

CACTUS TIMES

THEY CAME WITH SNOW ON THEIR BOOTS ...

Welcome to what may or may not be the first British sf convention (or is it? - see below) to take place in a blizzard. CACTUS TIMES, the convention newzine, is edited and produced by Abigail Frost and Mike Hamilton, in the really quite unfaded splendour of the Waverly Room on the sixth floor of the Royal Angus Hotel. We're assisted by special investigative reporter Anne Hamill (if she can tear herself away from work and get here, that is) and a few others - like, maybe, YOU? Any reports, news, opinions, or even (hand-cut) pictures will be welcome; just find me or Mike and make yourself known. Material will be included at our discretion. Deadline for announcements for the Saturday Lunchtime edition is 11.30 am; Saturday Evening 5pm. Have a good con; meanwhile, here is some important stuff:

BAR HOURS - CHANGE

The committee and the Royal Angus management regret to have to tell you this, but the details given in the Programme Book no longer apply. A recent change in policy by the local licensing board has caused the hotel difficulty in obtaining sufficient extension hours for non-residents; so things have had to be tightened up. It will be essential to show a room key to obtain drinks between 3-5pm and after 12.30 am; but keys from the Grand Hotel will be honoured. Please don't give the hotel staff any hassle about this - it's neither their fault or the management's.

PROGRAMME ADDITIONS

Listed in the programme book but not in the last PR: 10.30pm Saturday, Paul Kincaid interviews Keith Roberts. Don't miss it.

Writers' Workshop (for those signed up in advance only) will be held from 11am on Saturday, in the Board Room (sixth floor). Cactus Times will endeavour to get a report on it for the plebs.

Fanzine Production Workshop (for ~~the old~~ ~~trufans~~ trufans), starring Eve and John Harvey will take place on Saturday afternoon, time to be announced, in the Waverly Room. Come and learn all the tricks of smooth and

LAST CHANCE SALOON

Don't forget to put your entries for the Brain of Mexicon in the red and white box at the Registration Desk by 10.30 tonight at the latest. After all, why hide your light under a bushel? Don't miss the deadline and the glory by hanging on till that last book title comes to mind. Look - you could enter a blank piece of paper and still beat me. Amnesty International should be tipped off about Kevin Williams, in my view.

STAR TREK SHOCK HORROR

You thought THIS WAS THE CONVENTION where only Kate Solomon knew who Captain Kirk was - and even she kept quiet about it, huh? You could be wrong for once. Committee members arriving at the crack of 9.30am were horrified to note that the hotel notice board at reception was announcing: MEXICAN 2 STAR TREK. The jefes went off to do something about it; so Linda got it changed before Greg could go and get her camera.

SPECIAL SPECIAL FANZINE AUCTION BUY BUY BUY

Greg Pickersgill, fandom's answer to Sotheby's, will be auctioning rare and important fanzines in the fanzine room on Saturday at 12 noon, moving on to the main auction in the con hall at 1pm. Don't miss this either.

ANOTHER BLOODY FAN POLL

The Mexicon fanzine room's own fan poll - usual sort of categories plus others - is available in the room itself, which would like you to know that it's the Ariel Suite, by the restaurant on the second floor, and marked by the traditional Sue Williams cactus. Deadline for votes is Saturday midnight; lots of awards and silly prizes; vote early and vote often. (No, not often, please)

BELIEVE IT OR NOT.....

10% of the membership of this convention are filthy pros. There are 27 of them appearing on the programme, and at least half-a-dozen more in the audience. Membership stood at 301 by midnight Thursday. We will not name the TWP person who said "well, that does count people like Sue Thomason."

A BIG TENTACLE

... for Sue Williams, who didn't make the cactus. (S Hopple did) but painted the cuttlefish banner in the con hall. Last Mexican's "broken wall" banner (also Sue's creation), now forms a spectacular curtain at the elegant Kidbroke flat of Kate Solomon and Malcolm Davies.

ALAN MOORE

... "one of the finest fantasists writing today" (Rob Hansen) will be only fleetingly here, alas, arriving Saturday and leaving early Sunday morning. So take advantage of him while you can.

BOOKROOM HOURS

Liable to change, since individual dealers have their own keys to their own rooms, but should be open 9am-6pm. If you see Reg Peyton in the bar between these hours click your tongue disapprovingly at him.

MORE OF THEM CAME WITH SNOW ON THEIR BOOTS

A trip to the fanzine room for sellotape at 4.30 revealed a good crop of new arrivals, including Vince Clark, currently helping Mike H with the dreaded hand-cranked duplicator (thanks!), Jim Barker, John Clute (who has a cold and should not be kissed) and Charles Stross, fresh from "Bath, where several hopefuls were wining and dining Malcolm Edwards..." Something to do with some competition in some scab East End newspaper, I understand.

