting others" This is of course the logical end-product of communication, of producing a fanzine whether good or bad, personalzine or genzine. It should be what inspired you to start off, what reached out to you from those tatty pink fanzines of several paragraphs back and dragged you into fandom — their editors' successful attempt to contact you. And most importantly, it is what keeps you going — the fact that others listen to you and in their turn, respond to what you have to say. Fanzines can withstand harsh criticism, but like small children, they cannot take being ignored. (Give them attention and they veritably flourish.) Less abstractly, fanzines are a terrific way to find your feet in fandom, to make acquaintanceship with unfamiliar areas of it, to spread your social net outside your home group or town to all over the UK and even the USA and Australia. I still marvel occasionally that I know and receive post from people living thousands of miles away, Pollyanna-ish as it sounds; I still feel a lot more confident at a convention, no matter how long I've been in fandom, if I've got a fanzine in my hand to give out as my passport to meeting new people. What was it they used to say? "Fanzines are the secret handshake of fandom."

— How poetic. So you found some reasons for writing for fanzines after all, did you?

— Yes, thank God. I'm not just running on inertia after all. There IS a purpose to all this!

Then I woke up and it had all been an accountancy tutorial. ■

Lillian edwards

maureen porter  
**THE WOMANS APA**

Fandom loves to obscure matters by using acronyms and initials. If you've ever heard of APAs and TWP, and wondered about them, this should be your moment of revelation. APA stands for Amateur Press Association or Amateur Publishing Association — no one seems quite sure which is correct, and everyone says APA anyway — whilst TWP is The Women's Periodical, and as its name infers, it is an APA for women only. It is also the longest running of the present clutch of apas, having started during 1983, and has a full membership and waiting list.

The mechanics of an apa are simple. In TWP each member writes a contribution — a minimum of two sides written work or one side of artwork — and makes forty copies of it, which are sent to the administrator (me at the moment). She collates forty copies of the mailing and despatches them to the membership, who then, theoretically, fall upon the bulky envelope and eagerly devour its contents. Mailings occur approximately every six weeks, with members contributing to six out of nine mailings. All this for pounds 8 per apa year (nine issues), pro rata if you join partway through a year, the rate of contribution also modified accordingly.

We do have a waiting list of four or five people at the moment, but prospective members shouldn't be deterred by this. Such is the nature of apas that waitlisters are often "in" sooner than they anticipated, and I should also add that TWP is almost at the end of its current apa year, which can create a few gaps as people decide to drop out for one reason or another. I should say that a characteristic of TWP is that people who drop out do seem to come back again. There is obviously a strong attraction.

When they finally get a place, waitlisters suddenly panic — what should they write about? The answer is simply anything you like, though in practice it takes courage to actually start. Holiday tales, political views, book reviews, what happened to you last week as you walked down the road, anything. The choice is yours and I must stress that the administrator exercises no editorial control. Each contribution is the member's own work. And there are also mailing comments — the lifeblood of any apa. They are comments on and responses to other contributors' work. They can be short or several pages, complimentary or in disagreement, but they are important, promoting discussion and interaction within the group, not to mention giving you the thrill of seeing your name in print. On the other hand, they are optional so don't be put off by the thought of it.

TWP is particularly strong on communication, in print and through meetings, at cons and in London for those able to get there. We have a diverse membership, with a wide range of interests, which makes the apa pretty lively at times. If you enjoy writing, or need the incentive to write more regularly, and like making contact with new people, getting a new perspective, then membership of an apa, TWP in particular, can be very rewarding. If you're interested contact me. I'm Maureen Porter, 28 Asquith Rd, Rose Hill, Oxford, OX4 4RH. □

# FRANK'S APA \_\_\_\_\_ Ron Gemmell

FRANK'S IS NOT DEAD! but it is barely treading water.

FRANK'S is being relaunched at Albacon we hope to be press-ganging you in there.

Seriously people, with all the other APAs going from strength to strength, them being solid as rocks, well established and.... full... , where else can you join one, how else can you help me survive my administrative year — as in a full twelve months?

believe me FRANK'S APA NEEDS YOU, whoever you are — we ain't elitist, we never were... honest..

well?

Well, for those of you who are interested, FRANK'S APA has a monthly frequency, eleven surviving members, who have to contribute to every other mailing — otherwise I ask them to please send something in soon, well what's the point in lying to you guys?

me? I'm Ron Gemmell, I live at 79 Mansfield Close, Birchwood, Warrington, Cheshire, WA3 6RN... and I'm the latest (but hopefully not the last) administrator of FRANK'S, that's me in the flight suit, creeping up behind you.. give me a break, don't look round... ■

## CLUBS AND FAN GROUPS

Conventions are not the only places where fans meet, they also have local groups which may get together formally or informally every week or month. The list below is a partial list only. If you want to know if there is a group in your area than look at the list in the fan room which should be more up to date than this.

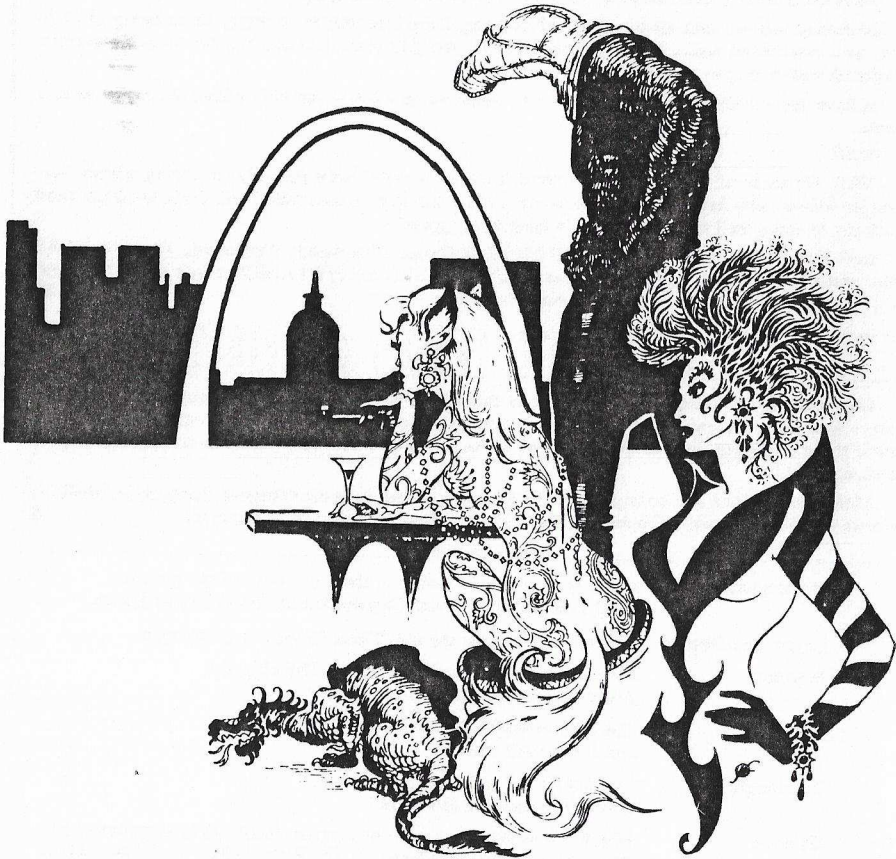
Many Universities and colleges have SF societies. These include: Glasgow, Strathclyde, Hull, St Andrews, Hatfield, Warwick, Edinburgh, Birmingham, Cambridge, Oxford, Newcastle. ■

