

# WORCESTER

(Title by John D. Berry)

Material for this conrep was provided by the following

Vernon Brown ("Doesn't he ever smile?")

John D. Berry ("My goodness, but he's a big one.")

Edge I. Gilbert (Idwal? Really!??)

and

Andrew Stephenson (Renowned ANALOG letterhack and author.)

Not to mention the other 250 or-whatever-the-number-was attendees, who have been credited by name wherever possible.

Artwork has been provided by

Kevin Cullen

Harry Bell

and

David Rowe

in particular, but I may fit some more in yet.

The whole thing was made possible by the hard work and good will of the Eastercon 22 committee

Peter Weston (Who is almost as famous as...)

Vernon Brown (That fan again.)

Roger Peyton

and

Bob Rickard

However, no matter how much praise any or all of the above may rate, the editing of this magazine is entirely the fault of

Gray Boak

6 Hawks Road

KINGSTON upon THAMES

Surrey

LKT 3EG

to whom all uncredited comments, and everything within double-brackets, belong. He would like to take the chance of pointing out that EC22 was a superb con, and to thank everyone who feels that they deserve thanking for making it so.

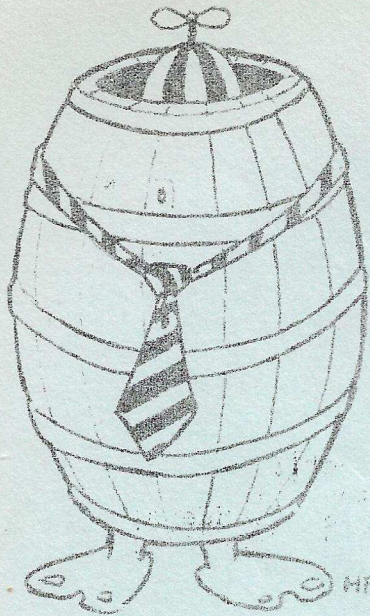
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After this con, the rivers of Britain will flow with corflu!

Keith Bridges

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# WITH SAUCE



Vernon

If you want to enjoy a convention programme never organise a con.

Over the whole of the Easter weekend, from Friday lunch until Monday lunch, I managed to see two official programme items - one of which was the chairman's

Introduction to which I was dragged at about 30 secs notice, the other being the Sunday convention discussion. Even on the boat-trip I was flogging commemorative covers. Looking back I seem to have spent my time on the reception desk, controlling lights, or just trotting round in ever-decreasing circles trying to find people - I never even got a taste of the seven gallons of wine I took down. ((But I did. And so did all attendees

of my impromptu party Saturday night. It was good hooch, Vernon...I'm sorry you missed it.)) Still, it was an enjoyable weekend.

It all started just after the '70 con when Peter gave me a ring to ask if I would give him a hand with the '71 con. At first things were not too bad. After Peter had run through the AA book of Midland Hotels we picked out a few promising ones - few being the operative word, as there seems to be a dearth of reasonably-sized medium-priced hotels. The ones large enough to take over 100 guests and more attendees appeared rather staid; the managers usually tended to look askance at the very mention of the term Science Fiction. After a disappointment or six we found the Giffard, which was not only new but large and with a genial manager. The toilets (gents at least) were large and clean - I have found on my various wanderings that it's not the bar or the main decor that is the yardstick of a place but the state of the humble hidden loo!

We were now on a solid foundation, with an abode and a Guest of Honour. Letterheads were printed - it's surprising what a difference a piece of headed notepaper will make when communicating with almost anyone, from private individuals to large firms, - and we could shoot off official letters in all directions. Committee meetings were held every few weeks - a necessary requirement of a functional committee is that its members live fairly close to one another in order that meetings can be held frequently or as often as necessary and at short notice if the occasion arises. It's no good trying to hold a meeting by phone or letter.

Various responsibilities were thrashed out, each member being more or less solely responsible for his area with as little overlap as possible. This meant that each member worked at his best, as there could be no passing the buck. Among other things I ended up with the gathering of auction material and the organisation of commemorative covers. I wrote off hopefully to a fair number of authors for donations to the auction - mss, books, etc. A number replied, the majority of whom were most helpful and courteous, even if, as happened in several cases, they could not donate anything as all their material was being filed in University archives. Some passed me on to others who might help, some didn't reply. Gods with feet of clay! The secretaries at work, noticing sheaves of multi-coloured envelopes instead of catalogues in my post, were most intrigued to discover that 'those' people who read 'those peculiar space/BEM/A-war books' were actually organised and unashamed of it.

The commemorative covers started out reasonably well. After much tele-

phoning and letterwriting all the snags were ironed out, details of when and where organised and the design for the handfrank sent off and received by the GPO well before the appointed deadline. However, the internal communications of the P.O. were as efficient as the external and the designs disappeared. I didn't even know about this until the Friday before Eastercon, by which time it was much too late to resubmit and/or arrange private franking/posting. Peter managed to get a small stamp made with the legend "Posted at Eastercon 22" but of course the whole point of a commemorative cover was lost.

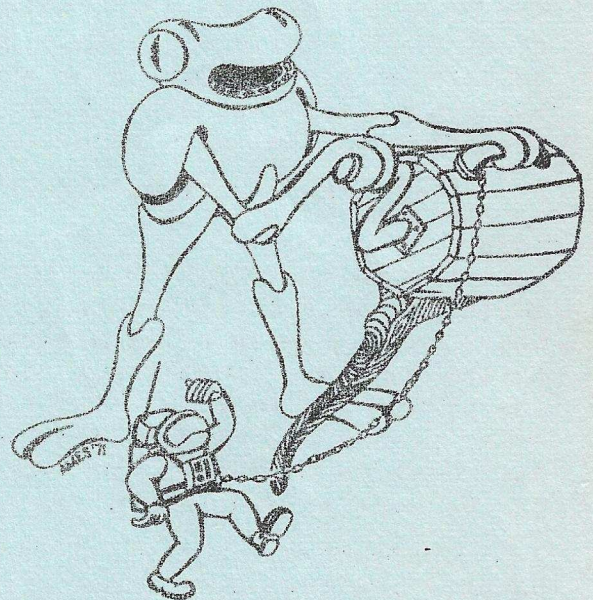
Another thing that we didn't realise was that there is a tax on printed matter and the cost of the covers went up by about 20% in tax. However the final cost was such that, had things been OK with the GPO, we could have covered the complete cost of the covers by charging 15p per cover including postage. As we ended by charging 5p we made a bit of a loss.

Other aspects went off fairly well; adverts came in by various means - the postal strike didn't help much but even the foreign post managed to reach us - or I should say Peter, as he had the devious connections necessary - the Banquet menu was decided upon, even a new GoH was found at short notice to take Brian Aldiss' place when he had to resign due to personal reasons. Films were ordered several months in advance after poring over various catalogues and a riverboat trip arranged. One hectic evening was spent putting together the Programme Booklet. Piles of artwork, adverts, articles and programme information littered the table while a huge sheet of paper, divided into numbered page sections, was slowly filled in, erased, and refilled with details of the layout of the Booklet.

Finally most of the material required was stored in Peter's house and arrangements made for travelling down on the Thursday evening to get everything set up for the 'off' on Friday. I arrived at Peter's late after a last-minute hitch - I realised that my 'genuine-type' helmet looked nothing like those depicted on S&S covers ... why-in-hell don't the artists realise that a helmet fitting the head like a glove (?) would cause the chap inside to die of a homogenized brain and multiple skull fractures is a hail-stone hit it? I got a 'suitable' one from R-x-chams and sprayed it silver.

The taxi-driver who drove me across town must have had a tiring day or something because he gave me rather peculiar looks as I climbed in with a huge suitcase, a large newspaper-covered box (for posting) and a 3ft-odd broadsword. Perhaps it's as well that someone else was taking down my 2ft. diameter shield and seven one-gallon containers of wine.

((I recall, at Oxford, heading out to dinner with a bunch of Herts./Crabapple fen complete with jousting equipment, when I ran across Terry Somalya, Kenyan-Asian fellow Univ. student. As we chatted blithely about mutual friends and our respective employers, his fellow-national companions stared in open amazement as the fen began limbering up for a practice battle there and then.... When Jillie Bridges came up, threatening to take bites out of her broadsword if I didn't feed her quickly, we mutually thought it best to ~~like to fight~~ part company....))



After several false starts Peter, Bileen, Rick and I were on our way to Worcester. Arriving rather late in the evening there was little time to do much convention setting-up so after a drink or three I got my last night of reasonable sleep.



Friday morning of course things started going wrong - after setting up the tables and notices for registration (did anyone notice the deliberate mistake in the spelling of commemorative (sic)) we found that the duty rota we had worked out was no good as some volunteers were late, resulting in Roger Peyton, myself and two conmembers running the desk between us most of the day. Then we found we couldn't lock the artroom door; after piling chairs against it when unattended, we found that the frame had warped. However, scientific use of a nail-file and, later, a carefully-timed and executed kick, surmounted this obstacle to safety. We found that the door could only be locked from the inside and e had to retrace our steps through the room, leave by a

fire-exit and wander through the bowels of the earth before creeping up a flight of echoing concrete stairs and emerging from the panelling into the main first floor corridor. The whole process was rather ERBish, especially as a wrong turn led to a series of ledges and huge doors overlooking black depths, which undoubtedly hid waiting and hungry denizens.

After a hurried lunch at a snack bar round the corner it was back to the desk again all afternoon, except for a few minutes sitting on the dias during the chairman's welcome, and a further few minutes fiddling with the lights for Jack Cohen's lecture - which brings a gem of thought from the dim recesses of my mind. While an organising committee should be small - three or four members at most - there should be a larger sub-committee responsible for being available and organising these small things and thus leaving the main committee to deal with major worries and/or minor catastrophes.

(( In the meantime, others were still arriving....))

Roje

I woke up very early. Known as panicguts, I have never been late for anything, only far too early. We piled into the car and down to Vic Hallet's houseboat. He was still dressing at his own pace, and got chivvied up by an agitated Roje. Finally got him into the car, and realised I hadn't watered the plants I'm looking after for some friends. Back to the house at seventy, water plants and back to the bus station, arriving 15 minutes before departure. Said Tata to Heather. Vic unerringly chose the draughtiest seat in the bus. Off we went to Cheltenham.

Cheltenham bus station is incredible. They stack buses in at maximum density and then play chess with them. The first thing we noticed was the 20 yard queue outside the ladies and the interdigitating stream in and out of the gents. We were suddenly hailed by Gill Adams, who appeared completely unworried by the queue - she had booked in advance. The coach was found after three attempts, and the journey to Worcester was a delight, through a part of England I knew not at all. Finally to our goal, nestled in a vale of the Malverns.

Gill said that the first person she wanted to meet was Lisa Conesa, because she (Lisa) was crackers. I had gained an essentially similar opinion from my correspondence, and was pleasantly surprised by reality. Good old

Phil Muldowney was there already, trying to grow a beard.

I remember ending up in the bar, where I appeared to cause blissful delight to Ratfandom by just being alive. I know that I am an extremely lovable and pleasant personality, but this adoration was a little too much for me. Although quite incapable of blushing, I felt sorry for this happy band of Ratfen, innocently worshipping my presence, sorry that I could not accept them into my fold - they are as yet too full of childish illusions, but soon, if they do not get too old....

\*\*\*\*\*  
I'm giggling myself stupid. John Hall  
\*\*\*\*\*

The beer was expensive but the lager at the same price as the beer seemed drinkable. Later that evening I ended up in a party in the Giffard Suite drinking fannish brew of indeterminate composition, thank goodness. About 3am, it killed me off and I retired.

And had breakfast with Peter Roberts. I chattered on inconsequentially for a bit, but Aardvark Fandom remained mute. I checked to see if he still breathed and was rewarded with a "What the bloody 'ell you doing!" The trufan lived. ....

.... By the time I got out for lunch, the pubs were shut, and I had a sandwich lunch with the Bulmers and the Westons. Ken was very dejected, and kept mumbling about bargains. When pressed he said that Brian Aldiss had bought "Battle of Dorking" in a local antique/junk shop for 30/-. Ken had offered him £2 and Brian had laughed at him. I now realised that there are gaping gaps in my knowledge of SF and literature far wider than I first suspected.

((And still they rolled in...))

John

I arrived on Saturday, the second day of the con and a day later than I had intended. But then nobody except Pete Weston had any inkling that I was coming, so the surprise was just as great one day as the next. Indeed, I did surprise quite a number of people

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That's John D. Berry??!

Greg Pickersgill

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although I'm sure the majority of the convention members took no note of my arrival. If it had been a small, intimate, convention instead of having over 400 registered members, and if there were now anything like the contact between British and American fandoms that existed in the 50s, I might have surprised many more people. But then I probably would have had to meet many more people and my contact with each would have been more superficial. As it was, the people I saw most were those I had met when I was in England two years ago and those I knew by their fanzines whom I had not yet met.