CORRECTION STOP PRESS CORRECTION STOP PRESS

Deadline for Brain of Mexican entries is 10am Saturday, not as stated overleaf. But you're not going to improve your score overnight and you're not going to up up that early, are you so be grateful.

SIX O'CLOCK LINE JP

Membership is now 313; lots more people have appeared, of whom easily the most important are Newcastle's Riverside crew, PA whizzes, who are a DAY LATE. Expected tomorrow are D West -- currently duplicating Simon Ounsley's fanzine, and Helen Starkey, "I'm not coming ... I'm only coming because of William Gibson ... I'm only coming for the Greenaway shorts etc etc etc ..."

Phil Palmer writes: "John Brosnan isn't coming because he's writing a novelisation of Dempsey and Makepeace."

MEAL TIMES

Lounge lunch hours not known, presumably lunchtime. Evening meals 6-7.30pm. and 10.30 - 12 midnight. Selection of dishes promised, eg chili and rice, chili and baked potato, burger and chips. Prices around £1.10 - £2.00

COMING TOMORROW IN CACTUS TIMES

The answers to the Brain of Mexican quiz; writers' workshop report; John Jarrold reviews the secret alternative programme.

Don't forget; deadline for announcements tomorrow is 11.00am for the lunchtime edition, 5.30 for the evening.

Thanks to Martyn Tudor for the loan of the duplicator, and Vince Clark again for expertise.

Cactus

Times



Atoro

OH MISTER PORTER, WHAT SHALL I DO?
I WANTED TO GO TO BIRMINGHAM BUT THEY
TOOK ME ON TO CREWE!

Programme changes announced by Paul Kincaid
last night:

2.00pm: Joan Aiken unable to attend; so
won't appear on Children's Fiction panel.

8.00pm: Pro team will be Neil Gaiman, John
Clute, Chris Evans, and Kim Newman.

Sunday: Gerry Kaufman joins "What is fan-
writing?" panel, 6.30pm; Keith Roberts
joins "Reappraisal", 7.30.

Joan Aiken's non-appearance is due to
urgent family commitments. Brian Aldiss's
is not in fact confirmed; but everybody
except Mr K and Mr G seems to have been
told about it from the horse's mouth.

Aldiss flies out and Shaw flies in;
the real Bob Shaw, famous novelist and
convention-goer apparently decided last
night that he had to be here, so he
arrived this morning.

HEAVY BAD STUFF ££££REWARD££££

Last night, an emergency wall-phone was
deliberately removed from the lift area,
presumably by a convention member.

There will be a FIVE POUND REWARD for useful
information on this matter. If you know
anything about it - if you saw the incident,
or know who was responsible, see Greg
Pickersgill. This sort of idiocy has
been too prevalent at cons lately,
and we don't want no steekin' aggro here.

HAVE YOU HEARD, IT'S IN THE STARS NEXT JULY WE COLLIDE WITH MARS...

Worldcon party - I missed the first half,
changing out of my smart rem oval girl's
outfit and into my party dress; when I
arrived it was pretty damn good. Music
was somewhat familiar to those who'd been
at Chris Atkinson's party a couple of
weeks ago; it was the first time on record
that I'd failed to do my foot in to the
Tuckett Road tape of Tom Robinson's
Motorway. (Must be slowing down) Best-

dressed partyer Chris, in stunning but
ideologically unsound fur-trimmed little
black number. Best dancer Faith Brooker
for the two minutes I spotted her. Toby
Roxborough only dances with girls who
begin with L. Hitcherfans (I think) had
some for once harmless fun, providing a
floorshow with Biff T-shirts, henna'd
hair, etc etc.

Good party. More tonight and tomorrow.

(AJF)

BARGAIN OFFER FOR MOTORISTS

Alex Stewart has discovered - and it's
been CONFIRMED by the head night porter
- that there's a system here whereby
Angus residents can obtain free parking
in the NCP park next door. Ask at rec-
eption and they'll give you a voucher
to get out free. One voucher per person
per night of residence.

HIGH JINKS IN THE FANROOM

Anne Page invites entrants for two
projected fanroom extravaganzas: the
long mooted all-in sack racing (sacks
courtesy of Martin Tudor and the GPO)
and in true Mexican/Mexican style, a
Spanish dancing contest! Whether these
occur depends on public interest - so
please either contact Anne Page herself or
leave your name at Registration... (LE)

ROG'S RESTAURANT GUIDE

Compiled by Rob Jackson and John Stewart
with the expert assistance of Rog Peyton
and the Birmingham University Group.

We believe you are All Adults and can
therefore basically find your own way
round Birmingham as well as we can, so
don't need our advice on how to have a
good time. But for those of you who'd like
something to go on when deciding how to
have fun filling your bellies, here's a
list by type of restaurant.