### TOWN \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Details

- Birmingham BSFG meets in the Imperial Hotel on the first Friday of the month. Misfits meet at the Crown, Corporation St, last Friday of month.
- Bolton and District Every Tuesday at the the Old Three Crowns in Churchgate.
- Brighton Every Friday at the Druids Arms, 81 Ditchling Rd. Andy Robertson 0273 558775
- Bristol Thursday fortnightly at the White Hart, Park Row. Jim Greer 0272 739700
- Edinburgh Tuesday from 8 in Milnes, Hanover St. Owen Whiteoak 031 228 6239
- Glasgow FOKT WHY THE HELL WAS THIS ONE FORGOTTEN - TROUT MEETS EVERY THURSDAY AT THE BANK, QUEEN St. 8:00pm - 12:00pm Vince Docherty 041 882 3006
- Leeds Friday at West Riding pub. Simon Ounsley 0532 756162
- London The One Tun, Farringdon. First Thursday of the month. Southern Friends in Space, Sunday, Wellington Tavern Waterloo. Mike Dickinson 01 870 9844
- Newcastle The Gannets meet at the Green Dolphin, Tuesdays after 8. Key Williams 0632 858529
- Preston The Black Horse, Friargate, Larry Dean 0204 51876
- Portsmouth South Hants Group, 2nd and 4th Friday of month at Scotts Bar, 37 Eikon St. Phil Plumby 53 Havant Rd.
- Sheffield Wednesdays at the Roe Buck. Laura Wheatley 0742 434107
- Southend Tuesdays at Dickens. Ashley Watkins 0702 333206
- St Albans Staffen meet Monday nights. Mic Rogers, 22 Campfield Rd
- Warrington 1st 3rd 5th Thursday from 8 at the Bulls Head, Church St.



**Everybody's coming to...**



# ST LOUIS IN 88

To support the bid, send \$5 for a pre-supporting membership, which will get you a periodic bid-progress newsletter and, if you vote for site selection at the 1986 Worldcon, a matching reduction in the price of a membership when we win the bid. For a bid t-shirt (S/M/L/XL), send \$5 plus \$2 P&H. For our multi-page bid statement, send a # 10 SASE.

**ST. LOUIS IN '88 WORLDCON BID COMMITTEE**  
P.O. BOX 1058  
ST. LOUIS, MO 63188

- Art from "A Separate Star" by Frank Kelly Freas -

# convention section

## introduction

Conventions come in all shapes and sizes. In this section of the programme book there are a selection of convention reports (conreps), going from the first convention to the last. The writing of such reports has a long tradition in fandom. Some of the conreps presented here are about real events, others are pieces of fan-writing which use the form of a conrep to entertain the reader. I hope it's clear enough which are which!

If you are interested in running conventions then you might like to know that Albacon has a badge maker, 16mm film projectors, lenses and screens available for the cost of transport. There is also a fanzine "Conrunner" in which topics of interest to convention organisers are discussed; it and info about the equipment is available from Ian Sorensen, 304a Main St, High Blantyre, Glasgow G72 0DH.

This section also has a list of a few of the upcoming conventions in Britain. You can find out more about them in the Fan Room at Albacon or by writing to the address given for each. ■

### CONVENTIONS IN BRITAIN

Albacon may be the largest convention in Britain this year, but it isn't the only one. There are a great many conventions taking place ranging from one day special interest events attended by under 100 to large gatherings of 500 or more. And that's just Britain - there are conventions in Europe and North America also. Here are a few of the upcoming conventions:

- 18-20 July. Mythcon. Fantasy con in Nottingham. Guest: Marion Zimmer Bradley. #10 to 53 Glencoe St, Hull, HU3 6HR.
- 8-10 August. Consept. Smallish general convention at University of Surrey. #8 to ) Graham Rd, Wealdstone, Harrow, HA3 5RP.
- 22-25 August. Galileo Con III. Star Trek con in Newcastle. #20 to Ms Catherine Richardson, 18 Wentworth Place, Rye Hill, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 6RB
- 22-25 August. Rubicon. Small "fannish" convention in Reading. #5 to Keith Oborn, Bishops Cottage, Park House Lane, Reading, RG 3 2AH.
- 13-14 September. Rocky Horror Shock Treatment con, Shepperton. Info from 16 Tonbridge Rd, West Molesey, Surrey, KT8 0EL.
- 26-29 September. XIcon. Albacon's kid brother. Guest: Harry Harrison. #9 to J Campbell, "Beachfield", Calmuir Rd, Lenzie, G66 3JJ.
- 7-10 November. Novacon 16 in Coventry. Large general SF convention. #8 to 18 Berwood Farm Rd, Wylde Green, Sutton Coldfield, B72 1AG.
- 5-7 December. Santacon. A fun media convention in York. #15 to Trisha O'Neill, 111 Chestnut Grove, Conisborough, DN12 2JH.
- 28 August-2 September 1987 Conspiracy 87. The World Science Fiction Convention comes to Brighton. #25 to PO Box 43, Cambridge, CB1 3JJ.

# THE REAL TALE OF GILGAMESH

Quite near the beginning of time, in fact just after God thought being called Chronos would be a change, there arose a proud nation named in later eras The Babylonians. These fierce people gathered together the skills of man to construct the first cities: Ur, Erech, Sumer and mighty Babylon itself. Each city was dedicated to honouring a particular God or Goddess: Ishtar, Marduk, Ea (of the vast intellect), and the number four. In this balmy time of plenty, the mortals prospered. The weather was always brilliant, except for the occasional heaven-inspired flood, or odd thunder-bolt to disincorporate some luckless priest who mumbled his incantation. It was a time of heroes who knew no bounds, and women who knew their place, and women who refused to know their place, who were called Goddesses. With such propitious behaviour did the mortals please the Supreme God, who was Marduk just then, it came to pass that God gave man Literature, in the form of an Epic of Creation. This Epic told of the prodigious struggle between Marduk and Tiamat for control of the organisation of the universe, and how he had done such a terrific job of it with the simple materials to hand (Apsu, or sweet water, and Tiamat, or salt water).