The opportunity to appear unexpectedly came from my being in France to study for six months. I took a very complicated series of trains, buses and planes to London on Friday, but the journey took much longer than I had expected and I had to spend the night in London. The next morning I took another train

to Worcester. On the way I met an utterly fascinating man, very sharp and in his fifties, I'd judge, who struck up a free-form conversation with me in the dining car, and we were soon talking as if we were old friends. We talked all the way to Worcester and, besides the obvious benefit of meeting someone new and fascinating, the encounter limbered me up for conversation. It was the best possible preparation for a convention, and consequently Saturday was my best day at the con.

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I hear that Greg took John Hall to bed last night? Bryn Fortey  
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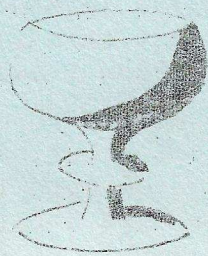
The very first person I saw in the con hotel was Pete Weston, who looked precisely like a harried con chairman. It wasn't until some time Sunday night that I saw him relax, have a drink, and join the party; by then it was undoubtedly past that point I've heard so many con chairmen talk about, when you say "It's out of my hands now; the hell with it!" Pete's wife Eileen provided a humanizing balance, but I don't think she had Pete to herself very much that weekend. After paying twenty-five shillings registration fee and picking up the very handsome programme booklet, I went up to the lounge and into a crowd of not-quite-familiar faces. I've seen enough photo-pages from past conventions that the crowd didn't look all strangers, but there was at first no-one I knew. Then one of the faces came into focus -- it was Darroll Pardoe, hiding under a heavy beard and long bushy hair the clean-cut Englishman he had seemed at the Baycon and Midwestcon three years ago. Darroll, his wife Rosemary, and I, along with a number of young fans whose names I'm afraid I've forgotten, set off to find some lunch, but we found a Wimpy bar instead. A Wimpy would make me feel right at home -- if I were in the habit of eating overcooked McDonalds burgers. And calculating food prices brought me up against one problem that would plague me all weekend. From one trip to England two years before, I had just about mastered the British currency system. Now they've changed it -- and while in theory a decimal system should be easier for an American, in fact it was more confusing than ever, trying to keep in mind that one New Penny is worth 2 2/5 American cents (and 2 2/5 old pence). Since the system had just been converted, most of the English were hardly more adept at it than I, and they kept converting back to old shillings and pence, which only confused me more.

British cons don't seem to be markedly different from American ones. Because of the very modern hotel and the record-breaking attendance, this one felt much like an American worldcon. I suspect I could play the old con game as well there as in the States: guess which ones are the fans. In the Giffard it was easy, because everyone was a fan but for the hotel employees, but even on the street outside it required little effort to spot the "fannish types". Pete Weston told me that when he and Eileen were outside she pointed at a group of people and cried out "There are some fans!" Pete looked and said that they weren't. "Oh, no," said Eileen, "they're just people with very sensitive faces."

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You've a sensitive, fannish, face,  
Boak.

Pete Weston

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There were a few things about the con that reminded you that you were in England, not in Ohio or California or New York. I found that I had much less trouble understanding British accents than I had had two years before, but by the end of the weekend I had picked up equal parts of English sentence structure and a Northern Irish lilt. There seemed a more unanimous emphasis on alcohol there than at the typical American convention, where a great number of fans are heads, yet Sadie Shaw remarked that there was much more emphasis in America on hard liquor, as opposed to the plethora of British beers. (Of course her experience with American cons was Southgate in '58, which was well before the current wide acceptance of drugs.) At any rate, I spent most of the weekend drinking Guinness, with a couple of pints of bitter as embellishment. "Picking up bad habits, are you?" said Bob Shaw, who had introduced me to Guinness two years before.



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 Guinness? Fannish, true, but wouldn't Ghuinness be better?  
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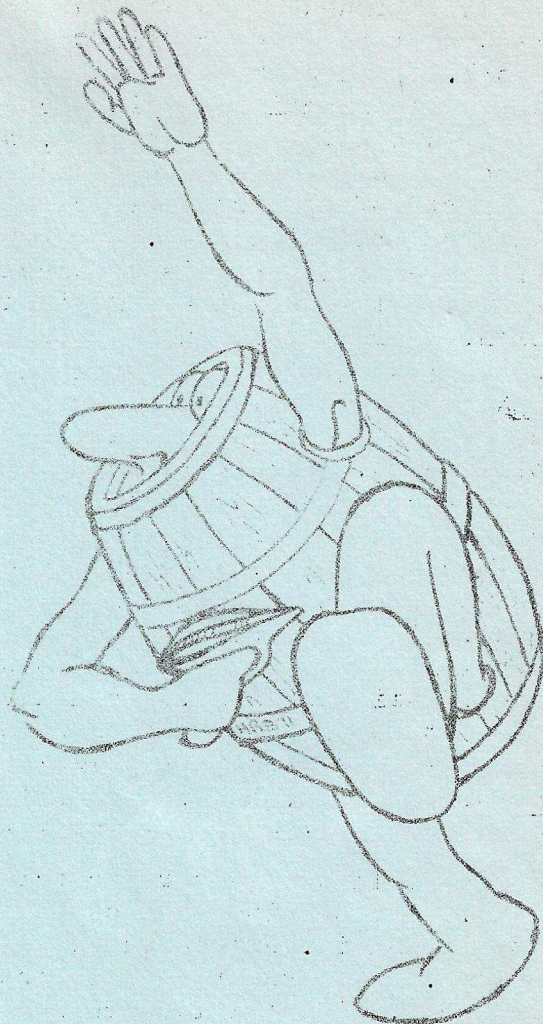
I travelled in diverse circles at the convention, and they didn't always overlap. James White and Bob and Sadie Shaw were there, and I talked quite a bit with Sadie, but on the whole I was surprised how little time I spent with them. For that reason I hoped to visit Northern Ireland again before I left Europe. I met Ella Parker and Ethel Lindsay manning the registration desk (and as a result left Bob Shaw standing in the hall). "Wee Ethel" seemed to me about the way she ought to be: small, Scottish, and possessed of a very keen mind. Ella is short, stocky, short-haired, and forceful, a personality to be reckoned with in British fandom; I spent a fair amount of time at a party later that night barricaded in a corner talking to her, dissecting fandom old and new. Ella and Ethel are old hands at conventions and come prepared, as I found out when they offered me a cup of tea and some sausage rolls at around five in the morning.

But most of the con I spent in the company of young British fandom, in one form or another. I renewed acquaintance with Graham Boak, who is now becoming a Fanzine Editor again. I met Peter Roberts, slight, long-haired, usually wearing bright yellow overalls, and encouraging me constantly in my appreciation of Guinness. Pete is starting up CHECKPOINT ((deserved plug)) as a newszine for British fandom, to fill the gap that has existed since SKYRACK disappeared.

Then there was the FOULER crowd. This is the two editors of FOULER, and perhaps John Hall, who seemed to belong. (I believe John publishes his own

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 Hall isn't that thick - Pickersgill wrote most of that. Roy Kettle  
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 fanzine or is planning to, as it seems every young British fan does. One issue, two issues, a bit of talk at several conventions, and you're inscribed in the annals of British fandom.) ((What annals? If only....)) FOULER is a phenomenon that has stirred up British fandom in recent months, with no knowledge of it sloshing over into American fandom. The fanzine has seen four issues, all of which were given to me, autographed by the editors, at the

convention. The tone is brash and rude, and by attacking current fandom in his editorial in the first issue, Greg Pickersgill drew a lot of fire by return mail. The attack was contradictory and never entirely serious. Greg used the same tone in person: young and with a fuzzy beard, he stood at the bar with a rum Coke in his hand and pontificated, always needling and always changing his targets or tossing off remarks about how unserious he was. He's quite a contradictory fellow. The effect of all this in print is to make a sloppy, angry, whimsical fanzine that has drawn more response from its 50-person mlg list than almost any other fanzine. FOULER is the closest thing to a focal point that British fandom has, yet it's an adolescent focal point, filled with excesses for the sake of excess. Curiously, Greg and his co-editor Roy Kettle seem to want a return to "fannishness" and yet they've become involved in a paper feud with Darroll Pardoe, the very man who for years has taken the brunt of young fans' attacks for being a pre-historic fossil, crying out for a return to old-time fannishness.



\*\*\*\*\*  
 Tell me who wrote that so I can hit him!  
 Ian Williams

\*\*\*\*\*  
 Vernon

After Friday afternoon my recollections of the con are a bit hazy, with lumps of memory like islands. As I never got to bed until 5ish and was up at 8 this perhaps is to be expected. The majority (99%?) of my drinking was done after midnight - I remember on, was it the Saturday night, drinking with Rog Peyton until about 2 in the morning when, undoubtedly due to the larynx lubrication we'd bought him, the barman pulled down the bar partition, isolating it from the lounge - with us on the bar side. Not wishing to be unfriendly we consumed innumerable shorts and sandwiches until about 5am when, after climbing over the bar, we made our way out via the emergency exit. A few minutes later, after glancing round the conrooms for sleepers, I was standing by the main entrance when two of the local constabulary, curious at such latenight revels, strolled up for a chat. Have you ever tried to explain a science-fiction convention to a non-fan even when you're sober, which I don't think I was? However, they didn't run me in or commit me and I wandered off to bed.

Roje

((Saturday night)) up to Festerhead's room with Muldowney and Conesa, where Ratfen again attempted to glorify me. Overwhelmed by their adulation, we moved on to the St. Anthony party, where alcoholic endurance was tested. At one thirty am, the fen did not seem to be dying quick enough, so Mario Bosnyak handed round Varguzz to kill off a few, which it did.

\*\*\*\*\*  
 I refused to be ostracised from fandom just because Gilbert spoke to me!

ANON

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John

The St. Fanthony party was reminiscent of all crowded room parties, with the addition that the German fans had brought their proverbial Virguzz. Mario Bosniak was carrying around a deadly-green bottle of the stuff and offering little glasses to anyone who would take one. Virguzz is a very powerful peppermint liqueur; and I found it very tasty. There's inevitably a bit of a disappointment when you taste a drink that's supposed to "Knock you right off your feet"; unless you are unusually susceptible to alcohol, no liquor will knock you out with a single shot. I drained my first glass with no evil effectsh but a warm glow, and Bob Shaw and I drank up all we could get. The virguzz and other potables induced Mario Bosniak and Anne McCaffrey to carry on an operatic duet in the corner, at which both of them proved adept. (I had travelled 6000miles to meet Anne McCaffrey and Dave Kyle, both of whom I had seen but never met at American conventions.)

((Virguzz did have rather more effectsh (one of my better typoesh, I think?) on other fans - I recall Thom Penman, Book of Ecclesiastes in pocket, Zelazny quote to hand, staring at a glass of virguzz in his right hand, and a glass of Brum home-brew in his left. "I'm not daft," he declared, pouring the virguzz into the home-brew.

((Or Roje Gilbert, staring lustfully at the fair Lisa Conesa, and at Phil Muldowney, hovering over her as always. "No chance," I said. "Look here, Bo-ak," he said, "you just don't understand the way of these things. It's not your fault, you can't help, it, but just watch this." And off he strode across the room. I was then distracted by Ian Maule, who wished to inform everyone that he had his arm around A Married Woman. When I (later) turned my attention to the fair Lisa, Phil was hovering over her as always, and Roje was angrily knocking back a pint with a grinning Vic Hallett.

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I want to make fandom intelligent -- Thom Penman

-- I thought that when I was twelve. Greg Pickersgill

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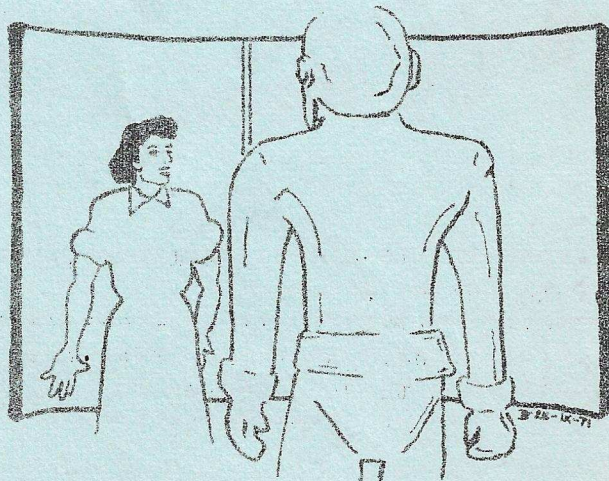
((It's not surprising that the St. Fanthony party was memorable - the sight of the stainless-steel bucket that held the punch must have cheered the room by itself, and as for the sight of Norman Shorroch upending bottle after bottle of red wine and vodka to fill it - and again ...and again.....it was a good party.))