Most of them are fairly local, within ½
hour's walk (CONTINUED ON PAGE 3, col.2)

Running Dogs

The key told your intrepid reporter that we were in a culdesac; it was only later that I discovered we were, in fact, in Ideologically Sound Row. They don't come any dounder than Robertson and Hamill; well they do, but Judith and Joseph were first against the wall, for when the Revolution comes... Palmer was across the hall from us, the only worry was that Ted White was said to be incognito with a certain married couple across from HIM, but this was later found to be a malicious lie no doubt spread by the running dogs of lickspittle capitalist imperialism.

Bright Talking

I really decided that this time I was going to be Bright and Dynamic on Friday evening, mindful of my duty to my readership who would maybe not be so thrilled to hear all about me washing my hair 3 times so as to avoid actually having to interact with anyone. So I went downstairs and wandered around greeting people and being bright. It's frightening how strange it makes you feel when you walk into the foyer and there are EIGHT people there you should talk to and you can't think of the first thing to say...well the FIRST thing is all right, but people think you are being Bright and Strange if you keep going up to people and saying Oh HI! Uh -

After a while I run into Gregory who is standing like a Great White Behemoth in a place where you can't help running into him if you are being Bright. Hello Hamill, you look terrible he says. On drugs again I see. Jolted by his perception I rapidly small talk my way into helping Pam behind the Registration Desk.

Roses

Here I rapidly discover my limitations. I always thought Registrations was, you know, easy... They didn't tell me about finding badges. I mean, you have to remember people's NAMES. Somehow I shrink at asking Margaret her surname... Uh...that's your er, Pam! I say desparately. WHAT? says Pam? Wellhank is your end you fool! Pretty cunning this, only sometimes she only says YOU've got the R's, which doesn't help much really. Apart from not remembering anyone's names, and not hearing them right, I don't recognise famous authors. I am discovered incompetently searching for M. John Harrison's badge under U for Unwin. Eventually they decide to use me as a runner, probably in the hope that sooner or later I will get lost, which in fact I eventually do.

In touch

The first actual convention item I attend appears to be something to do with questions from the audience, only Greg has fielded all the really interesting ones like 'Getting laid at conventions - who did you do it with last?' in favour of asking the panel for the high and lowlights of their sfictional reading over the last year. Ted White says he would be glad to say what would be his best and worst book of the year, only he hasn't got around to reading either of them yet. Gradually it becomes evident that nobody else has read any science fiction either, except Caroline Mullan who can't remember any. Chris Evans admits that reading science fiction makes his creative juices dry up, and has been ordered by his accountant to Give It Up. Gregory cums it all up by saying that he wouldn't mind reading some of now and again, only it's like Heroin - you'd quite like to try some, but you know it's going to kill you... This is Mexican guys, the written sf convention.

Later in the evening I discover what is wrong. There is a small inconspicuous switch in the lift marked 'Fan'. Jimmy has been switching it on when he comes down, and off when he goes back to his room. Some people will do anything to be the life and soul of the party.

Domestic harmony

Silly games start off with five teams of two Divirsions Desesperados. To make it more interesting, the pairs are cohabiting couples who have to work TOGETHER to solve almost impossible physical problems, levitating tea trays using ropes and balancing beer cans between foreheads. The conversation is the best bit... "You have to raise your RIGHT hand first, dear." "I DID raise my right hand first, dear." "No, dear, you're doing it too quickly." "I'm doing it as slowly as I can, dear." The ideologically sound team leave the floor with a democratic 3 points. Other competitors are less restrained. "Oh you STUPID BUGGER you can't even CHEAT properly!" raves Eve Harvey as a ping pong ball slips from the spoon in John's mouth. The Oborns suss the ping pong ball round by judicious use of Chapsiick on the spoon, and from somewhere a thin howl rises "I TRIED to cheat earlier, but you wouldn't LET me!" Later Brooker is seen crowing in indecent triumph that they beat the Hanna Nicholas axis by NINETEEN points, while Chris Evans

WARP 1 cont.

stands by supplying the necessary Cool.

Walls and things

The night progresses, and gets stranger. I try to initiate a discussion on what makes people's bones turn to water. Jimmy takes a long time to come up with Thin Woollen Dresses. I ask Palmer, but he just stares at me with the air of one who has just been up to Ted White's room. Can I say that you just looked at me with glazed eyes, I enquire? Can you say that Krakatoa went Pop? he replies. I run into further problems with my survey, because the men I ask don't know, and the women know, but won't tell me.

I go upstairs and stare at the wall for two hours. For some reason, at the time this seems a rilly triffic thing to do.