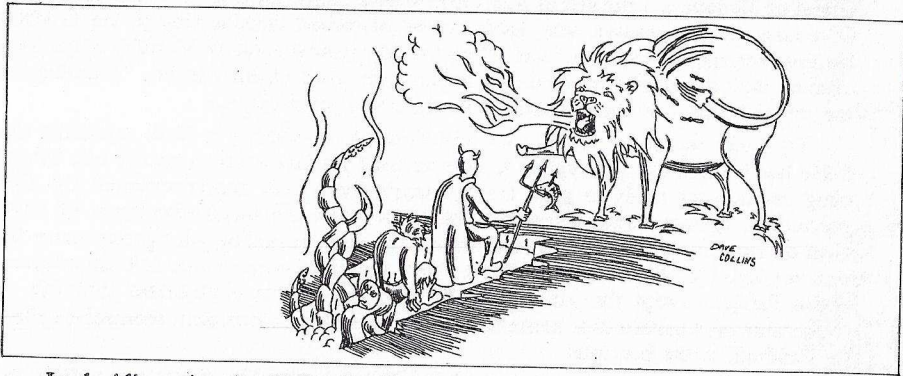
"Sod this!" Remarked the hero-king Gilgamesh, "This is a simple compilation, not even a hint of editorial control." So it was that Gilgamesh girded up his mighty loins to spread even more consternation among local families, taking daughters from fathers, wives from their husbands, and criticising the sole literary artifact to pieces in all the temples. Ea (of the vast intellect) saw this and was little concerned. Aruru took mud, cut it and from it fashioned in Anu's image the hero Enkidu. His body was covered with hair, on his head his hair was like a woman's, and he could beat Gilgamesh any day. Thus it was that Gilgamesh went adventuring and so enraged the courtesan Goddess Ishtar that Marduk produced his second book, titled "He Who Saw All".

With such artistic riches in the world there was but one course to follow, a feast such as there had never been before must be had, a gathering of men, heroes and Gods such as none in the past. To distinguish this gathering appropriately it was known as the Ageless Literature of Babylon Annual Convention, Orgy and Nexus. Since Gilgamesh had not, by this time, actually completed his adventures (there was the small matter of flinging himself into the Water of Death, whose slightest touch meant death, with stones tied to his feet, in order to collect a prickly plant that would grant him immortality), it was ruled that the theme would be speculative fiction.

Naturally, everybody came. All the Gods, demi-Gods, Heroes, Genii, fabulously beautiful princesses, kings, and scribes with fetishes for lists. Everyone who was anyone came. Of course the majority of the mortals did not go, since they were of little consequence except as expendable extras in the sagas of those that really mattered. These people were known collectively as the Mundane, and were mercilessly set upon by Gods or heroes during their frequent temper tantrums. The usual reason given for this unkind behaviour being that the Mundane could not read, and so did not appreciate the finer points of their kings and Gods. But, Mundanes aside, everyone was there. All wore their finest raiment: dazzlingly polished battle-armor, gowns made entirely of priceless gems, the various deities of the underworld appeared in their best filth until told by a Genii with the head of a lion, the body of a bull, five legs and breathing fire, that such exhibitionism would not go down well.



The scene for the convention was the wondrous Hanging Gardens, which were decorated with the finest stone tablets advertising the very best in current Epics. The presence of only two titles did not stop the wily traders from each claiming the sole God-given right to sell. Several small mountains had been levelled to provide the materials for the merchandise on offer, which had caused the Earth Goddess Ga-Tum-Dug to complain of the dreadful ecological consequences she would see to if no-one put them back. In honour of the occasion the multitude of fountains and pools held nothing but the finest wines and beers; this ensured that no matter where a celebrant was they could just dip a glass and obtain the liquor of their delight. All the manifold activities of a great feast were run to perfection at Marduk's command by the good Genii, who oversaw every aspect of the convention with inscrutable care.



In deciding who should be the Guest of Honour, the Genii encountered a rather thorny problem, for no matter who was chosen, someone would be royally peeved. The solution is regarded as an early example of genius at work. It was resolved that God would be the Honoured Guest, since none of the mortals or demi-Gods dare complain, and this neatly avoided all inter-deity friction by recognising all the manifestations, names and characters of God as stemming from a fundamental unity. There was also the pertinent fact that S/He was the only author at that time. Happily this was accepted all-round, and God even allowed some of his lesser incarnations to appear on the programme.

In the more theological Fanatic programme, the talk was all about the recent happenings at Babel. Discussions were conducted in an atmosphere of mild regret (a Fire God sitting in a corner, turned down low) as it was agreed that the principle of access between heaven and Earth must be based upon mutual understanding, and the existence on both sides of people or Gods to vouch for those crossing the divide. While it is true that Gilgamesh at one point threatened to tear someone's head off, no

violence ensued. The peaceable nature of this, normally most riotous, assembly of fanatics was put down to the difficulty in understanding what anyone was saying. The Genii bearing the burning gems of Ea (of the vast intellect) seemed always to be somewhere else, so that no-one could translate between the various new theological languages being used.

In the main programme the Guest of Honour kept things bubbling along. By splitting Him/erself into several aspects S/He could hold heated debates on any issue. At one point, during questioning from the floor, S/He was asked about this many-incarnations business. For had S/He not argued on one panel that the degree of sex and violence in current Epics was too much and also that it was a perfectly justifiable expression within Literature that had never been shown to do anyone any harm? After a little haggling amongst Him/erselves as to who should answer, the reply came down, "Look, I'm an artist. This is not something that is susceptible to any sort of reductionist argument. However, I do feel, as an author, that I have the right to hold as many contradictory ideas as I like. It's my universe, after all. I mean, if it all made sense and followed logically, life would get pretty dull pretty quickly, wouldn't it? Anyway, I refuse to be drawn on whether there is a coherent explanation for it all until I've published my latest trilogy, which will be up to the usual standard that my readers expect!"

Gilgamesh, who had asked the question in a fit of hubris, then stormed off to taunt some lesser heroes, and generally flex all his muscles.

During the evenings dramas were enacted, to the delight of the mortals present since this form would not be invented for another two thousand years. But if your Guest of Honour is omniscient and omnipotent, there have to be some advantages. Of course the convention was liable to be disturbed considerably if the Guest of Honour became moody, which is why several musical comedy Morality plays by an obscure dark age dramatist made an appearance. God claimed to be, "Fiddling with the minor details," of the era some four thousand years hence.

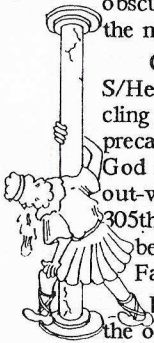
Of course no one really minded odd signs of eccentricity in God, especially since S/He had brought along Sisyphus to demonstrate his labours on a nearby hill. The circling eagles, ever ready to peck transgressor's livers out, nearly rendered the Genii precautions against disturbances irrelevant. But then the social advantages of having God on hand to get drunk with and then cajole into revealing juicy gossip more than outweighed the disadvantages. News that the celebrants could call themselves—305th Fandom swept the Halls, closely followed by the explanation that this was because on a certain date some immodest mortals would declare themselves First Fandom, or the first fans.