John

The wee hours when the party had thinned out saw James White and Tom Schlück dancing (at first with each other), followed by tea and coffee for sobering and waking up. Still later, James and I accompanied Ella and Ethel to their room for winding down and small scale fannish talk. James told us a bit about airplanes, since he works for an aircraft manufacturer. "At my job at Short's I've come to understand much more about airplanes," he said. "It's not very reassuring."

"That's not very reassuring either," said Ethel.

Sunday I felt truly like a visiting dignitary when John Spencer, ((Phil?)) a young fan I didn't even know, bought me a drink. I'm afraid I left him in the lurch a bit later.



"But when you asked me to your room party, you didn't say there'd just be the two of us."

TALKING ABOUT THE PROGRAMME (which we weren't....)

Perhaps the major drawback of a convention is that, at some randomly-chosen times, a member of the committee will appear and break up all vibrantly-fannish gatherings by announcing that some bore or collection of bores are about to break wind in the Con Hall. There are almost always just enough of the group gullible enough to wish not to miss this event (and I include myself) to kill dead the atmosphere. However, as cons go, Worcester had quite a good programme - but for the fecund over-abundance of films. If I want to watch films, I stay up for the late night TV show. I go to cons to meet people, and this aim is difficult to achieve if the people I wish to see are busy watching "Noddy in Marsville". However, it

is impossible to talk about a con without discussing the programme, and I need somewhere to use up these sercon illoes, unfortunately illustrating the one SF film not shown at Easter.

Roje

I dropped in on John Brunner's talk, which was its usual competent and interesting self. I would have stayed for Pam Bulmer's too but at that moment the bar opened, Bob Shaw appeared, and I was lost to alcohol and a Belfast accent.

((I have yet to receive confirmation that John said "CYNIC wha none"- whatever that may mean - during his speech ... but I heard it! Pam's speech was rather disappointing, but that seemed largely due to her inexperience in public speaking. I look forward to reading it in Quicksilver..))

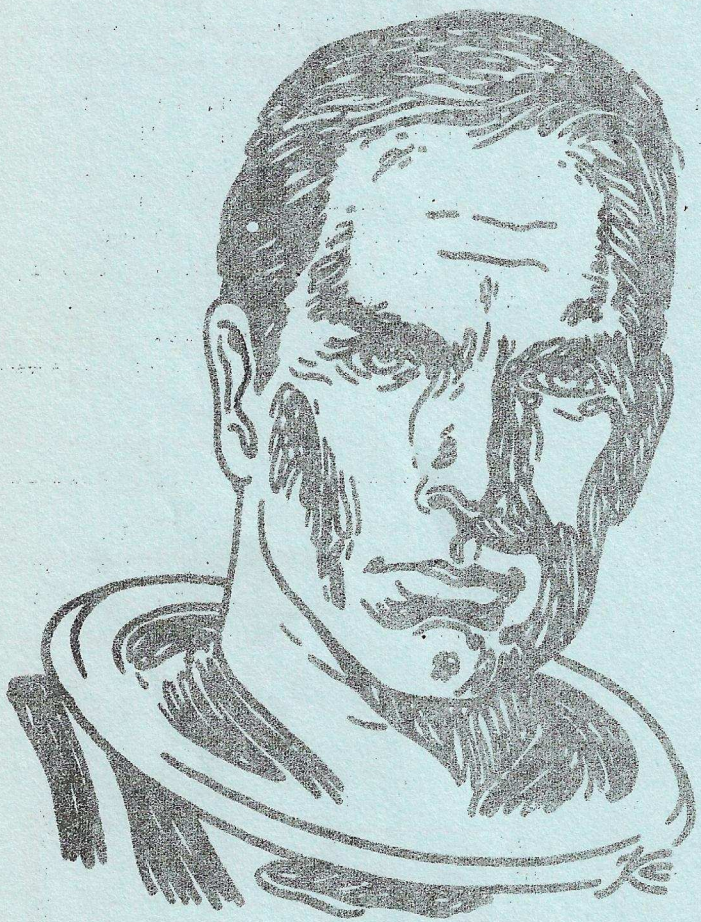
Philip Strick showed that sick little film of his "Jeux des Anges" in the afternoon. In some unaccountable way, it turns my stomach. Others were completely unaffected by it. Had dinner with Anne McCaffrey, and spent most of the time saying I didn't like her

books in the nicest possible way, which is still a pretty nasty way, then back to the bar.

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Intelligent beings are never berhivorous: after all, how much intelligence does it need to sneak up on a blade of grass? Jack Cohen  
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John

Anne McCaffrey surprised many of the British fans by being so completely open and feewheeling; when she was young I'll bet she was brash. Since I've never read any of her books, I was a bit lost when she or the audience talked about Dragonrider or her other work, but I still appreciated her statement that "Dragons are really a rather nice animal; they've just had bad press." After Anne's talk was a panel discussion; I forget the original



topic, but it became concerned with the limits of science fiction. David Gerrold likes definitions and wanted to limit the size of his pond by defining sf; the others on the panel seemed to prefer open limits and no worry over fixing borders. From the audience Jack Cohen expressed it best: "In most important things we deal not with edges but with centres."

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I rejected it too, but when I read it..... David Gerrold (?)  
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Easily the most popular programme item was the showing of Charly, which impressed everybody. The people who made it obviously knew what they were dealing with.

((And that, barring a few comments from Andrew later, is all my contributors had to say about the science-fiction side of the convention. I'd have preferred to say more about the sf side, but as no-one volunteered... Still, you can read it all in Speculation and Quicksilver - I suspect that a lot of C readers aren't all that interested anyway. There was, perhaps fortunately, rather more to the programme than just the films and the sf talks...))

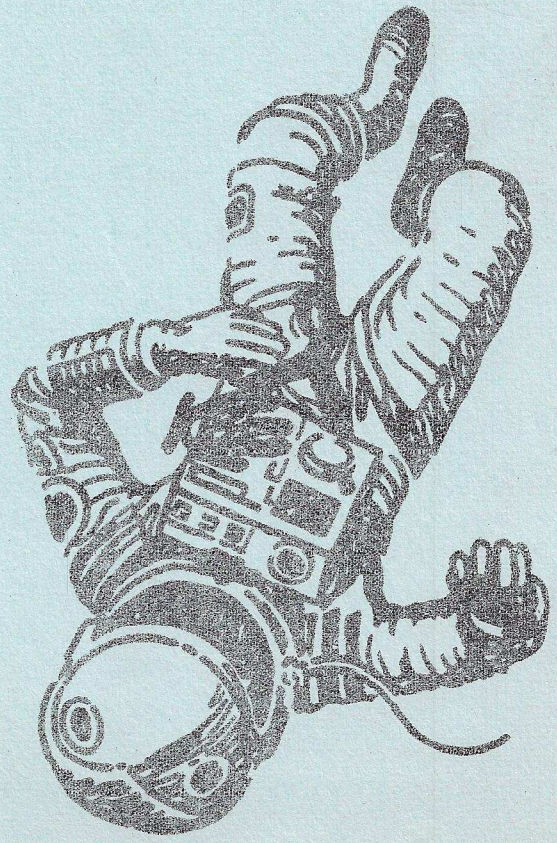
Roje

The auction was a tragedy. Many good items went very cheaply. I wonder if fans have so much money these days? I bid 20p for "The Worlds of Robert F. Young" and no-one even spoke. I considered this a fairly worthy item when I first read it, and to pick up an SFBC edition in very good nick, just sans dust-cover, seemed robbery.

((John Berry ventured the opinion that it would be worthwhile buying up material at a British auction and taking it to sell in the States. He suggests that the cost of the fare over could be covered quite easily. I did notice that some of the material went for low prices simply because the interested persons were not present - I particularly remember an autographed copy of "Wasp" going for a pound : there was no sign of either Keith Bridges or Arthur Cruttenden, who would gladly have doubled that. There was a very brisk trade in fanzines - a healthy sign? - one poor neo paying 35p twice for seemingly identical bundles of OMPA zines. Poor fool. However, this was halted by Rog Peyton, who proceeded to sell handfuls of sf at 3-4p each. I only hope that he runs his own business along better lines than he did the auction!

\*\*\*\*\*  
Who wants to look at old fanzines?  
Rog Peyton  
\*\*\*\*\*

((The Sunday morning, more than anything else - despite everything else - could have soured the con. Apart from Pete Weston's "vigilante" call-to-arms (and I'll say no more) we had the unedifying sight of British fandom attempting to persuade Pete to chair a British attempt at a Worldcon in 1975. Fortunately Pete was having none of this, for the understandably selfish reason that he'd missed most



of this con through being chairman, so he wasn't going to let the same thing happen to a Worldcon! It was unfortunate that he didn't think to argue - nor did anyone else! - that '75 is out-of-step with the Eurocon years, that Stockholm is already talking about a Worldcon in '76, and that the Aussies have been planning a Worldcon in '75 for two years now! British fandom is already sufficiently isolated from World Fandom without doing an unsociable thing like that. "You've got stars in your eyes, Gray" I was told at the con on more than one occasion - is this a bad thing for a reader of sf? - but they don't stop me from realising that the Aussies would probably win. The year for a London Worldcon must be '78, which is a free Eurocon year too. However, seeing that British Fandom is not yet organised for its own '73 con (is the '72 one finally settled yet?) I can't see a British Worldcon for a while yet.

((The other embittering experience was at the BSFA meeting, where John Hart, after giving great help to the organisation (so we were told) was voted off the committee in order to make way for Roje Gilbert. Now Roje is by no means as bad as he sometimes tries to paint himself, and we are on reasonable terms with each other (witness his presence this issue) but I remember the convention at Bristol, where Roje was elected chairman of the self-same BSFA. His first act was to insult the then-editor of Vector, Darrol Pardoe, so that Darrol resigned on the spot. His second act was to gaffiate for two years. The effect on the BSFA of this double action can be imagined for, if you are unlucky enough, remembered. Already in trouble, it plumbed fresh chasms of failure - John Hart being one of the committee members who managed to pull it round. Possibly Roje was wearing his would-be trufannish hat, and it was a deliberate attempt to kill the BSFA off.

I suggest that he might have been more successful had he stayed in power. Possibly that is his present plan, but it comes as a sharp shock to realise the short memories of the BSFA membership. "I was still drunk," he said afterwards. Were they all?))

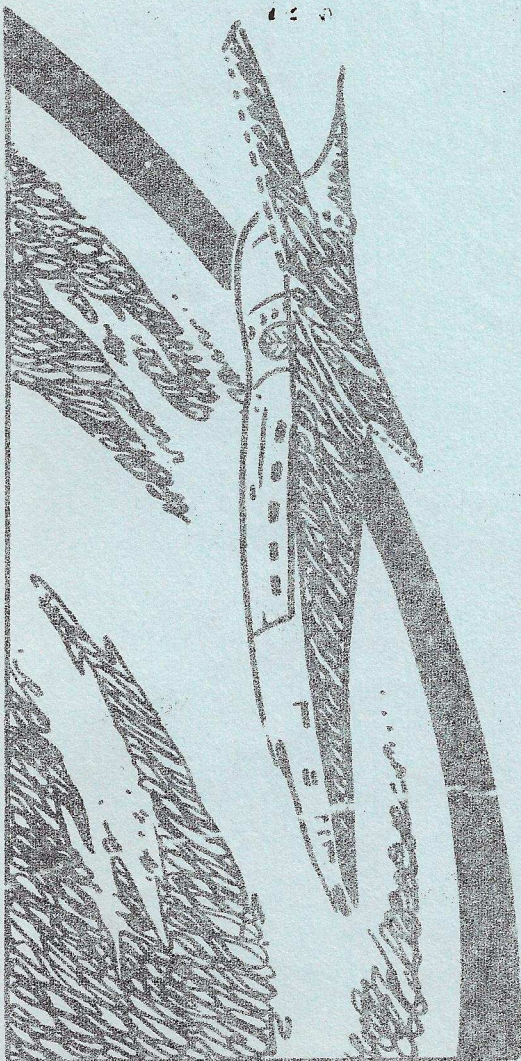
\*\*\*\*\*  
 Doing something about the BSFA is like banging your head against a blancmange. Anon.  
 \*\*\*\*\*

John

Saturday night there was a brief party in room 407 that was dreamed up by Gray Boak ((Thank you Brum group for the booze)). I overheard a classically beautiful argument in which Keith Bridges explained why he saw no reason to join the BSFA and a number of other fans tried to convince him how sinful it was to criticise the organisation instead of pitching in to make it better. With very little editing it could have been and argument over the N3F.

((One important decision taken at Easter was the innovation of a convention to be held in November - the Novacon. This is such an undeniably good idea that it is astonishing that it wasn't thought of years ago. Thank you Brum Group for that happy idea.))

\*\*\*\*\*  
 35p for a Chapdelaine manuscript? Pohl wouldn't pay that much! Anon.  
 \*\*\*\*\*



((But every con programme must finish sometime, regardless of how late it may start, and we return to the bar, to find out why John left Phil (?) Spencer in the lurch.....))