The night wears on, and it only gets weirder. Tomorrow has to be another day...

SLURP, SLURP

CONGRATULATIONS are in order... Mary Woodward, the Thistle Hotel Group's Sales Manager, has let it be known that we very nearly drank the hotel dry last night. Hence the frantic restocking activity this morning... Make a manager very happy. (RJ)

THE NUMBERS GAME

347 attending members as at 1 pm Saturday; plus 6 day members today. Good Stuff.

GRINGO AWARDS

That should be Gringo Awards! Just a quick note to say that although you won't find it on the ballot forms, fanzines etc. voted for should fall into the period Jan 1985 to 1986 now, please. Remember, votes must be in by midnight Saturday and we 'd like as many votes as possible for a fair assessment.

(LE)

QUOTED WITHOUT ATTRIBUTION

"I can't believe that Alex ((Stewart)) is a guest. It's like discovering that your baby's become a ballerina."

Nick Lowe, 6pm Friday, by Brain of Mexicon box: "Just as I suspected; nothing in it at all."

ROG'S RESTAURANT GUIDE continued

(you need the exercise; look at a map - we can't describe the routes individually), or close enough that a taxi shared between 4 will only cost 40p each. What's On in Birmingham, available free from hotel reception, gives a very full list as well as other info.

Indian

Koh-i-Noor, Bristol St. £5/head less booze.
Raj Doot, Albert St. Really special quality but more expensive.
Maharajah, Hurst St.
(The Gaylord closed a year or two back.)

Chinese (Chinese New Year tomorrow - Year of the Tiger - lots of banquets, maybe booked up - ring & check.)

China Town, Hurst St. Big new place.
Ho Tung, Bull Ring Centre.
Dynasty (Peking style), Hurst St.
Chung Yung, Wrottesley St. (off Hurst St.)
Happy Gathering, 54 Pershore St. } both
New Happy Gathering, Station St. } Cantonese

Caribbean

Rustie's (owned by Rustie Lee) 69 Hurst St.

Greek

Helios, Corporation St. Udicensed: take wine.
Bambos, Station St.

Spanish

Los Canarios, 105 Albert St.

Mexican - if you find one, let us know!

French

Biarritz, Hurst St. Pricey but high quality.

Daytime eats

Central, New St. Centre. ("Greasy spoon".)
Croissant Shop, New St.
Duchess, Piccadilly Arcade (off New St.)
Viennese coffee & cakes.

Have fun, & get well fed up!

BRAIN OF MEXICON FINALISTS

Steve Davies Malcolm Edwards
Julian Headlong Tim Illingworth
Dave Langford Caroline Mullan
Mike Scott Peter Wareham

Congratulations, people. Could all you knowalls please report to your Quizmaster, Neil Thompson, just before 6 pm in or near the main con hall?

For all the rest of us, including one or two who very nearly made it, ALL IS REVEALED on page 4, overleaf. You too can get lots of abstruse references...

PS Steve Green is going to the Dynasty!

Now it can be told!