Presently there were mutterings about the state that the venue was getting into; the owners complained that it was difficult enough to maintain a wonder of a world in such uncivil times without inconsiderate deities and the like being sick everywhere. Indeed the main convention Hall got into a disgraceful condition. The Genii apologised for this, and argued that they lacked the staff to clean up the inordinate number of fallen angels. The shortage of Heroes for these tasks was blamed on the drop in the number of callipygian virgins stupid enough to fall for God's chat up line.

After forty days and forty nights of liquor and literature enough to drown the world, the feast came to an end. The finale was a more than new band, The Jericho Thousands, who really brought the house down. Ea (of the vast intellect) spent the next millenium laughing himself silly. Gilgamesh was sent off to find some rocks. □

malcolm hodkin

(*Ex-Regius Professor of Ancient Gibberish*).



## MY EASTER CON

It has always been understood that I do not go to Eastercons. It's not that I have any moral or religious scruples about an Easter convention, but my husband likes occasional living proof that his wife is not just a part-time lodger — and Easter is supposed to be a time for families. But whilst I dutifully give Eastercon a miss, the fact of doing so is becoming harder to accept as each year passes and I become more firmly established in the fannish community. Not wishing to offend any organising committee, it's not that I feel I would enjoy Eastercon more particularly than any other convention, but it's another opportunity to meet friends and acquaintances, particularly those who, having decided to go to just one or two conventions, inevitably seem to pick Eastercon, and it's an opportunity I miss annually.

Whilst everyone is gathered together, one assumes having a good time, or at least moaning about how rotten everything is, I sit at home, beset with an overwhelming feeling of isolation, figuratively twiddling my thumbs, and wracked with self pity. I wait for something to happen, secure in the knowledge that this is highly unlikely because, of course, everyone else is away — at Eastercon. So no-one is likely to call in, or should anyone actually be at a loose end, they will doubtless assume I've gone to Leeds, Brighton, Glasgow or wherever, despite my annual protestations to the contrary. And, needless to say, there isn't anyone for me to visit or ring up. I cannot describe how dreadful it is to know exactly where all my friends are, and at the same time to be powerless to take advantage of the situation. I am always profoundly grateful when Easter Monday finally arrives and I know that my world is about to re-assume its customary shape and boundaries.

And then, like salt rubbed into an open cut, the con-reports are published, and letters arrive, lovingly detailing the good times had by all, and amusing things that so-and-so did or said. And people start asking why they didn't see me there, and so the tedious explanations start again, or I give flip answers that don't quite conceal how I feel, and yes, I do resent missing out. I usually end up taking my bad temper away until it cools down. Occasionally I'm bought a present, or someone sends me a postcard, or best of all, has the wit to collect up my share of the zines. That helps.

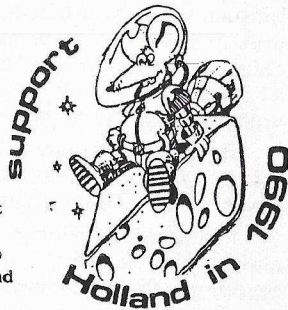
As I write this I've no idea whether I'll get to Albacon. I'm registered, with somewhere to sleep, but it remains to be seen whether I do make the great trek north. I hope so — I don't fancy missing out yet again.

maureen porter

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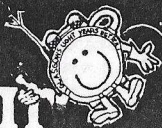


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# SLAUGHTERHOUSE III

THE 37th BRITISH ANNUAL SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION

By the time the bar of the Central Hotel had blurred into its counterpart in the Albany and back again for the fourth time, I'd already sussed that the Tralfamadorians were taking the piss. What really intrigued me was the way Ian Sorensen's glass mysteriously emptied itself every time a reckless bystander offered to buy a round.

"So how are you enjoying the Billy Pilgrim routine?" he muttered in an effort to resurrect the conversation before I drifted off again.

"Somewhat of a disappointment, I've been floating backwards and forwards in time since Christmas and Valerie Perrine still hasn't appeared. Worse, I keep re-materialising after closing time."

"No wonder you hang around conventions," Ian quipped, his ale doing another Lord Lucan as some unsuspecting newcomer neared his web. "It's the only place you're guaranteed to get a drink at a decent hour, like four in the morning."

I raised the curtain on a portrayal of amused disbelief. "In GLASGOW? I think you've forgotten I'm a veteran of the 1980 and 1983 Eastercons — if this city was any better lubricated it'd slide into the Irish Sea."

I sensed he was about reply when the Tralfamadorians struck again and I found myself propped against a table, praying to some undefined deity for British Rail to install a decent seating allowance on the Birmingham-Glasgow "express". It's just after midnight and I try desperately to keep myself amused, dividing my attention between the copy of BOUND IN LEATHER I've just won in a one-off BAPA competition and the eyebrow-raising reminiscences of one of my fellow passengers, who claims to be the brother of the Glasgow Hells Angels chief and currently sports a plaster cast on one leg, allegedly the result of aiding a local copper through an upper-floor window. Sadly, I've forgotten to pack a membership form for the Forty Second Squad.

By the time I re-materialise Ian's glass has already been refilled and his expression switched from glazed to inquisitorial. "Anyway, what do you feel about doing this article for the '86 Programme Book?"

"Intrigued," I offer in my best non-committal tones. "I've written plenty of con reports over the years, but never one *before* the event — and an event I'm only attending in 90-second bursts, to boot."

"Ah, but don't you see? It's just like Priest's AFFIRMATION — the fantasy is more true than the reality. All that really changes are the guests and badges, anyway."

"Too bloody true; by around the third day of an Albacon I've indulged in so much desperate fun the only way I remember who I am is by checking my badge. Some clown wrote "Isaac Asimov" on mine once and I'd written two robot novels before someone exposed my self delusion. Thank ghod it didn't carry on past breakfast."

Ian downed another gulp whilst I plucked pieces of silly string from my lapel, souvenir from a split-second phase into the Worldcon '87 room party. "If anything, it

would be more accurate than the conreps you usually write," he was adding. "At least you could write your notes whilst you were sober."

For a moment I began to wonder how well he really knew me, then found myself suddenly amongst the audience at the Brum Group's room party during Albacon II. Onstage, Sorensen was warbling his way through another of his derivative ditties, but for a moment I felt tapped into the life force of the Glasgow cons, the sheer party spirit of it all.

".. if that's not too soon for you," Ian was saying, suddenly three years older. "Are you okay?"