I went off to find some aspirin to combat the cold I was rapidly developing, although when I returned they were just where I'd left them. A con is a great place to pick up a cold. I've heard the theory that it's just like army boot camp, where people from all over the country bring their regional germs together and give them to each other.

\*\*\*\*\*  
You can't do a conrep without mentioning Mushling! Anon (horrified)  
\*\*\*\*\*

Vernon

The Banquet had few hitches - we had forgotten to check on the number wanting vegetarian meals but this was quickly remedied. A tip for persons organising a menu with wine thrown in - check whether the wine is charged by glass or bottle...it's usually a lot cheaper by bottle.

Roje

The banquet cuisine could have been better, and the stawberry mousse was pure poison, but all trufen had already pickled themselves and were largely unaffected. Myself, I cannot be a trufan: I began to get a headache and with so many cameras flashing it got worse and worse. I gave in not long after the banquet, which was distinguished by being the only occasion at which I have seen Phil Rogers struck dumb. ((By winning Doc Weir.))

\*\*\*\*\*  
This is no use to me ... it's empty! Phil Rogers (eventually)  
\*\*\*\*\*

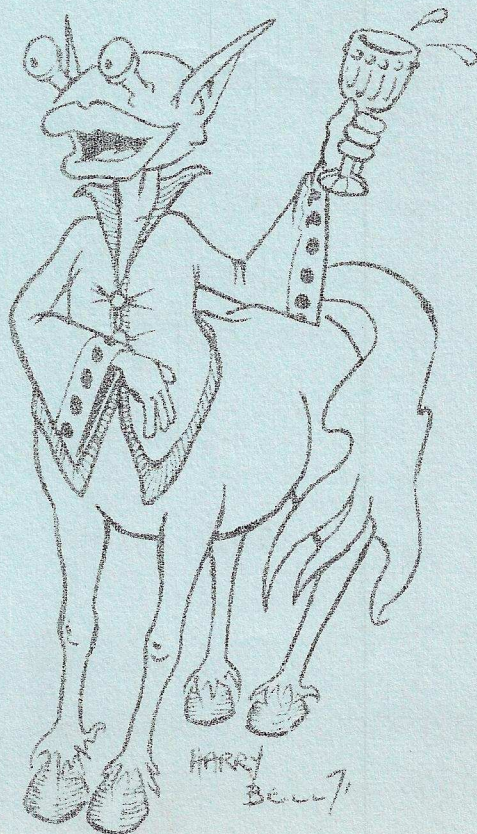
Vernon

I think a large number of people enjoy dassing up for a fancy dress session - I know that several of the costumes this year took months of spare-time research and work to make. However, there must be some reasonable excuse for fancy dress such as a parade with prizes or a ball. Eastercon 22 fancy dress parade went off very well with several entrant's photos in local papers. For myself I would have preferred some form of social gathering for an hour or so afterwards so that fancy dress is worn long enough to feel that the time expended in its making is worth it. However, this is not always possible as there is the danger that people will drift away if nothing solid is organised.

Several of us decided to wander round a few local pubs in our fancy dress. For some reason this elicited a certain amount of interest - it was amusing to see all the heads turn as we walked in. The best touch of all was when "Prof" Doron, as the "Fly", sucked his beer up through his proboscis - some of the women around turned green. Two old dears who'd had a drop or two of stout literally grabbed us in the street and shoved us in one pub - not that we minded but the beer was lousy.

John

Sunday night everything wound down; the party was simply in the lounge, and after only a day and a



half in Worcester I felt the way you do on the fourth night of a worldcon. For the first time in British con history there was something planned for Monday morning: a boat-ride on the river, modeled after the ride at Heidelberg. I was amused to see that for some of its length the river was literally lined with wood, a wooden planking holding in the water on either bank. Such a ride strikes me as an excellent way to finish off a con. Fans have a tendency to stay indoors and never mingle with the rest of the world, but getting a whole convention -- the most unreal manifestation of fandom -- out into a boat on a river with the sun shining and the wind blowing ties the microcosm back into the macrocosm.

I saw an amusing incident on my trip back to France. I flew on a small commercial airline from Ashford to Beauvais and, as in most international travel in Europe, the flight offered you a chance to buy duty-free goods. There was an American businessman on the plane, and he bought tickets at Ashford to change for liquor when we were in the air. But he wanted cognac, and by the time the stewardess got to him she had run out; he had to settle for something else. He got mad and started yelling about the inefficiency of the system. He knew it wasn't the stewardess's fault, so he railed to her about the airline. "How can they be so inefficient?" he wanted to know. She was English and very sympathetic, but she would apologize for the company and so got in the way of his anger. He just couldn't contain himself. When we landed at Beauvais he was still fuming, so when we lined up to disembark the stewardess said to him "Can I give you a kiss?" Suddenly everything was fine.

\*\*\*\*\*  
 Isn't eight months a little late for a conrep?  
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Brian Robinson

Vernon

Looking back, it was probably one of the best cons of latter years, both in organisation and supporting and attending members.

However, with the increasing numbers each year there will have to be more organisation of committees as larger hotels

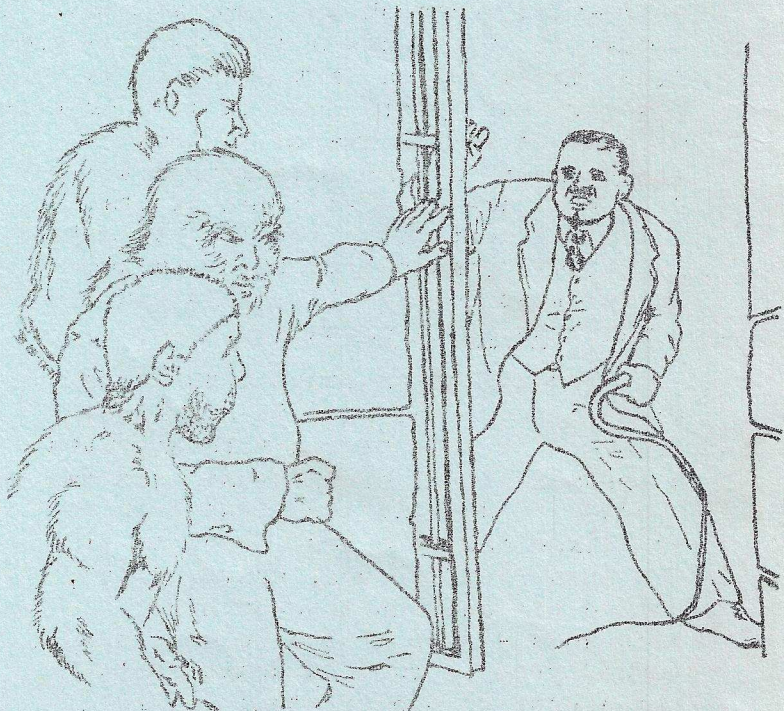
which are relatively cheap become more difficult to find.

I visualise that in about four or five years time there will have to be a sub-committee of

the BSFA of qualified and knowledgeable people with organising experience and a professional knowledge of the conference field. This subcommittee will assist and

direct a local committee with their convention and will provide continuity through the years. The

money side of the problem will also have to be sorted out - for example a separate convention account could be opened, into which all profits will go and which would pay any losses. The whole scene



"Get back..... I tell you,  
 it's at Chester."

is getting too big for, for want of a better term, amateurs to handle. Perhaps this is inevitable as fandom grows but unless the numbers of convention goers is restricted, say by cons only being available to BSFA members, the whole thing must be made at least semi-professional. As numbers increase, more effort will have to be devoted to the social side of a con - above a certain number, which I would say is about 140 persons, self-perpetuating cliques are formed and neofans, getting no chance of a "look-in", get discouraged. This means that if new blood is to be retained fans must be introduced on an informal basis to each other. If conventional fandom is to survive and thrive we must look to the future before it happens and gain from our experiences.

\*\*\*\*\*  
 The BSEFA is notably unable to  
 organise its way out of a paper bag.  
 \*\*\*\*\*

Andrew

Memories of Eastercon 22?

1. Jolly Jack Cohen and his travelling menagerie.
2. minimcaffries underfoot whichever way you turn.
3. Pete Weston, who, I think, produces a magazine for stock-brokers.
4. A profound puzzlement as to why, if P.K.Dick is so great, does he need a whole hour devoted to the singing of his praises. Don't his books do it well enough.
5. An acute shortage of Ted Tubb and his tub of Tubb's 5-star.
6. J. Brunner, at various times.
7. An excellent Fancy Dress Parade.
8. A hotel which, although first-rate, seems to expect fans to arrive for breakfast at 7:30a.m.
9. A con hall which allowed us to hear James Blish talking about Damon Knight, and worth every minute.
10. Brain Burgess and his pork pies. Or was that SciCon 70? Or Galactic Fair '69? Or....
11. Eating one of Brian Burgess's pork pies. Yeah, I remember it now...
12. That feeling of inner satisfaction that comes, not from one of BB's pork pies (burp!), but from a well-organised Con, so much like an iceberg whose greater part lies hidden beneath placid waters. Thanks, Pete.



Gray

It was A Good Con.

I must read Cynic to find out if I enjoyed myself.

Keith Bridges

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

# PRETEXT

THE SPEECH THAT NEVER WAS - pre-prepared comments for the fanzine panel

Looking at the panel, I see a remarkable similarity in aspirations and fanzine styles. ((I hadn't known that Malcolm was going to be on!)) All fannish, in the best sense. Interested in, but not dominated by either, sf criticism and socialising. ((I also hadn't counted the chairman!))

Where are the fiction fanzines represented? Where are the crudzines?

It struck me that the divisions in fandom are just not represented on this panel. The first things that a beginner must learn about are the divisions in sf fandom. Our bright eyed-newcomer comes along to a con - which is where anything and everything happens; a kind of multi-media happening, to use the vernacular - happy he is, this neo, glad to find other madmen of his ilk. He says something Deep and Profound.

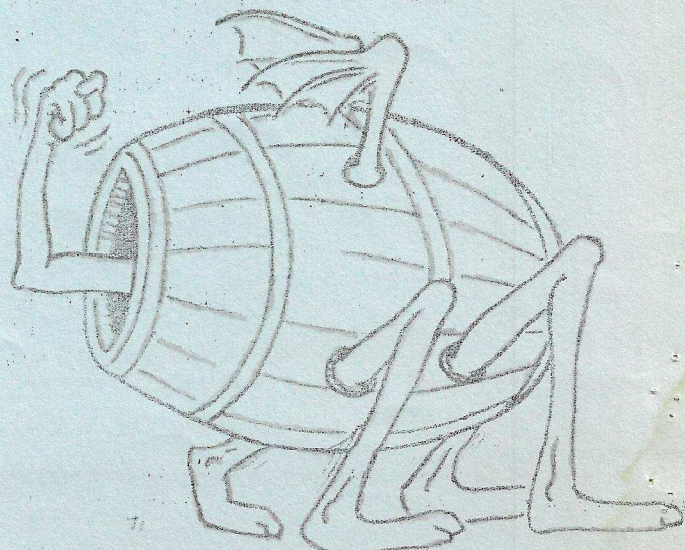
BANG! He's in the middle with shit flying at him from all sides.

Let's not talk about New Wave vs Old Guard in sf - our neo can find his own way about that mess. Let's tell him that the sf world and the fannish world are not the same. Parallel, but not coincident. In the sf world there are books, which everyone reads: in fandom there are fanzines, which neos, would-be, ex- or active faneditors read. Some fanzines are read in sf circles - especially sercon zines like SPECULATION. In fandom, some people never read books and some never have.

SF is literary entertainment, fandom is a social disorganization. SF is about, in its basics, Things and Ideas. Fandom is about people. If every new member of fandom, and some long term members, realised this schism, life would be a lot easier.

Why don't they realise this? Because no-one tells them. To a neo, fandom is fanzines. I cannot accentuate this too deeply. Fanzines, until recently, didn't talk about fandom. They should. They used to. Why they don't is tied up with the mid-sixties assault of the New Wave, and the Old Guards' retreat from active fan publishing to the cul-de-sac of St. Fanthony. I'm oversimplifying.... but then I said that I wasn't going to talk about it at all, so I must oversimplify in order to skate over it quickly and get to the point.

Five years or more - an entire fannish generation - have gone by without a good, regular, large British fanzine talking about fandom. The young fans don't seem to realise the possibilities of doing so, the established fans don't care - or at least; they don't show that they care. They don't show it in the fanzines, where it counts. The result is the morass of crudzines British Fandom is now notorious for. There are hopeful signs: EGG and FOULER, to name but two, but we need more help. Let's put the fans back into the fanzines.



\*\*\*\*\*  
You're much better in print, Boak.