THE BRAIN OF MEXICON - ANSWERS

- 1) I Gert! I Gert! by Brer Alf Steed - Tiger Tiger by Alfred Bester
- 2) I'll make my report....matter of the imagination - Left Hand of Darkness - Le Guin
- 3) Rarely is it given man....intervenes in his destiny - Last Starship from Earth - Boyd
- 4) On his thousand year eve...house of the dead - Creatures of Light and Darkness - Zelazny
- 5) Mad Friend - The Mad Friend stories of G.C.Edmondson - Stranger than you think (coll.)
- 6) Glass jetty.....blue ruin - The Kokod Warriors - Vance
- 7) Kill Vorga Deadly - Tiger Tiger - Bester
- 8) Remember Thor V - Earthman Come Home - Blish
- 9) Can-D - Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch - Dick
- 10) As you wish, so be it - Traveller in Black - Brunner
- 11) A pathetic Ocean - Rumfuddle - Vance
- 12) Up west of Arkham...axe has ever cut - Colour out of Space - Lovecraft
- 13) And came down in (Paris) - Aye and Gomorrah - Delany
- 14) Perris - Nightwings - Silverberg
- 15) Shape of things to come - Shape of things to come - Wells
- 16) Cosmic Puppet - Dick
- 17) Yuli - Heliconia Spring - Aldiss
- 18) It took perserverance...Tharsis Canyon - In the Hall of the Martian Kings - Varley
- 19) There was a wall...roughly mortared - The Dispossessed - Le Guin
- 20) It was cold on the ramparts - If this goes on - Heinlein
- 21) Khitan...rattle box - The Anome (The Faceless Man) - Vance
- 22) Hey Mouse, play us something! - Nova - Delany
- 23) Between timid and Timbuktoo - The Sirens of Titan - Vonnegut
- 24) The idiot lived....Flickering of fear - More than Human - Sturgeon
- 25) Gee Ace!.....dazzling report - Any Lensman book - Doc Smith
- 26) He had reached the age of 650 miles - Inverted World - Priest
- 27) Dr Strauss...dont no why - Flowers for Algernon - Keyes
- 28) Kull Wahad - Dune - Herbert
- 29) Cassandra! - This Immortal - Zelazny
- 30) The Lathians have got the Willies - Next of Kin (Plus X or Space Willies) - Russell
- 31) For the love of God Montresor! - Cask of Amontillado - Poe (or Usher II - Bradbury)
- 32) Love is an imaginary number - Title of story by Zelazny
- 33) Space is vast...relentless enemy - Return to tomorrow - Hubbard
- 34) Once I was a professional soldier - Necromancer(No room for man) - Dickson
- 35) Mountebank in an Urban Landscape - Malacia Tapestry - Aldiss
- 36) Then let this be your last battlefield - Title of a Star Trek episode
- 37) Earth isnt a place, it's an idea - Earthman Come Home - Blish
- 38) Unexpected travel plans are Dancing lessons from God - Vonnegut
- 39) People have feelings, they can hurt - Double Star - Heinlein
- 40) No you have given...because they are man - We have fed our sea(Enemy Stars) - Anderson
- 41) They stood together at the parapet - Space Viking - Piper
- 42) The sky above the port...dead channel - Neuromancer - Gibson
- 43) The Moon was very bright tonight - Inconstant Moon - Niven
- 44) Rising over the Hand of God - Tau Zero - Anderson
- 45) Instrumentality - Any Cordwainer Smith
- 46) At times like this....can and must survive - Return to tomorrow - Hubbard
- 47) I ask you, could a congress of gorrillas...breed man? - Genetic General (Dorsai) - Dickson
- 48) The Hard Way - A short story by Dickson
- 49) The Alien Way - A novel by Dickson
- 50) Silence shall be my mother tongue - Dying Inside - Silverberg
- 51) We in some strange power's....rigourous line - Title of a story by Delany
- 52) Cold, cold....star streams - Up the walls of the world - Tiptree
- 53) This much we have learned...rule the Sevagram - The Weapon Makers - Van Vogt

OH MASTER, I BEGA
CACTUS TIMES
COVER

EAT SHIT,
FADED
GROUDIE

NO NEWS IS GOOD NEWS SAYS MR K

Asked Paul Kincaid for programme changes; none since last issue he said. (But see below, Errors and Omissions) Any other news? "Everything's going smoothly... that might be worth a mention." (AJF)

CHANNEL FIVE - John Jarrold at the Secret Alternative Programme.

ORDEAL BY INNOCENCE

When I was a lad, Agatha Christie was redd by all sixteen-year olds. Faye Dunaway in Agatha Christie sounds wonderful, if only to watch her and drool. But Donald Sutherland looks lost in this movie, and Dunaway is wasted in flashbacks. It's a "who killed this person fifteen years ago" sort of story, badly made, badly acted, badly distributed, which may be its only good point. Sutherland is out of place in the Forties, Dunaway isn't, but since you know she's dead when the film starts, the interest wanes; not even I can be interested in necrophilia. Stay in the bar, or go and see Rocky IV. Anything else is preferable to this mish-mash. On at six, nine and midnight. Tomorrow is DOUBLE PLAY, with Christopher Plummer and Maggie Smith.

ERRORS AND OMISSIONS

You may have noticed Greg Pickersgill in the main hall today between 1 and 2 - but no auction. Yes, by Freudian slip I announced the fanzine auction for Saturday rather than Sunday. Kicks off at High Noon, followed by main hall auction at 1pm. Keeps you hot on your toes, say I. (AJF)

LOST AND FOUND

A silver(y) pendant and two paperback novels in the Waverley Room, probably left after fanzine production workshop. Owners please ask at Registration Desk.

Packet of Disque Bleu: please return to The Fake Alain Delon, c/o Cactus Times Reviews Department.

In the small hours of this morning, The Grand Hotel, Birmingham; please return to Toby Roxburgh.

ADVERTISING SUPPLEMENT

B S F A

If you want to find out more about the British Science Fiction Association, half the committee are here. See David V Barrett or Paul Kincaid (Vector), Dave Hodson (Matrix), Mike Moir (Information Officer) or John and Eve Harvey. Or any of the dozens of members here. Membership is still only £7.00 a year!