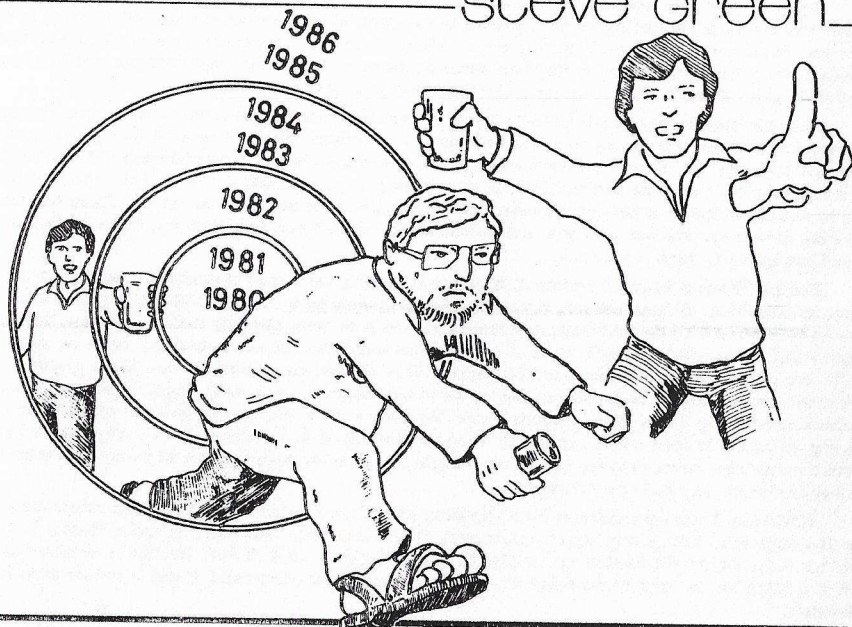
"Yeah, sure. I'm just grateful this psychic slideshow has managed to skirt round the less memorable moments of the first two Glasgow Eastercons, like the Sam crawls down the hotel corridors wondering if your body should have come with a 25-year guarantee, or the melancholy on Easter Tuesday when you realise you have to scrape through another 360 days till the next instalment."

The wall behind the bar had begun to ripple as wave upon wave of past events flowed past: Jim White impersonating Michael Parkinson, Colin Kapp dressed in an anti-radiation suit, Jim Barker and Dave Langford abandoning their fake TAFF duel and deciding instead to attack compere Eve Harvey, the Albacon haggis hurling contest..

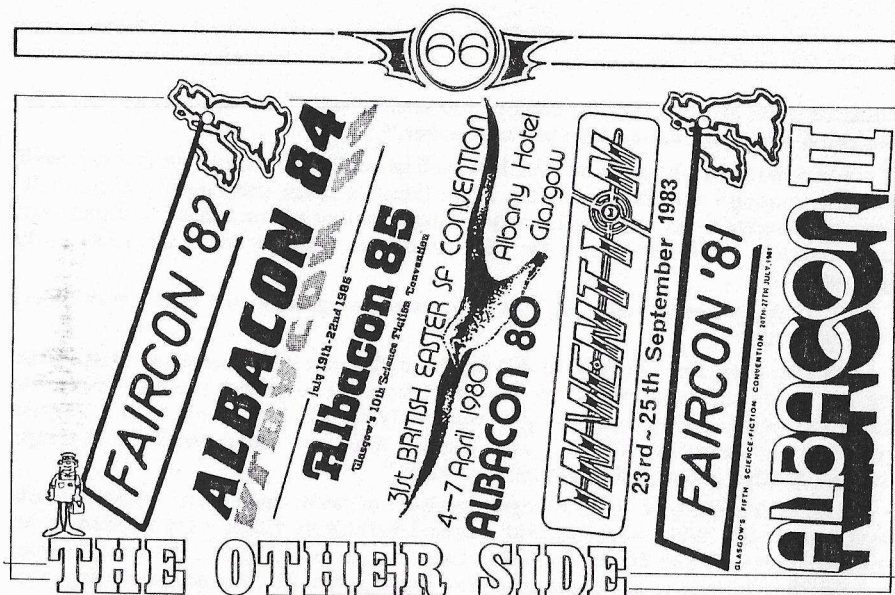
My companion made one final attempt to retain contact as I began to slip away, like Vonnegut's Pilgrim, like THE AFFIRMATION's Sinclair. "Look, if nothing else, just tell me this: will Albacon III be a success?"

But it was too late, and he never heard my anecdotes about this latest sequence in the tradition of Glasgow spectaculars, nor my comments on Albacon IV for that matter. For a moment I thought I knew where I was, but when I looked back

steve green







It all started at the end of 1976 and we now rush towards our 11th convention. By the time of Albaicon III we will have been doing it for 9 and a bit years, just to give you about 6 weeks of actual convention. As you can imagine, a lot has happened in that time and I have seen a lot of the other side of the convention, the convention running by the committee.

As I write this I am trying to visualise all the conventions as just one big event and all I get is a vast morass of chaos. The overriding memory is of running from here to there, not knowing the reason — just running and taking stairs two at a time rather than waiting for the lift. Of taking equipment to one venue then taking it to another. Of going to bed sometime between 5 and 7am and noting the astonished look on the faces of the hotel staff as you ask for an alarm call for 9am.

And the bleep. The wonderful bleep. The terrible bleep. The feelings that that little bleep evoke! There was the wonderful feeling of having it: all the responsibility of the convention was invested in it. Yet you would dread it going off. Sitting there talking to people a marvelous feeling of exhilaration coming over you as you respond to its bleep while at the same time bemoaning how you couldn't stop and really enjoy yourself. Why do we have this terrible urge to martyr ourselves?

But while that is a general impression, there are specific memories from each convention. Faircon 78, the first Glasgow convention, and fear stalking the committee. Would it be a flop? Suppose hardly anybody turns up? We weren't bothered about profit or loss but about the mortification if the convention was only the committee and the GoH. Memories of going round asking people if they were enjoying it, and the collective relief of the committee on the Sunday as our fear was erased. There was also meeting newcomers who are now part and parcel of our committees: Iain Dickson, Mike Molloy and Neil Craig spring to mind.

Faircon 79 was a bit more organised, bringing in being the sort of committee structure we have now. Its main claim to fame was that it was a successful follow up to '78 but it was somewhat overshadowed by Albaicon 80, (the first Glasgow Eastercon), which we were planning at the same time. As that approached we kept wondering if we had overreached ourselves. Unlike nowadays, when we started there was only really the Eastercon and Novacon. When we first announced Faircon many people said we should have gone for the Eastercon, but we were total beginners with only a handful having been to a convention before. (This state of affairs lasted for quite a while with the majority of our committee having only gone to their own conventions. It didn't end till 81-82.) Albaicon 80 is really quite a blur with the only clear memory being the Monday night room parties where people kept on coming up to tell us how much they had enjoyed the con.

Hitchercon 1 was very different from anything we had done before or since. All the others tend to be the same mix, just getting bigger and bigger, while Hitchercon was based round a theme. It was strange, a mixture of the familiar and totally new. Looking back on it, it does tend to be regarded as a bit of a failure and we never tried that sort of thing again. On the other hand, it did introduce us to Ian Sorensen.