Roy Kettle

\*\*\*\*\*



# THE FAN PANEL

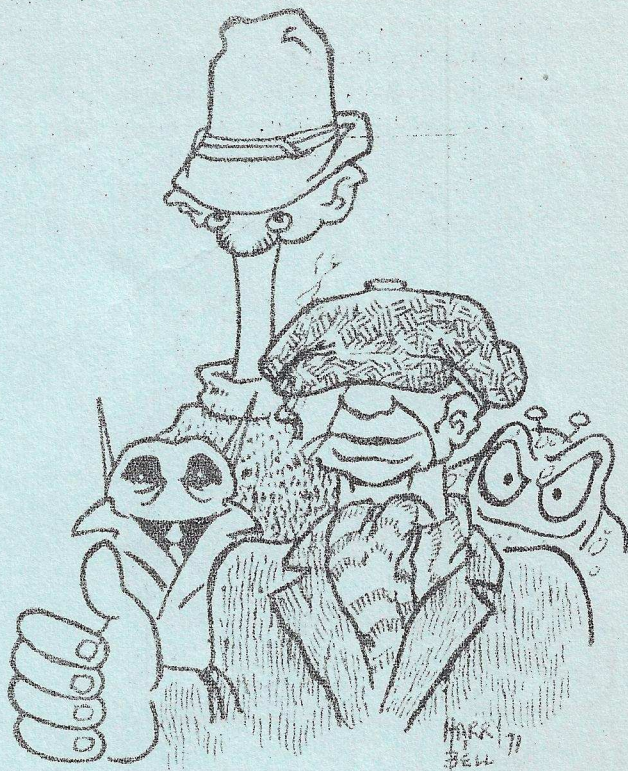
Peter Weston Chairman  
Ethel Lindsay Fan. Guest of Honour  
Malcolm Edwards  
Gray Boak  
Peter Roberts  
Darrol Pardoe

Peter<sup>W</sup>

You've heard quite enough from me, so I'll keep my introduction short. Up here is myself; Ethel, 15 years before the mast (or 16 coming up now) with Scottishe and one or two others; Malcolm Edwards, new boy, Quicksilver (Aldiss, Moorcock, Priest.... that crowd); Graham Boak, Cynic - Britain's fannish fanzine (at least I look at it that way); Peter Roberts, who'll probably argue with me because he does one as well, Egg; and Darrol Pardoe, who is of considerable wintage: Darrol was a member of the old Stourbridge Circle, with Ken Cheslin. Ken started Les Spinge, which was a marvellously scruffy fanzine. It's still going strong - well, it's still going. Dave Hale took over it, made it a beautiful immaculate thing - spent a fortune on it. Darrol then inherited the mantle, producing Spinge irregularly but of high quality...

Now, I'll ask each of the people here, why do you publish? There must be some reason. Nobody would be crazy enough to spend this amount of time if they didn't get something out of it. And then I'd like to throw this back at the audience ((But didn't! AGB)) what do you get out of fandom - fanzine Fandom, if you like. Most of you have seen fanzines, have read fanzines. What do you get out of it? What do you think of them?

Ethel The reason I put out a fanzine is - for my personal satisfaction. If the people who read it also enjoy it, well, that's very nice, but the first thing my fanzine must do is please me, because I am not going to make a profit out of it and therefore I don't have to please the readers. If some will give me money for it, jolly good luck to them, but they are going to have to realise that the first rule is "what goes into my fanzine is what I want to see there." So it's of no use saying "what do you want to give to the people reading it?" because this is one place in the whole of your life where you have complete responsibility; where you don't have to give way to other people's thoughts and desires. It's a personal thing, and what you get back in return, of course, various people have various things, but what I have got back is a group of very very good friends - some of whom I have never met, but fortunately a lot of them I have. But I do have friends through putting out my fanzine, who are very good friends, who have really enriched my life, because I happened to "hit off" with them through the things that I write in my fanzine. And that's the biggest reward I get.



PeterW

Perhaps everyone else on the panel will want to say just the same thing as Ethel, so I'll slightly rephrase the question. What do you think, Malcolm and the others, are you dealing with in your own fanzine? Everyone is different, we're all trying to do something a little different.

Malcolm

As I suspected, this has turned into a great opportunity for self-advertisement, so if any of you haven't seen this....

((Whereupon he proceeded to advertise Quicksilver. Mercenary sercon swine! However, within these pages the editorial red corflu reigns supreme.))

....Quicksilver, so they tell me, is a Sercon zine, which if you don't know - and I suspect you do - is serious and constructive, which means it has something to say about SF. I think that the reason that I do it is tied up with the way that term is used in this country. The way I see it, the

connotations of a sercon zine involve a kind of ludicrous overearnestness in taking SF too seriously, which it is possible to do, and making a fool of yourself in doing so. In England, it seems that any fanzine which actually tries to deal with science fiction, and tries to deal with it at any level above the trivial, just giving plot summaries of books and saying, "well, this is a great book, this is a rotten book" is regarded as somehow an overearnest activity not really worth doing: it's a very sad state of affairs which doesn't exist in America, and is one of the reasons why British fandom is in a rotten state.

(Dark mutterings from panel and audience.)

((If true, lamentable...but I don't believe it. The reason for British fandom's failings is sheer lack of talent.))

And since the only magazine I could find which was actually devoted to this was Pete's Speculation, and I

don't agree with everything it says in Speculation, I decided to do one which would have things that I would agree with.

PeterW

I think that's shameful, publishing a fanzine all of your own opinions. I don't agree with everything that's said in Speculation either. Incidentally, I said at the convention to Malcolm that only a neofan publishes a special issue of a fanzine to bring to a convention, because they always get lost. Now Ethel has done the same thing....

((And Gray....))

I remember a Speculation that was in a combozine....

Jake Griggs

Gray

Some people produce fanzines from a science fiction point of view; I produce mine from the fandom point of view. I thought that there were several magazines going which were talking about science fiction: criticism, reviews. I read Speculation. Pam Bulmer's stuff - I thought "I can't do that!" It's too good for me. As was said about C.S. Lewis's books he wrote them because that's the sort of thing he wanted to read. So I started doing a fanzine about fandom, because that's what I wanted to see in fanzines. I wanted to

know what fans were doing apart from at cons - I can meet them there, but the rest of the time they disappear. Fanzines used to give an idea of what was happening in the country; what fans thought about science-fiction (amongst other things), how they lived their lives, their interests, their companions (if you like, other fans who lived nearby)... this sort of thing is not being shown in fanzines nowadays. I thought - aha! there's a gap, that's what I want to read, that's what I set out to do. Preferably with a touch of humour, which may not always work but I do try. A light-hearted look at what fans do, when they're not being mundanes. ((If only C was like that...))

PeterR

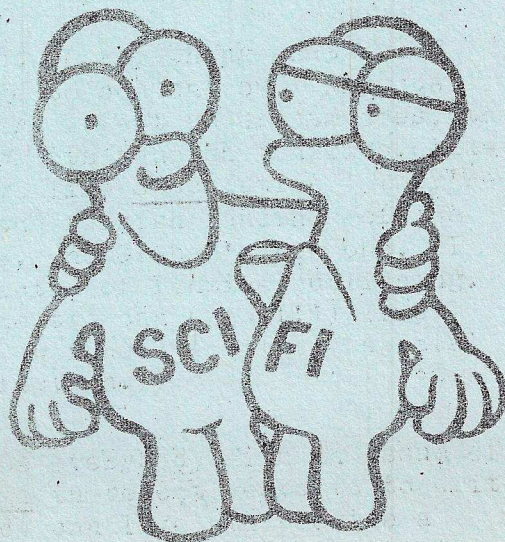
Ethel was saying that she produced her fanzine because it was her own personal writing - this was what she wanted to do. I think the reason why I produced all my fanzines was to contact other fans. I live alone in Bristol. There are no other fans in Bristol, I don't know why but that's how it goes. The only time I can meet other fans is at a convention. Obviously, unless you're a millionaire and can travel around, that's all you can do. So my main reason for publishing was to contact other fans, to get letters of comment back and just to produce something that other people would like to read, that they would like to comment on. And just generally to contact people. Egg in particular: I felt as Graham does, that there was a gap. Britain used to be famous for its fannish fanzines, like the inevitable "-", and recently you get things like Speculation. They're fine enough, but there's nothing left now of the fannish fanzines of the past - except a few in OMPA, Scottishe perhaps, and Graham's new one. I still think that this is the most important sector of fanzine publishing. The fannish side, not the sercon. Although the two can ((must!)) live side by side. ((Fannish fanzines are what makes fandom something special in itself - not merely a parasite on science-fiction.))

Darrol

I long ago found out that you can't please everybody with an issue of a fanzine, so what I've tried to do with Spinge in recent years is to write at least something in every issue that somebody can like; to provide a cross-section of material as big as I can, so that people won't write in and say "I was bored by the whole thing" but they might write in and say "I was bored by it except X". So, rather than try to please everybody all the time, I try to please everybody with at least one item in the issue. I don't mention science fiction very much, because I leave that sort of thing to the acknowledged masters, but I suppose my fanzine is what you'd call a fannish fanzine, rather than a serious and constructive one. My basic philosophy is to, as I said, provide something from everybody and package it as well as I can within the limitations of the media.

PeterW

I'm glad we had Darrol last because he brought up an interesting point. Each of the others has adopted a different philosophy to Darrol, I think I'm correct: we're each trying to do one specific thing for a band of people, so that the people who get it will like everything in that issue, and the people who don't like it will like nothing in it. That's a vertical, if you like, using a mundane term, vertical coverage; Darrol's doing a horizontal coverage. He's trying to have a very wide bunch of people getting it with all sorts of interests, and he hopes that none will be



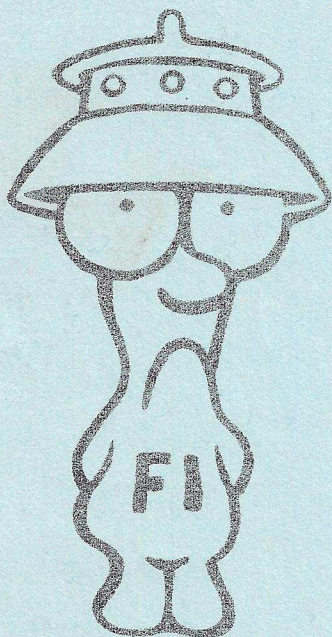
dissatisfied. There's a fundamental difference. I think we can work in a discussion, somewhere. The thing I was going to say before - I'm the only one here that's published a really horrible first issue.

Ethel

Oh no you're not. Oh no you're not!

Peter

...on the panel. Darrol's first issue - well, I don't remember Darrol's, lost in the mists of time - and as for Ethel's .... I don't believe her first issue was anything other than impeccable. Malcolm's sickened me, as a first issue ... James Blish said "easily the best science fiction fanzine since SFR was revived" (which is a nasty thing to say); and Graham did a very good ... very good indeed, I thought, whichever his first issue was. Graham has an annoying habit of starting about six fanzines at once, and publishing the first issue of each, with the wrong covers on. Every time. But whichever was his first issue it was bloody good. And Peter, his first issue, he took off with some horrible Cornish thing, walruses or something, but it was very good indeed for a first issue. We've all seen the really horrible rough stuff, haven't we? RUFFCUT.....



Hurray! ANON

... We've all seen the really horrible first issues - mine was dreadful - and it's almost impossible to produce a good first issue. Would the rest of the people here like to talk about their labour pains, if you like?

Gray

My first issue goes back about four years now, when I was in the Bristol Group. There was quite an active group in those days - lots of fans in Bristol in the old days Peter, but we all moved. I'm sure there's no connection. It was decided at a meeting that we were going to produce

a fanzine, and I walked in to find myself editor. I don't really know why. I enjoyed it. I don't think, looking back, that the first issue was anything special. It was, rather like Darrol's, horizontal - I don't really like that term, but it gets the meaning across. It tried to do all things for all people, and it didn't succeed. I don't think most ((any)) fanzines of this kind will succeed, because you have to have a large spread of contributors, each talented in their own section, to be able to produce interesting articles. I don't see that many contributors in British Fandom, to be honest. There are doubtless people here - in the audience, in fandom - who can write good articles on what they are interested in; but as a general rule they don't do it for fanzines. I'd like to know why they're not doing it. It's all right us sitting up here - why don't we produce such and such, why don't we produce such and such - why don't you produce such and such and we'll print it for you. If we like it.

Darrol

Since we're on the subject of first issues, I think that the mistake a lot of fans make is that they publish their first issue too soon. Some fans think "Great! I'll publish a fanzine"..when it comes out, nobody likes it, and they wonder why. I think I had the advantage there - I was a fan for six years before I published a fanzine. I had plenty of time to

absorb the atmosphere, look at great fanzines of the past, and know what a good fanzine should look like - and try to model myself on it, to a certain extent. But I think a lot of people do make the mistake, that they publish too soon, before they really know what it's about.