CONVENTION

Four cons are taking registrations in the fanroom: Conspiracy (87 Worldcon, Brighton), Albacon (86 Eastercon, Glasgow), Novacon (small unestablished sf con in hard-to-find backwater North of Watford), and Concept (ever-so-famous con somewhere or other). Additionally, the Brun Group announce FIFTEENCON, anniversary con/party, 11-13 July, £6.00; or £5.00 if joining Novacon too. Next Brun Group meeting, Valentine's Day, at the Angus, £1.50 or £1.25 for Brun group members or members of another recognised sf group. (Who does the recognising, eh?) They have arranged overnight rates of £17.50/person with the hotel. (I dunno - we spend all year telling people we're not going to be like Novacon and end up advertising all these Brun Group eventsAJF)

LETTER TO THE EDITORS

Dear Sir and Madam,
Was it deliberate ... or just a mistake on someone's part? When you enter the fanroom, you see on your right a display that includes a written diminishing spiral which commences: "New Readers Start Here"

At a convention which states in its charter that it is a specialist convention dealing solely with the written form, are there likely to be any NEW readers?

((Well, Rochell Dorey does her best to keep producing them... AJF))

////////// IN YOUR TEARAWKY TIMES TODAY//
ZZ9 speak out!

WORKSHOPPING - Liz Sourbut writes!

The Mexican Writers' Workshop took place today between 11am and 4.30pm in the Board Room; it was chaired by Lisa Tuttle along the lines of a Miford workshop.

Six budding sf writers took part; we had all received copies of the stories beforehand, and so were able to get straight down to the criticism. No punches were pulled, but a lot of constructive comments came out of the (sometimes very) lively discussion. I think we all benefited from the exercise and came away with ideas and determination to re-write.

Many thanks to Lisa Tuttle for her stimulating and perceptive commentary, and a plea to the committee - please can we have another for Mexican 3?

((Look, don't give Gregory any more ideas, will you? AJF))

OVERWHELMING GRATITUDE

...to contributors to today's issues. As well as those named, there were Lillian Edwards (LE), Rob Jackson (RJ), Arthur Thompson (logo), Vince Clark (again), and Martin Easterbrook (getting the duplicator going). And fanzine production workshop people showed interest and made (sometimes helpful) comments.

IS FILK SINGING A MINORITY PURSUIT?

... asks Bruce Macdonald, adding "In Lounge? 11.30 Sat night... Suggestions?"

AUSTRALIAN NEWS

1.30am Melbourne: Justin Ackroyd attends Mexican 2. The former GUFF winner, who came to the first Mexican in 1984, didn't want to miss this one, so called Maureen Porter up in the middle of the Jan Mark panel. "I think he was pissed" adds Ms P.

ALLAN AND UNWIN SALES REP IN MERCY DASH

AT 2.45pm Rog Peyton and his Andromeda books team were preparing for a signing session for Louise Cooper's new novel "The Initiate". This has not been officially released and this was to be a special prestigious pre-publication bash, involving 200 copies of the book.

The tannoy made the announcement, there was a notice up and everyone was primed. Louise Cooper had come to Mexican especially for this event.

Then with 15 minutes before the start, they open the parcel and books....
...and shock, horror, discover 200 copies of the wrong book!!!! So the Allan and

////////////////////////////////////
Cactus Times 3 SATURDAY NIGHT SPECIAL

Unwin chap, heads for his car and disappears in the general direction of Hemple-Hemstead, intending to be back for 6pm; having collected 200 copies of the correct book!

Rog Peyton says take pity on the poor chap and buy one of his books. (M.H)

ZZ9 DIDN'T DO IT - HITCH-HIKERS IN FANDOM

Les Fuller on behalf of the lot of them

The Trufans vs The Rest panel discussion turned out to be more than a "What is a trufan?" debate. The whole topic of elitism and fan acceptability was given a good airing for the dirty laundry it is.

Because of the Hitch-hikers' somewhat rowdy image, we went down to adjust the focus a bit, and let people know we're ok fans - some of who are seasoned con-goers.

During the discussion, the subject of the Strathallen Hotel was breached. ((Alex Stewart said "If it wasn't for you lot, this con would be at the Strathallen" AJF)) Abigail asked us to set the matter straight and give our side of the story. There are a few rumours flying around, one of which we were landed with at Novacon 15. One of the committee asked if it was true that one of the hotel rooms had been redecorated. It is not true. Quite simply, however, the Hotel did not co-operate with us. (Sob story, folks)

1) The bar extension we'd been told we'd have wasn't given. Imagine that at Mexican. ((See CTL AJF))

2) Our people's rooms were mixed with mundanes', after we'd asked for them to be booked together.

3) An unwanted "doorman" (bouncer) was supplied, at no request from us, and re-appeared the second night after we'd been promised otherwise!