Faircon '81 was the last in the Ingram Hotel, with most of our time spent on how to present all the programmes and facilities we wanted in too small a hotel. The Mike Molloy proposal of using the Central Hotel came too late for us to properly plan it, but we did move there for Faircon '82 is now legend but it did mar the atmosphere at the convention. Albacon II produced another change in committee structure, the one in use now, although the change was not as radical as in '79. But while Albacon II was being planned so was Invention.

Invention was to be a small convention run by those who had never run a convention before, with the assistance of a few who had. While Albacon II meetings were painful, the Invention ones were a joy. The conventions themselves were both very enjoyable despite the different organisational methods. Albacon II was really big, with everybody pulling together and most of the organisation working. Invention worked despite organisational collapses — including getting endless copies of Shenendoah instead of Silent Running! Only the total lack of organisation for the clear up after the convention marred it.

With Albacon '84 we no longer had video which alleviated one of our great problems. The money freed from the video programme was poured into the film programme to produce a very mixed bag of films. And a very mixed response, with people hating its lack of SF films and others loving it for the mix and its unpredictability. Albacon '84 also had us having to contend with our GoH not being able to make it, though Norman Spinrad made a very acceptable substitute. With '85 we had Ellison and another change as we involved our GoH much more in our convention than we had ever done with previous guests.

That brings us up to date with our cons. Enjoy Albacon III for its own sake and try not to compare it with previous conventions. If you do you'll find yourself comparing a convention which is huge and coming off a production machine of committee organisation against a small convention run by a bunch of newcomers thrust into organisation for the first time. In fact the only thing that all these committees and conventions have had is the enthusiasm and determination behind them to produce the most enjoyable convention that we could. We aim to do this with Albacon III as well. ■

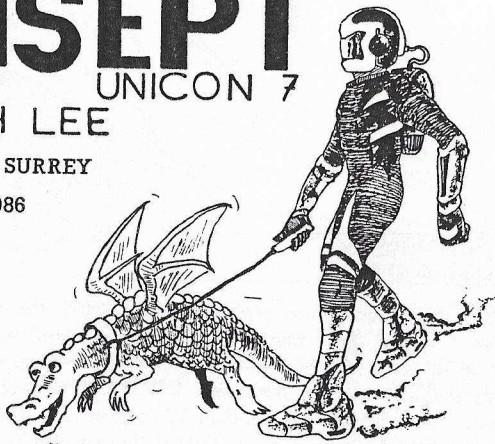
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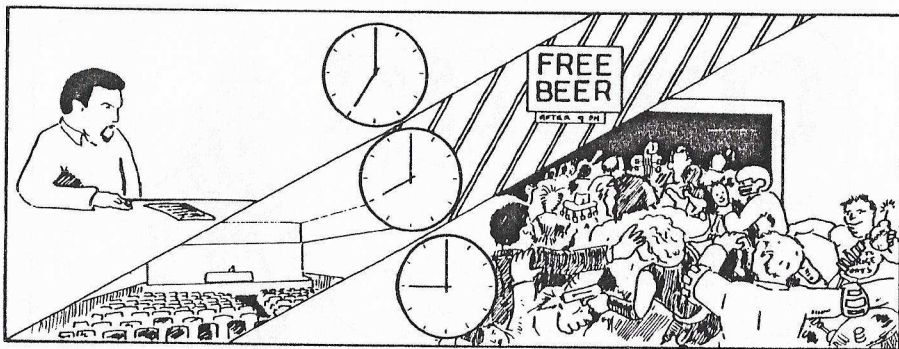
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# AUSSIECON REPORT

Judith Hannah

▼ Aussiecon II, the 1985 World SF Convention, held in Melbourne, Australia. ▼

A long way to travel for a convention. We took it in as part of a family visit — it was about time my parents had a chance to inspect Joseph. Eve Harvey was there because she had won GUFF, so was paid to go and represent British fandom, and John went too to take the photos. Chris, Chris and Chris (Hughes, Donaldson and Atkinson), Malcolm, Paul, Jan and Colin (Edwards, Oldroyd, Huxley and Fine) had been flown Down Under free by British Airways to throw parties and win the '87 Worldcon. Which they duly did. It seemed a pretty good excuse at that. The Britain in '87 team gave terrific parties: can CONSPIRACY keep up the standard? A few hundred other foreigners, including many Americans, took in the Worldcon as an opportunity to drop in on terra Australis Incognita and see if it bore any resemblance to *Picnic at Hanging Rock* and *Road Warrior*. Australians from all corners of the continent (hardly anyone lives in the middle) also attended.



Of the 1500 or so people attending Aussiecon, the local Australian fans seemed least visible. Most of them were so immersed in running some aspect of the Convention they would only be glimpsed every now and then, pausing with harrassed White Rabbit expressions as they muttered "Where's a gopher? Where's security? The Hotel have been complaining. Oh dear it's all running late!" Even non-local fans, like Queensland writer Leanne Frahm, found themselves dragged into the frantic worry unable to escape to see the convention they'd come a thousand miles or so to attend. Others like Greg Turkich of Perth and Cary Lenehan of Cooma, knew in advance they'd be working full-time running security. When the blokes running security are both 6'7" and solid, and one of them is a policeman, security hassles just somehow fade away. Overseas visitors pitched in too. Co-DUFF winner Robbie Bourget definitely wins the '85 speed collation award, zipping faster than light around the table

where pages of the penultimate issue of Leigh's *Aussiecon Free Press* were laid out, repeatedly lapping native contenders Marc Ortlieb and John McDouall.

Notable events at Aussiecon included: — Race Matthews, Minister for the Arts in the Victorian State government, opening the convention by reminiscing about the old days when he was a fan, publishing and reading fanzines, and an Australian national SF convention was 30 people meeting in the local scout hall. — Near-riot at the end of the banquet when the committee tried to stop other convention members coming in to hear Bob Shaw's after-dinner talk. Since Bob had been flown out to Aussiecon by a special Shaw Fund, the masses who'd contributed were a mite upset by attempts to exclude them from his star turn. The committee was eventually talked into reason, Bob himself joining the protesters against the attempted elitism. — The Hugo presentation ceremonies, an hour or more late while a tremendously elaborate slide show was set up... only to find that the names of the nominees flashed up *out of order*. Marc Ortlieb compering, resplendent in a wine waiter costume, preserved noble sangfroid. But when the winner of the Novellette award flashed up as *PLESS ENTER* even he cracked up. You all know, of course, that this year the Good Guys carried off some Hugos: Dave Langford won the Fanwriter award, and Bill Gibson's *Neuromancer* the Novel Hugo. — An "academic track" of serious papers which have been published as a book *Contrary Modes* by Ebony Press, one of Australia's two SF specialist presses. Topics addressed include History of SF in Australia (Van Ikin), National Accents in SF (John Baxter), Mad Max (George Turner), the works of Gene Wolfe, women and SF. The academic track was run by Jenny & Russell Blackford, who are Ebony Press, and Lucy Sussex.