PeterR

I think one point that did vaguely come up when Graham was last talking was that a lot of the old fanzines, a lot of the better fanzines, even up to and including Badinage, perhaps ((No!)) were done by groups. Groups of fans, either something as definite as the Bristol Fan Group, or just a conglomeration of fans. Most fanzines nowadays are done by a single fan, and I wonder if this might have affected the fanzines.... ((Trying to gather together two points - If I'd had the background of my present six years in fandom when I was offered the Badinage editorship, I'd have done a lot better than I did - or can do now by myself.))

PeterW

I did notice last year that most of the big American fanzines were done by married couples - or at least couples. Odd, the Fishers, who have broken up, unfortunately. Yandro, of course, which has gone on longer than any other fanzine - 205 issues, which is a hell of a long time. They are a husband and wife team, one's typing while the other's duplicating....

Audience laughter

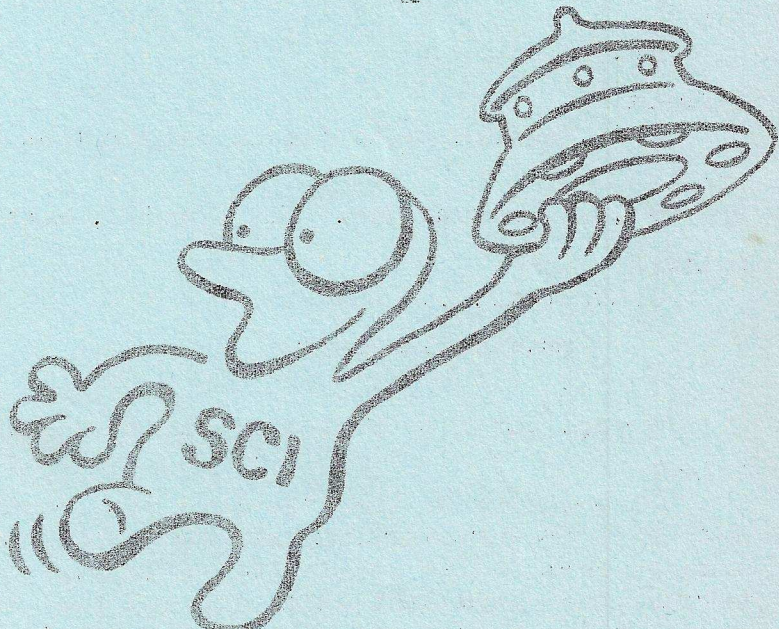
..... I'm going to ignore you lot. What I did say to my wife was that the younger Coulson has been born and brought up in an atmosphere where producing a fanzine every four weeks is part of the accepted order of being, and they did a report of when he first went to school, and had to run off home a few nights of the month... "Oh, I can't stop to play now, I've got to get back home to do the collating." His little friend said "Collating - what's that?" "My goodness don't your parents publish a fanzine?!" The little so-and-so was absolutely horrified. And this is what it can lead to - it's a way of life. And there are a few others - the Seattle people, Cry of the Nameless, with a very successful husband and wife team. As Peter said, in Britain it's usually a one-man-band. Today the trend is, again, to one-man-bands. SFR, which was easily the biggest, the most influential, the most popular, was a one-man-band. Warhoon, my favourite, is Dick Bergeron. He must be a brilliant character, and he produces it with just a small stable of highly competent writers....

Malcolm(?)

Once a year.

PeterW

Once a year. He was last seen working on a special Willis issue, but after 250 stencils he was more or less forced away from it, but he's still working on it.



Ethel

I hope that what I want to say naturally follows on from this, but I hope you realise that a great deal of what we call good writing in fanzines is in fact provided by professionals. For instance, Science Fiction Review, and the Bergeron fanzine, both had professional writers who were the mainstay of the fanzines. Richard Bergeron actually writes extremely well himself, though I don't think that Richard Geis is quite to his standard. So that if a fanzine editor is in such a position that he can gather together a stable of people who are professionals who also like to write for fanzines, he's in a very strong position and will, like Geis, walk off with the Hugo for two years running. Even though I've been the British Agent for SFR, I don't know if this is a marvellous idea. It seems to me that fanzines are produced by the fans, the amateur part of the science-fiction world, and the professionals already dominate that world to a large extent, so that I don't believe in letting them take over the fanzines as well. I have had professional writers in Scottishe, but actually that was just for the 15th anniversary issue that I had a lot of them. Ordinarily the people who contribute to my fanzine are also amateur writers like myself. I make no pretensions to be anything else.

Malcolm

Yes, well, as far as that goes, if you're going to have a fanzine that is a fannish fanzine rather than an SF one, then....

Ethel

No....

Malcolm

Well, dealing with fandom rather than with SF....

Ethel

No, an amateur one. Not fannish, amateur.

Malcolm

Okay, but.....

Audience laughter

Ethel

Sorry, but I do feel strongly on this.

Malcolm

It seems to me that the more you actually deal with science fiction then the more you come to lean on the people who write it, because they know most about it, and they write about it the best. And - I'm sure Peter's found this - if you want to run a magazine which is concerned with science fiction then you naturally find yourself going towards the SF writers, because you want to know what they have to say about it.

Ethel

But one of the nice things about fanzines was that the professional writer could read in them what his readers thought. Nowadays, in so many of the big fanzines in America, the writers are reading what other writers think about them. They're no longer getting so much of the amateur viewpoint. The amateur reader viewpoint. The person who is never ever going to be on the same scale as the professionals, and makes no pretensions to. It used to be



that the author could go to the fanzines and find out what the readers thought.

Malcolm

But wouldn't that happen with the letter column, if people wrote letters to them? I know people do write letters to them but I imagine it's the same people for a very large extent of the time.

Ethel

Well, you see, this is what makes science fiction unique; it's the only place where the professionals can find out so much of what the readers think.

Surely you've got a problem here, though. I remember Peter writing in the last Speculation I read - it was about four issues ago, I think - saying that "please, anyone who can do decent reviews, write them and let me have them." So obviously there's a lack of reviews.

Fred Hemmings

PeterW

It worked, actually, Fred. Mark Adlard - I trained him up.

Ethel

There isn't really a lack of reviews; nearly every fanzine has reviews. What there is a lack of is criticism, and the same applies to the actual fanzines themselves. There's no lack of fanzine reviews, but there's very little fanzine criticism. Every now and then some fan comes into the field and says "I'm going to properly criticise" and he does it for a short time and then he says "Oh my, what did I take on?" and he stops. It's too much.

Yes, but most of you have said, except Darrol, that you produce them for your own benefit, on a vertical, therefore what use would be the criticism to you at all?

John Hall

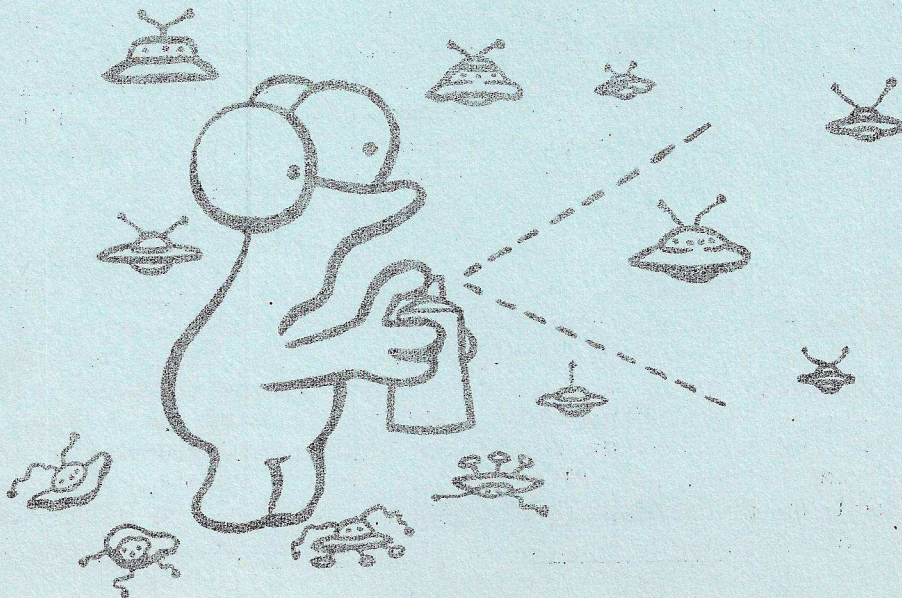
Gray

It's give and take. There's no fun in producing a magazine - no matter how much you like it - that it turn out everyone else hates. You feel like going away and crawling into a corner and pulling the world up over your head.

I've had some remarkable experience of that.....

Laughter

.... but really, if you're going to produce it along the lines of what you like, then it shouldn't make all that

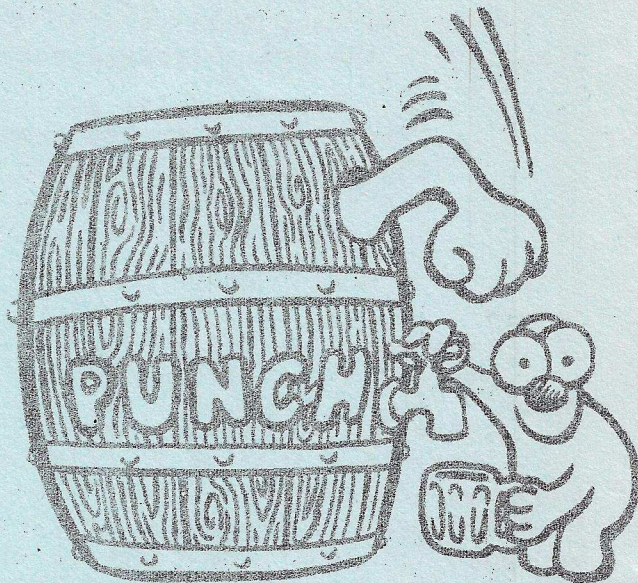


much difference. You know the issue you put out was what you liked; if nobody else liked it then that's their hard luck, surely?

John Hall

Gray

Yes, but if they produced good reasons why they didn't like it, not merely because "I didn't like reading about unicorns, therefore your fanzine is lousy"; if someone says "This article on unicorns was badly written." then it's doing you a favour in improving your idea of writing. And this kind of criticism is needed. ((Or, more generally, it is no good criticising Speculation because it isn't like '-, or Egg because it isn't like SFR.)



PeterW

Peter Roberts here stated off Checkpoint ((first series)) which was, as Ethel said, very careful criticism of fanzines, which I thought was invaluable; I'm only sorry Peter hasn't carried this on the way he wanted to start it, which was to cover everything, but the volume of the job defeated him. Roy Kettle and, er, his colleague up there, with their Fouler; I thought the fanzine review section was very good indeed, very carefully done, and we could do with a lot more of this.

Could I make two points? The first one is something that I find slightly extraordinary - that some fannish activity, or fanzines, appear to exist for purposes which have nothing to do with the actual writing of SF. I almost get the impression that the editor - there may be people on the panel who do think this way, I'd be interested to hear what they do think - I get the impression that they wouldn't really mind if the magazine were about stamp collecting, or collecting match-boxes. The assumed interest in SF almost seems to be a cover for setting up a pen-pal network, and the interest in SF appears to be so secondary to social contacts and correspondences as to be negligible. The second point happens to be completely unconnected with this; I'd be interested to hear what the people on the panel have to say in respect of some recent vicious criticism of the effects of fandom - fannish fandom - on SF. I am thinking particularly of Spinrad's article in Knight.

Mark Adlard

PeterW

I think the last one is a bit off the beam, Mark, but we'll do our best. ((It was ignored - when Spinrad cares to learn something about fannish fandom then we'll comment on his opinions.)) May I just say that the sort of fanzine I personally enjoy the most is the fannish fanzine - about people, never mentions SF, and I find it's really interesting. I wish secretly that I'd started trying to publish something like that, but unfortunately I'm not a very humorous writer, so it's just as well I didn't. I've always had a secret ambition to do something like this. I find the best fanzines I get are something called Focal Point, perhaps; Egoboo, and a very good new one



from Joyce Fisher - Potlatch. They really are witty, amusing, and about people I'd like to meet.