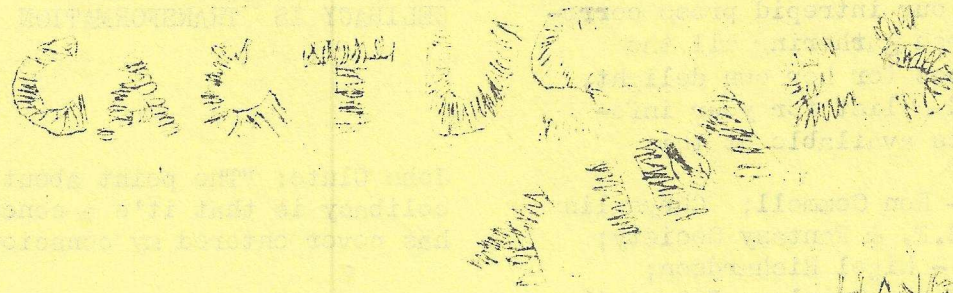
4) The first thing we were told on arrival was that the disco would have to stop at midnight.

5) There were a plethora of minor complaints to the management (one from a special guest speaker, one from us concerning lack of co-operation with a BBC film crew)

Yes, we did jam the lift. But when that happened at Novacon, ZZ9 didn't do it. The only other thing to be broken was the glass in a fire door.

It was the hotel's first con and probably its last. Of course we complained, and in due course Thistle Hotels owned up and donated £100 to Cancer Research. If we hadn't held out Lazlar Lyricon, Mexican would have had the same treatment. If you are still sceptical, ask Ian Sorenson or Ann Page. They were there.

Stop Press Langford wins Brain: 2nd Scott



HANGOVER SPECIAL

PROGRAMME CHANGES

4.00 The film Born in Flames has mysteriously failed to arrive, and attempts to locate it have failed. Alan Dorey's Fan/Pro Quiz has been rescheduled from yesterday to replace it.

TAROT WORKSHOP

Rachel Pollack will be holding a tarot workshop in the Board Room at 1pm sharp. (Sixth Floor) Contact Rachel or Anne Hamill for further details. There will be an admission charge.

MEXICAN AID

Part of the proceeds of the main hall auction will go to the disaster fund. There are collection boxes around the fanzine room etc for cash donations.

COUGHGRATULATIONS are in order ... never mind nearly drinking the hotel dry, last night we smoked it to death. By about midnight all cigarette machines were empty. A CT person was reduced to cigars (ugh), and to conning Rochelle Dorey out of half her remaining supply on the grounds that Alan owed ~~me~~ her some from the afternoon's fan panel. Oh the guilt, the guilt.

CELIBACY was the buzz-word in the bar very late last night, as Rachel Pollack and Geoff Ryman announced their forthcoming Celibacy Training Programme, guaranteed to enhance your life in all sorts of ways for mere thousands. Various suggestions for initiates' badges were canvassed - "I Don't", "Stay Down"/"Stay Tight", "Celebrate, You're Celibate" etc. Malcolm Edwards's suggestion was the most popular - a simple white bar across a red badge. What he's supposed to know about it I do not know.

SOME PEOPLE OUGHT TO TAKE THE COURSE REAL SOON, THOUGH, according to Linda Pickersgill. "Did you hear about the couple behind the screens in the fan-

zine room on Friday night?"

CT: Nu-huh.

LKP: Well, I was in here trying to have a fairly intelligent conversation with Ian Banks, and Greg and Holdstock and Dave Hodson called me over and said take a look back there. Well, there were some clothes and things over there, but you could see what was going on pretty clearly anyway..."

CT: What did you do about it?

LKP: Oh, nothing very much. I went back and talked to Banks and the others just stood and watched.

ROBERT STUBBS THE PEOPLE'S HERO

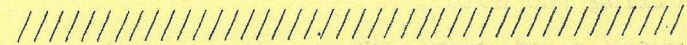
... has completely changed his appearance since last Mexican - no longer the sinister Man in Black look, but clean-cut crisp light grey and black check Mr Nice Guy - but his nature hasn't changed: Rushed about organising a People's Disco as the real one failed to take off. In the true manner of People's Discos it actually got started while he was sitting in the bar talking to me. Good work. (On the other hand, Gamma claims that Robert was responsible for doing his head in. Mind boggles.)

SNOD'S EXCUSE FOR THE DISCO

... is that, Riverside having no tape deck, he was obliged to borrow one from the heavy metal crowd and thus had to offer to play a couple of their tracks out of duty. This cleared the floor of everyone else.

ENOUGH OF THIS FILTH...

Caroline ("too sensible to be celibate") Mullan joins us overleaf with some more serious stuff.