We divided our time between the Fan Lounge at the Victoria Hotel, Melbourne's traditional convention hotel, and popping in on the main or academic programme, or the book rooms, or the late night room parties at the Southern Cross, the main hotel a couple of blocks up the road. A third hotel, the Sheraton, housed the media and film programmes. Back in London, we'd promised by letter to help out on the Fan Lounge roster, so that's where we spent most of our time, selling stuff for GUFF and DUFF in company with Valma Brown, Jean Weber, Eric Lindsay (who now talks computerised anarchy instead of explosives) Jack Herman and Cath McDonnell, Neil Kaden from Texas and Robbie and Marty Cantor. Leigh Edmonds laboured in solitary confinement in a deeper dungeon producing the *Aussiecon Free Press* (or *Free Pless* according to the post-Hugo issue).

Perhaps the most surprising thing about Aussiecon was that halfway round the world only a few incidental details, like the names and faces of the people present and the range of regional accents, were different from what you'd expect to find at a British convention. That, and liquor laws: Colin Fine, bringing in the boxfuls of booze for the great bidding party marathon nearly had a heart attack when a hotel porter confronted him. "Do you want to borrow a trolley to take that all up to your room, sir?" Hotel bar prices are horrendous, but you can "bring your own grog" into your room, as into most restaurants. And with a 4-litre box of bloody good Aussie plonk a mere \$4 or so, room parties rather than the bar became the focus of evening socialising.

Aussiecon was enjoyable, if you already knew people and regarded the convention as a social event. However, it became very clear that the few people making up the main committee and central sub-committees were trying to do too much, and both exhausting themselves and producing a less efficient and so overall less enjoyable convention for those who came along to see the programmed events than would have been achieved if more people had been drawn in at all stages and involved in the massive amount of work putting on a Worldcon entails.

# today Albacon tomorrow the World

There are only 515 days to go to the biggest SF event to be held in Britain this decade — Conspiracy '87, the 45th World Science Fiction Convention.

The World Science Fiction Convention is held annually at a location decided by the votes of members of the Worldcon two (and now three) years previous. There are many complicated rules governing eligibility of venues, but in essence it comes down to the convention alternating between the east and west coasts of the USA until a foreign bid wrests it out of North America. The Australians won the right to hold the Worldcon in 1985, so it was in Melbourne that the British bid was selected as best bet for 1987.

As you can read in Judith Hanna's Aussiecon report, it is too easy for the organisation to get on top of a committee, leaving the members in a constant state of confusion. One major event that should not be messed up is the Hugo Award Ceremony. (Hands up all those who've bought books because they had won a Hugo, and who didn't know how they got it?) If you become a member of Conspiracy '87 then you are entitled to vote for the Hugo Awards.

A Worldcon committee can usually get any guest they desire, but is safest going for Guests who are a good mixture of the rarely seen and much loved. Conspiracy have included such writers as Alfred Bester, Doris Lessing, the Strugatsky brothers, Dave Langford, the artist Jim Burns, and fan guests Ken & Joyce Slater. An added bonus of a Worldcon is that most of the rest of the world's top SF writers will also be there.

In addition to meeting famous people, attendees at a Worldcon have the opportunity to meet fans from America, Australia, Europe, Japan, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, England... just about everywhere. One thing that makes fandom special is the truly international nature of it: Worldcons are the breeding ground for the contacts which hold fandom together.

In case you're not already aware of it, the whole thing happens between August 27th and September 1st at the Metropole Hotel in Brighton, site of the last British Worldcon in 1979.

(If you want to attend Conspiracy '87 then you'd better be quick — the attending membership rate rises from #19.50 to #25 on April 1st and will remain at that level until the end of September. Join at Albacon. Or, if you've foolishly left it too late, send your money to Conspiracy '87, PO Box 43, Cambridge, CB1 3JJ. This was not an advert.)

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# THE LAST CON



shep...

It was Easter and the anniversary of my twelfth year on the dock. "I know," I thought, "I'll go to a convention!" The last ten years of opening cream eggs on my own in a drafty room in Kingston had made severe inroads into my aversion to conventions and the whole circus of self-conceit known as fandom. I could even feel myself looking forward to the inevitable convention disco.

I knew where I'd find them, alright. The Royal Angus Birmingham was the only hotel which would have them in these days of austerity, apart from that dump in Cardiff which we don't talk about. Thank goodness for UB-bus fares, I thought, otherwise I'd be out in the rain hitching it. And with the bastards that drive these days I'd rather try to cadge a hot-cross bun off a policeman!

As I walked into the Angus, that familiar feeling of convention unreality descended on me as if I had never left. "ConDe mnation?" said the red-head at the desk, looking me over with a knowing gaze. I wondered if she had ever read the works of Philip K. Dick, or Simon Ounsley, but didn't like to ask. She'd probably say she couldn't read.

Upstairs I saw immediately they hadn't redecorated. I wondered if they had redecorated since my first convention. I was only six months old then, so it's hard to remember. Besides, my mother was on drugs and it tends to screw up your reality perception at age six months. It screwed up my reality perception enough to keep me hanging round with those mindless jerks for almost twenty years, now I come to think of it!

I began to sweat, imagining running into one of my mother's friends, old women in dungarees with dyed hair and illegal smoking habits, or ex-yuppies blooming with health on the BUPA and pension credits they'd mortgaged their souls for thirty years earlier. I didn't think I could face that. Maybe fandom had grown younger in my absence. Maybe they'd all died.



But where were they? I began to get a creepy feeling about the whole business. There was the registration desk, with a sign saying "ConDemnation" blue-tacked to a fading piece of green baize. There were the standard brown envelopes sitting in the same cardboard box, I swear, I'd seen at Mexicon 9. There was the archaic lock and key cash-box they collected monies in, as if people carried loose change these days. But where were the people? There wasn't even anyone behind the desk.

I flicked idly through the envelopes, looking at the names: Joseph Nicholas - you'd think the government would have deported him by now; Nigel Richardson, what, the old lecher's still on the convention circuit?; Dave Wood - have they been feeding him immortality drugs or what?; Avedon Carol, my first role model; and... I backtracked and pulled out the envelope, staring at it in surprise. That was my name! Not my mother's name or my father's, but mine. Who the hell had signed me up for this convention, and who the hell had known I was coming?

I walked off to the bar in the hope of a drink, in the hope of some answers. Glancing in at the main con hall on my way past, I could see it was all set up, but still no people. I padded silently on to the lounge area, already sensing the emptiness, the damp smell of decay. It was all deserted but for an emaciated tramp bleakly drinking from a can at the unmanned bar. "No bloody alcohol!" he muttered. "How can a man get decently drunk on this dealcoholised muck?" It was, I realised with a thrill of horror, Michael Ashley. He had been a ghost even in my days, but only a few of the more sensitive fan writers had ever actually seen him at a convention.