Ethel

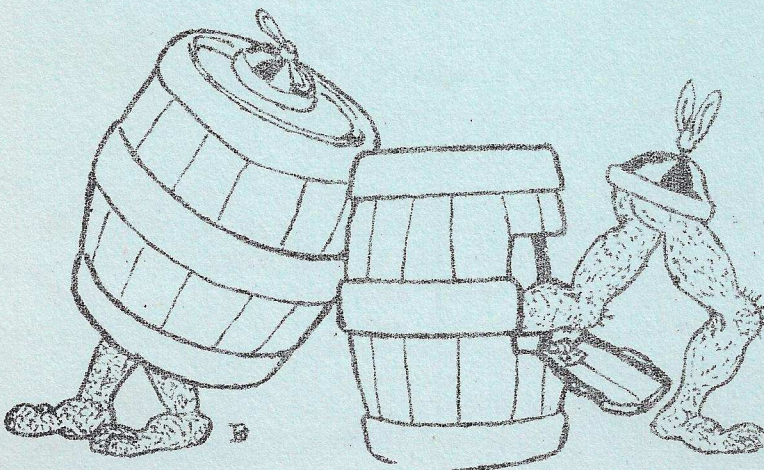
There was a period in fandom where the fans did take this attitude: science fiction, that old thing. You must remember that fanzine fandom has been going for a tremendous amount of time. If you stay in it sixteen years, as I have, there just isn't anything left to say about science fiction - it's a very limited subject after all. One can only read so many articles which dissect H.G. Wells; one can only read so many articles which begin from A of Heinlein and go on to Z in detail; after that you think "Well, I've had it! I can't possibly read another article about him." There was one period in fandom when this feeling became very strong, because there was a group of people together who had reached this stage. Science fiction: they'd just beaten it to death as a subject. So they went off onto other subjects, and they found that this was interesting, too. It produced some of the best writers that fandom has ever seen. You know James White as an author, a professional, but the first thing I ever read written by James White was a report of the visit by Bea Mahaffey to Irish Fandom. I laughed until there was tears in my eyes, it was so funny. And you'll notice that the only remote resemblance to science fiction was that she was an associate editor to one of the science fiction magazines. Throughout the article science fiction wasn't mentioned. It's beautiful writing - the sort of writing you won't find anywhere else at all.

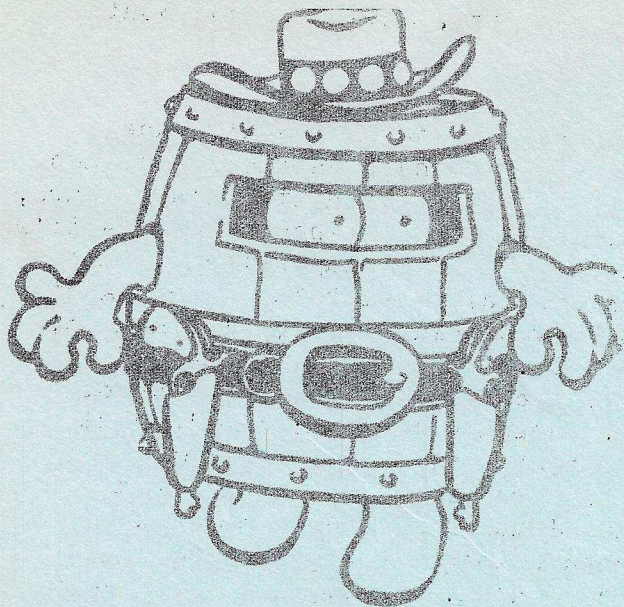
Gray

Some people produce sercon fanzines because that's what they can do. They can criticise SF in a meaningful manner. I read SF, I enjoy it very much, but I don't consider myself qualified to criticise it. I'm an engineer, not a literateur. I didn't learn the techniques of literary criticism in my training - to a certain extent you pick them up, but I don't consider myself good enough to stand in the sort of company of Pam Bulmer or Sandra Miesel. So, I look for something I can do. When you say that SF doesn't appear, and therefore it's secondary, it's not true. SF comes first. The people we're talking about are people who are interested in SF, it's the background. What we're interested in is the people - what they do. They want to talk about SF, by all means, but that's talking about SF, not about the people. I want to meet people: as Peter says, it's to make contact. Especially when you're out in the back end of nowhere, as I was, with no other fan within miles. Producing a fanzine puts me in touch with other people. Talking about fans: it's what I wanted to read, and wasn't getting, so I started doing it myself, in the hope of - I don't know.... generating some other articles, to find out other peoples' points of view, what they thought about fandom. If I want to find out what they think of SF, I read SFR, Speculation, Quicksilver, and they do it a lot better than I could. Why should I bring down the level of the market by producing some rather

inferior criticism or some rather inferior short stories - as I have done in the past - when I can do a better job writing humourously on what people do?

Darrol  
I enjoy publishing my fanzine, I think my readers enjoy reading it, and if I was to talk about science fiction in it I think that that would involve taking it more seriously than I really





want to. I don't think anyone has any right to ask me to make my fanzine publishing such a dominant feature in my life as I think I would have to if I concentrated on science fiction rather than the things that appeal to me for publishing.

PeterR:

Whereas some of the others are perhaps slightly apologetic about your remark, I think there's a lot of truth in it. I myself am not peculiarly interested in science fiction, I don't read much of it; I read a part of it but I read more mainstream literature than science fiction.....

Heresy! Anon.

... I assume an interest in science fiction in my readers, I can talk about mainly fannish things that come into contact with science fiction like world conventions, Hugo award balloting, and things like that. They are peripheral to the real science fiction field but they must assume a knowledge of science fiction on the part of the reader. But I think there's a lot of truth in your statement, that it's a glorified pen-pal club, to a certain extent.

Gray

Is there anything wrong with that?

PeterR

I don't think there is anything wrong with that, no.....

No.

Assorted in audience.

.... I just don't want to be apologetic; I think that's true, but I don't think there's anything wrong with this. You've got to have some sort of... just meeting people is a worthy thing to do, I think.

Malcolm

Just to add something to that, I agree with what Mark Adlard says, to a large extent, because it seems to me that, looking at many of the fannish fanzines, that it all goes round in a circle. You can visualize about twenty people, each publishing a fanzine, which has a review of each of the other nineteen fanzines, and is sent to each of the other nineteen fanzines, gets a letter of comment from each of the other nineteen fanzine editors, and it all goes round in a circle from one to the other ((where is this so different from sercon fanzines?)) and if one of them dropped out the whole thing would collapse.

Laughter.

Ethel

It's more like a hundred and nineteen, believe me.

PeterR

I think it's interesting to see about the circulations on fanzines. There is a market for fannish fanzines: I don't know about Graham, but I publish 250 copies of each issue((120)), something which has very little to do with science fiction at all, and they do go, they are interesting, they get back comments. It's not just twenty, as Malcolm said.

Could it be that the producers finding that the actual job of producing the magazine a bore is responsible for the death of the so-called Golden

Age, and possibly a moral to be learned by today?

John Hall

Gray

Yes. ((But it's so much more involved - why does it become a bore?))

PeterW

The only reason why Golden Age fanzines pack up - Willis's fanzines - was because now he's got more important things to do. He's got a life to lead. This is where Geis and Bergeron go wrong, I feel, because they're making fanzine publishing their way of life; to me it is not that important. I've got a job, a home, eventually a family; so has Walt Willis, and a lot of other people in the past. Now they've other interests, and they'd really still, I suspect, love to publish, but they've been driven away from it.

From what you've said, and from what the panel mostly said, I derive that fanzines are basically a personal extension. They may do other things, but first it is something that you want to do. If you can do it, you do; if other things come up which take the time away from that, then you won't do it any more. Fanzines therefore are for fans, about them, and about science fiction, because that's what people are fans of; but mostly it's personal extension and you try to contact people, maybe have people contact you.

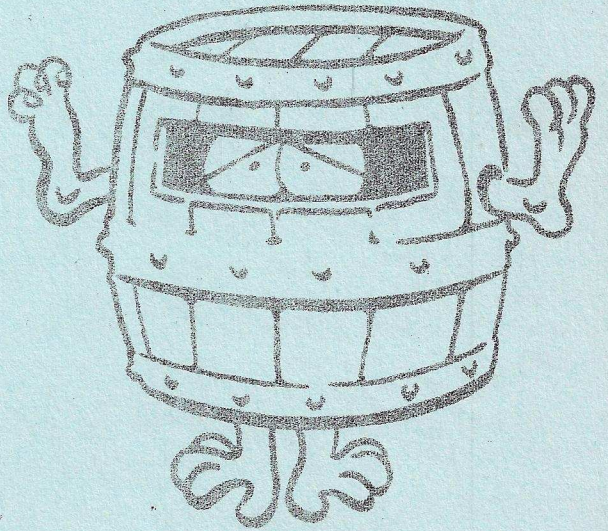
David Gerrold (?)

PeterW

Yes, but that isn't a question, is it? We agree with you, don't we?

This is not a question either. I just want to say that Don Wollheim started as a very shy guy of nineteen to make friends in fandom, and it has been a wonderful warm thing, and we go everywhere all over the world and we find such warmth - to call fan magazines "a slight thing" is really very wrong.

Elsie Wollheim



PeterW

Not "a slight thing", Elsie. This annoyed me so much when Moorcock and Ballard, just to name some recent names, more-or-less condemned fandom as a bunch of idiots, and useless, and so forth. Fandom Is A Wonderful Thing, I personally sincerely believe this. You put yourself out of the way, spend money to come here, and sit down, and listen to us all verbal; to have hospitality, as Elsie says, to have friends all over the world, this is tremendously important to me. My wife, she gets my post every day, tears it open; she loves reading the letters from all these people. Doesn't let me read them. I do agree with you, yes, yours isn't a question, but I'm not slighting fandom. It's tremendously important, but it musn't be the only thing in your life; unless, like your husband has done - he has made it his profession. Don - and Fred Pohl, for instance, and Jim Blish - started as fans, let it be said. And if you like there's another reason for fandom's existence - as a training ground.

I think we must end it, I'm afraid.

Vast applause.

# C4

Yes, Virginia, there is an Easter Bunny (no, not you, Roberts) and in his hot sweaty paws he holds this Easter's surprise packet - C4. Yes, really, no matter how many months late.

My apologies for the offset - this is the first zine I've done on the BSFA's duplicator (which isn't all there anyway) and it was done in a hurry to clear the drum for Vector.

The letter column was squeezed out, so I'd like to acknowledge the following people: Peter Roberts, Pauline Dungeat, Thom Penman, Ed Connor, Lisa Conesa (the Icarus article came first), Gillian Smith, Alexis Gilliland, Jilli Bridges, Rambling Jake, Dave Rowe, Howie Rosenblum, Ian Penman, Jhim Linwood, Fred Hemming, Archie Mercer, John Piggott, Bryn Fortey (who had difficulty commenting), Roje Gilbert (who didn't), Bruce Gillespie, Ian Williams, Harry Warner, Pete Presford, Jerry Kaufman and (last but not least) Peter Colley. I don't think that you'll find C4 at all an improvement, to your way of thinking, Peter, but thanks for the instructions on how to put out a fanzine. Are there any more names out there? Thank you one and all. There have also been far too many fanzines to list, and they are the greatest pleasure of all.

For those of you who may be wondering about the Great Boak Fanzine Sale - it'll come up sometime. The plan I had to gather them all together fell through... they are still in three different counties. When I get them all together .....

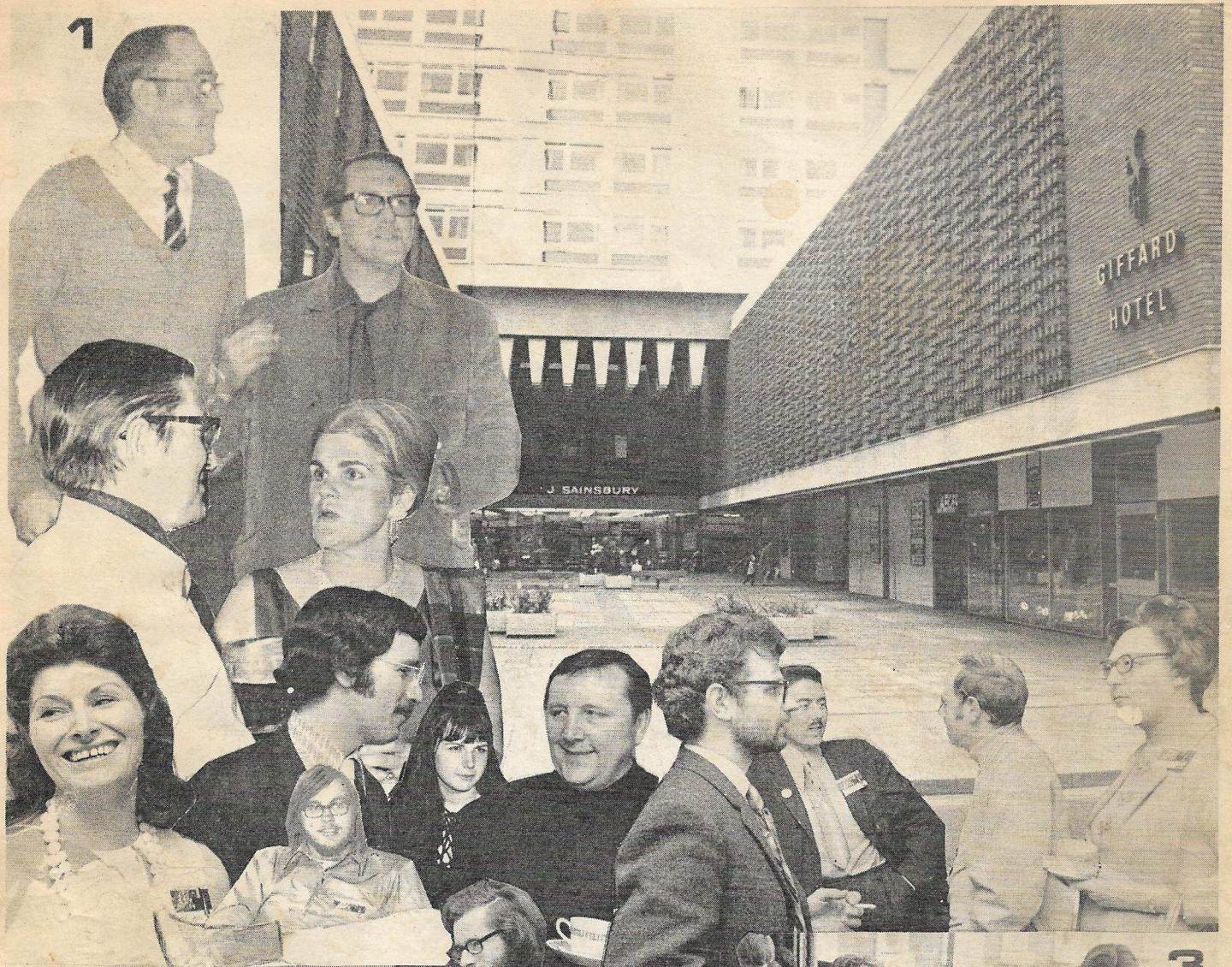
There has also been a Novacon since Worcester, and a fine con it was, too. There was to be a report of that, but it was squeezed out etc etc. By the time most of you read this, there will also have been a Chestercon... I'm falling well behind. Never again will I attempt a 'topical' fanzine. It's tempting fate.

Pan/Ballantine have been sending me their latest books to review. I'm greatly flattered, and have enjoyed them immensely (if some more immensely than others) but am now faced with the problem of having to produce some acknowledgment. I may well do a review supplement next time around... it wouldn't do to include sercon material within the hallowed covers themselves. (I have the suspicion that they are mistaking me for CYPHER....)

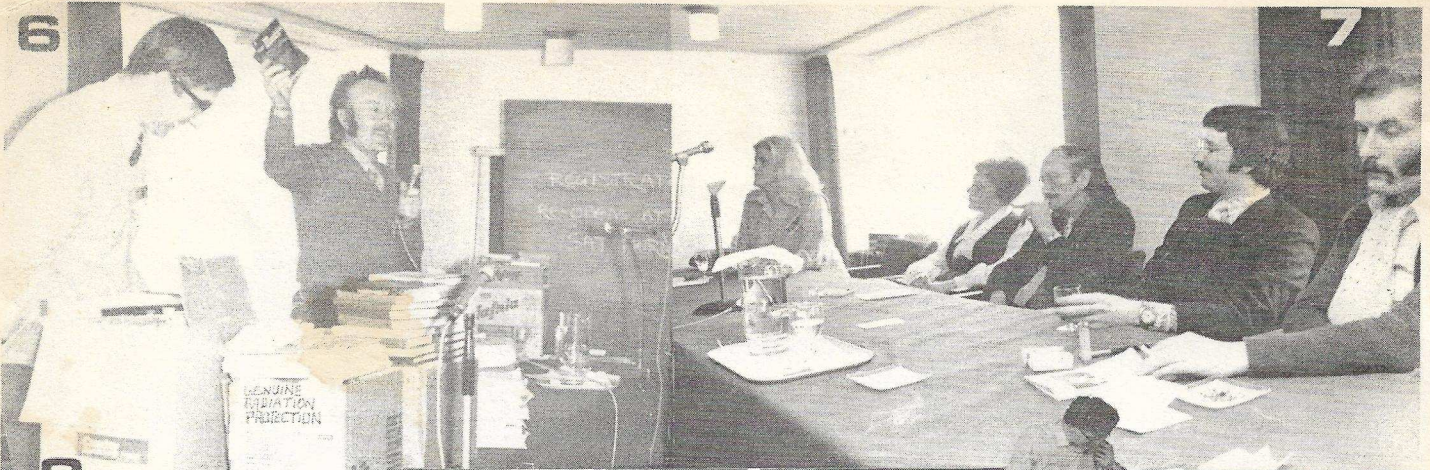
Next time around..... ah yes. Still in the melting pot, I'm afraid, but I'm hoping for Bryn Fortey, Jean Finney, Jhim Linwood, a full-length letter column, a healthy editorial, artwork from Harry Bell and David Rowe.... I'm a little short on artwork and would like to see some fannish writing around - any volunteers to do a column? I'd also like to do a bit towards internationalising fandom (Australia in '75, the Luttrells for DUFF) so how about some of you damn furriners contributing? An outsider's view of British Fandom? (Just ask Pickersgill, you say? That's nasty ... but if FOULER is dead, Greg, and you want to write something...)

It'll soon be time to start thinking about TAFF candidates again. Bill Rotsler? Mike Glicksohn? Arnie Katz? The Luttrells? And I musn't forget to include a plug for Trieste - the Eurocon.

And with a last comment before I rush off to duplicate this and start collating, I'll tell you that this has been



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Photograph descriptions out of Speculation, with modifications

Front Cover

Picture 1: (top to bottom, left to right) James White, Brian Aldiss, Mark Adlard, Anne McCaffrey, Sadie Shaw, David Gerrold, John D. Berry (seated and booted), Jean Finney (As one Well-Known-Fan's girlfriend was heard to say: "So that's Jean Finney. I feared as much!"), Bob Shaw, unknown, Fred Hemmings, Philip Strick, and an unknown lady. I don't know who the unknowns are either, Pete.

Picture 2: Crisis in the BSFA Welcome Room! Treasurer Jill Adams guards cashbox against flabbergasted Rosemary Pardoe, Anne Girling, John Coombe, Darroll Pardoe and Wolverhampton fan Ken Eadie.

Picture 3: At coffee in the lounge (which had a superb view of the cathedral). In foreground is Lizanne Strick with Margaret Aldiss and respective children. In the background is Joan Newman with other assorted infants.

Picture 4: Molly Auler, Jean Muggoch, Michel Feron, Gian Paulo Cossato. At bottom of picture Florence Margeit and Seigrid Poesse.

Picture 5: "All right Parkinson, what's happened to Vector?" BSFA meeting with Roger Peyton, Michael Rosenblum, Bob Parkinson and Doreen Parker. More Vector information in C5, hopefully.

Inside Front Cover

Picture 6: Someone from Brum - a friend of Vernon Brown's, I think - and Rog Peyton auctioning. Total receipts £78.61.

Picture 7: The Publishers' (and Editors') panel - Anne McCaffrey, Diane Lloyd, Ken Bulmer, David Gerrold, Lionel Trippet (Arrow Books.)

Picture 8: Audience composite. Foreground is George Hay (with glasses), Bette Woodward, Vid Hallet, John Brunner, Joan Newman, Georgeanne McCaffrey, Pat and Mike Meara (with camera), Phil Muldowney and Lisa Conesa. Take a deep breath. To the left of George Hay is an unknown fan; above him John Newman, top-left-hand corner is Dave Kyle. Then unknown, Sam Lundwall and Tom Schluck (both with glasses - all the best people wear glasses). Below Tom is Chas. Legg, then Paula and David Berry. Others visible include Jack Marsh, Bryn Fortey, Roy Kettle, Greg Pickersgill, Rob Holdstock, meself and Roje Gilbert (next to Fred Hemmings, behind Georgeanne.) Tony (Buck) Rogers is standing up on the right, tearing at his sweater; Carol Simpson, Ray Bradbury (ours, not their's) and Jenny Chandler are behind Lisa.

Picture 9: In the basement book-room, with Horst Evermann, Dave Garnett and Bram Stokes on left. Then unknown CIA agent, Pam Bulmer, Ken Bulmer and Ron Bennett. Pam is evidently saying "Of course I don't read all this stuff myself!" At the bottom right your editor is about to demonstrate latest issue of fanzine (Cynic? Transplant? Interim?)(Sod you, Weston, think of the free advertising I could have had if you'd waited till I had the title showing! It was C2 - I think!) to John Spinks.

Picture 10: Marvellous expressions on the faces of Peter and Diane Barrow, who provide a border for Doreen Parker (back to camera), Rog Peyton (hidden), Betty Rosenblum, Michael Rosenblum, Bob Parkinson, Elsie and Donald Wollheim, and Tony Sudbery (standing). Then Jan Geldart, Chris Priest, Dick Ellingsworth and Don Geldart. Superimposed on bottom: Roje Gilbert, Mervyn Barrett, Marjorie Edwards (wife of Chessmancon chairman Tony Edwards).

Inside Rear Cover

Picture 11 (whole page): Lipsticked Pete Weston doing his Master of Ceremonies thing as 'Gully Foyle', with Dave Kyle as 'Ted Carnell - Spirit of First Fandom'. Then Alan Denham as 'Overlord' (from Childhood's End), Alan Donnelly as a 'Yellow Martian', Robert Hepworth as

'The Fly' Gigi McCaffrey as 'Lisa' (from Dragonrider - Weston...that should be 'Lessa'), Eileen Weston as 'Olivia' (from Tiger, Tiger) and 'The Reptile'. This last costume was so good that only those in the know knew it was David Riley. Some fans were surprised to see a human being receive the prize!

Second row - Rambling Jake Grigg as 'Pirate of Ersatz', Fred Hemmings as 'Space Viking', first-prize costume from the late H. Beam Piper's novel, Ken Cheslin (Ethelred the Unready?), two junior fans, and Brian Burgess offering a little Worcester Sauce with the pies this year (also from Bester, perhaps?)

Third row - Jan Geldart, 'The Chanotéer' (who still remains anonymous! - his page, above, carries his shield), Doreen Parker in C'Mell costume, and Ray Bradbury as one of Kieth Laumer's Officers of the Imperium (entirely home-made).

Fourth row - Pauline Dungate as 'Kali', from Lord of Light (my favourite costume of the con - I don't know how these Brummies find the time!), Brian Hampton as 'BNF of Id' (Pete's title, not his.) Diane Ellingsworth from 'Star Trek', Phil Rogers, Graham Howard (Grievous Bodily Harm in mind) and John Newman (from Dune?) One of the hotel girls thought Phil had pretty good legs.

Bottom row - Eileen Weston, Anne Keylock, Gerry Webb (who is wearing that gear for real - he had to fit in a friend's wedding in London during the con. Stout fellow for making both.) Then Marten and Jon Bing from Norway, Jim White with a real live Mesklinite from Mission of Gravity, Anne McCaffrey and Judy Blish. Not to mention Jack Cohen, who came with assorted creatures including said Mesklinite, actually a tropical giant centipede.

#### Rear cover

Picture 12; Banquet - Eileen and Peter Weston, Anne McCaffrey, Kieth Freeman, Phil Rogers, John Brunner. Second row - the smiling Vernon Brown (another fannish legend bites the dust), Pauline Dungate (receiving her well-deserved special prize for 'Kali costume'), Ethel Lindsay, Bette Woodhead, Michael Rosenblum, Alan Denham, Alan Donnelly, Dave Kyle and Fred Hemmings: all prize-winners with bottles.

Picture 13: Jannick Storm (from Denmark), Tania Vandenberg. Smiling St. Anthony audience includes Andrew Stephenson -supposedly nearer Tania but no such luck- Chris Bursey, an overshadowed David Riley and Brian Robinson. On stage - Ron Bennett, Waldemar Kunning, Ken Cheslin, Ina Shorrock, Keith Freeman, Norman Weedall (Executioner), Eddie Jones, Phil Rogers, Dave Kyle, John Ramsey Campbell, Michael Rosenblum, Ethel Lindsay and new recruit Jim White.

Picture 14: River-trip - with some 200 people attempting to board a 150 seat steamer. On left, Pete Weston and Robert Hepworth are standing with cameras. (P. took the photograph of Peter Roberts, below, who had just taking the photograph of PW shooting him, PR. If you look carefully into the lens of PR's camera you can see PW's lens in which you can see....) Fred Vanner, Bob Rickard, Pauline Dungate, smiling me (actually, I was gesturing at Pete, but he chose not to use the other photograph).

Bottom left - Mervyn Barrett, Bette Woodhead, Pamela Bulmer.\* John D. Berry watches several unknowns and a bow-legged (look into that camera!) Peter Roberts. Naughty-cal Rambling Jake. Arline and Roger Payton, two unknowns, Chris Bursey and some others. Bottom right - Jim Marshall and Norman Weedall.

#### Credits

Photographs were taken by Michael Meara, Peter Roberts, Colin Moore ('official' con photographer), Mr. C. Duggan ('Official' photographer supplied by the hotel) and Pete Weston. Pete Weston had great fun assembling them into their present form.