I hurried past, shuddering, and took refuge in the fan room. Or was it the book room? It had been disputed territory for over thirty years, just because the bloody Angus was too small for conventions but no-one would admit it. I pushed the door open on a room stacked high with paper: some of it books, some magazines, but most of it fanzines. Piles and piles of fanzines, made from lovely thick, virgin paper. I could hardly believe my eyes. The room must be worth a fortune in scrap! I picked up a bundle and examined it, reading the government discharge label on top: "Miscellaneous, discretionary restitution advisable". It was a complete run of The Women's Periodical, I realised, or near enough, issues 5 to 146. Someone must have died or they wouldn't be here. Even this government can't repossess something that's partly your own work!

I weighed the bundle thoughtfully, wondering how much it was worth. Enough to buy me a good time somewhere else for sure! But even as I thought that, grimacing at the awful old photos round the wall, someone opened the door and squeezed into the room behind me. I turned round and looked into an all too familiar face.

"Oh, hello Dad," I said sheepishly. I hadn't seen him for six years since that business with the credit card.

"Ah," he said, instantly dropping into his jovial father caricature. "I thought you'd show up one day. You're stuff's over there." He shuffled past me and pulled out a box from under one of the tables. I looked down at it curiously. "Pimples" said the shaky lettering across the Quarto purple page I'd hoped never to see again. It's a bit hard living down your past when you've sent out your teenage angst to over 250 people who refuse to forget! "There's only about seventy there," my father said apologetically. "I think the rest must have been thrown away."

"What's going on?" I asked

"We're winding up," he said. "It's all over. We've called everything in, and now we're settling up the accounts."

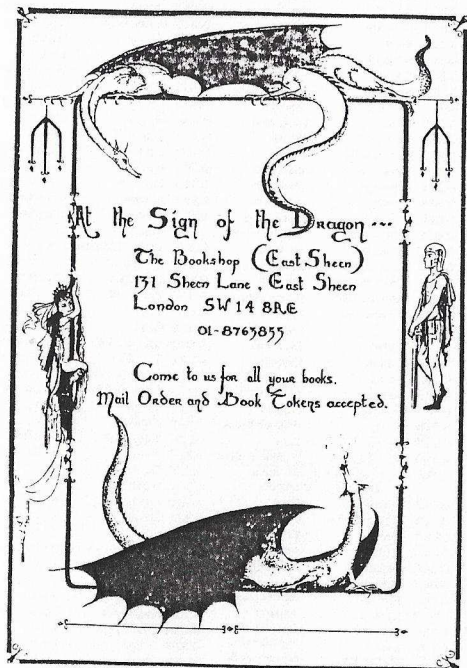
"But why?"

"Fandom was moribund. What else could we do? If we hadn't agreed to do it ourselves, they'd only have done it for us. So this is the last convention." The poor old man, I thought, his mind's wandering. There is no more fandom, just him and the ghost of Michael Ashley. And this valuable pile of paper.

"Don't worry," he said, misinterpreting my look, "this convention will run a few more years yet. There's still a couple of hundred fans out there. They come in in dribs and drabs, when they think how much money they could get on repossessing their fanzines since the new paper laws. Pickersgill came in grumbling the other day, wishing he'd done more fanzines when the going was good! I expect there'll be quite a few this weekend; we always get most over Easter. It'll be quite like old times. We could even have a room party!" His voice positively shook with nostalgia. I thought I might be sick. "Ah well, maybe not. I can see your heart's not in it. You might as well take your stash and go. Your birthright," he added proudly.

The sentimental old fool. I'd take my birthright all right, not just the Pimples, but the whole flaming lot! He'd see; they'd screwed me up for twenty years, him, my mother and their precious fandom with its pseudo vocabulary, its pretensions of superiority, and most of all, the promise of a better future. I deserved the fanzines! I'd learned to read on "Get Stuffed", not Janet and John like other kids, I'd joined apas not the boy scouts, I'd gone to conventions not school. I was a social failure because of them. I deserved all I could take. And I knew a dealer who'd ask no questions. This, I promised myself optimistically, would be the last day of the last convention. ■

christina lake



At the Sign of the Dragon...

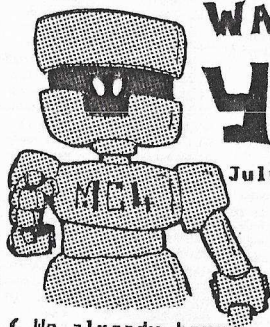
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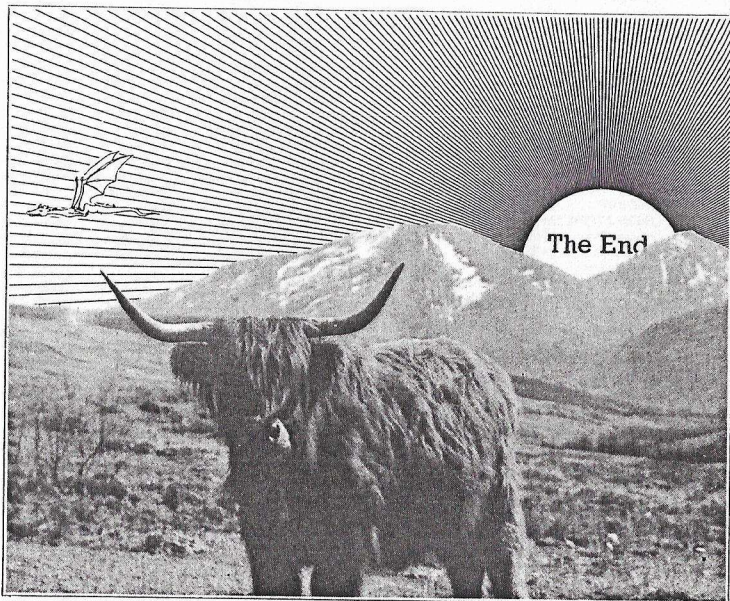
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at 12-3-86



## SO LONG AND THANKS FOR ALL THE HELP

A convention is largely the outcome of the work of the committee but there are a number of other people whose contributions have all added to the success of Albacon III. We would now like to thank them all: Our guests, Joe Haldeman (and his wife Gay), Clive Barker, John Jarrold and Pete Lyon. The management and staff of the Central Hotel. Naveed Khan for typesetting facilities. The staff at Dittoprint Ltd. McCowans the toffee people for prizes and toffee. Ken Ingles at the Glasgow Film Theatre. Gestetner Ltd and Dixons Photographic Ltd for their help in the repro room. All our advertisers and conventions who allowed us tables to sell memberships. Contravention for losing the bid in 1985 and for their party. All the artists who brought work to the art show. All the artists and writers who contributed to the progress reports and programme book. All the people who gave talks or appeared on panels during the convention. And our parents, without whom it would not have been possible. ■

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P.S. TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: I DO HESITATE TO BUY ONE POUCE AND ASSOC. SLANDRIES. WHEN, THAT THE QUESTION.