CACTUS TIMES - The Mexican newszine
No 4, Sunday Lunchtime edition, 9/2/86

LAST ROUND UP

Christina Lake, our intrepid press correspondent, has been gathering all the available fanzines for her own delight, but has provided a list for your information. Fanzines available at this Convention are:

Ron's Raygun 4 - Ron Connell; Chrysalis - St. Andrew's S.F. & Fantasy Society; Wetwang/Spuzz 2 - Nigel Richardson; Still Life 3 - Simon Ounsley; IDOL 19 - Chuck Connor; A Song To Anything That Moves - William McCabe; No-Previous Convictions - Lillian Edwards and Ian Sorenson; Wet Cheese by Steve Hubbard; Devil's Clutch - Peira Shearman; Kyster 11 - Dave Wood; Spec. Issue - Malcolm Hodkin; A Bit Of The Other One - Brian Parker; Prevert 14 - John Jarrold; Mainstream 11 - Jerry Kaufman and Suzle; Wing Window - John D. Berry; Ansible 45 - Dave Langford; Chuch - Avedon Carol and Rob Hansen; The Mirror Crack'd - Caroline Mullan; Crank 4 - Rob Hansen and Ted White; Nutz 6 - Pam Wells; Strumpet - Pam Wells; Hebedare - Iain Byers.

THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE THE ANGUS...

Helen Starkey arrived last night to find a mistake had been made with regard to her single room. She is now resident in a suite, with two television sets. They should make mistakes like that more often, perhaps?

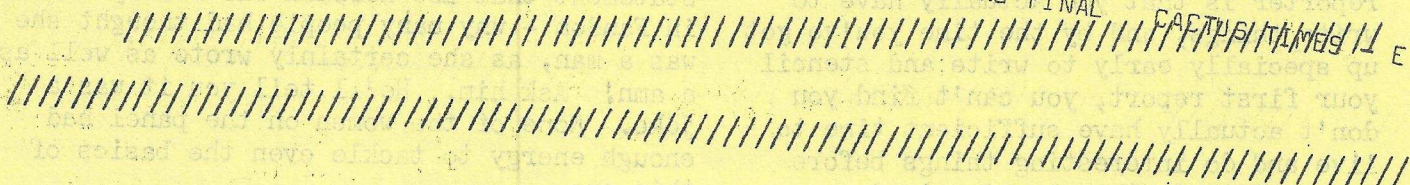
As some of you may have discovered already Alex Stewart got it slightly wrong when he told us that Angus residents get free parking in the NEC carpark. What you actually get from the hall porter is a voucher worth 75 pence, but the charge is about £2.80 per night. So far no-one has had any success in arguing their way out of it. Maybe if you just remove your car when there is no-one around to demand payment...?

BECCON Committee member Bernie Peck this morning attempted to extend his stay for one more night, having originally booked only Friday/Saturday, and was told the hotel was fully reserved for tonight. Can anyone proposing to leave tonight who had their room booked please get in touch with the Head Girl Linda Pickersgill before telling the hotel.

AVEDON CAROL COMPLAINS ... that the Transatlantic Echoes panel started too early. Never again, she says; "Ted and I nearly didn't show, Bill Gibson just didn't".

CELIBACY IS NOT DENIAL
CELIBACY IS TRANSFORMATION

John Clute: "The point about the new celibacy is that it's a concept that has never entered my consciousness"



WE DON'T WANT TO LOSE YOU BUT WE THINK YOU OUGHT TO KNOW...the weather forecast

Tonight: snow showers, ice and severe frost; -5°C. Watch the roads.

Tomorrow: sunny, light winds; no rain or snow but still below freezing.

If booked to leave tonight but wishing to stay over, you MUST check out, then leave name with Reception; unlikely to be much room here but they can book you into the Grand.

RING FOUND

Elaborate silver ring found, outside con hall; owner should contact Pam Wells and identify it by answering a simple question.

IDIOT REPENTS

Possibly inspired by Greg's threat to tear the culprit's head off, someone put the stolen telephone into a lift this afternoon., and someone else asked Linda if she'd happened to see it there. Well done; but better if the thing hadn't been taken in the first place.

FOODIES NEWS

Two responses to Rob and John's request for information on Mexifood in Birmingham; Jim Darroch mentions Bobby Brown's, Burlington Arcade, near station; Nick Lowe produced a leaflet announcing that "It's Mexican Fiesta time at Spud-u-like", an emporium with which the Welbank/Lowe menage seems obsessed (see their COA card of some time ago); Brum branch, 'Nick thinks, is near Town Hall, probably New Street.

WHAT WOULD LIFE BE WITHOUT ALISON MACDONALD?.... party report

Fans looking for late night entertainment seemed to gravitate to the ConSept room party ((oh yeah? AJF; who was at the People's Disco and then in the bar)). The large room got steadily fuller as we wondered of yet another 16-stone fan would fit in the door. There were four different sources of Str8h, and lots of

sleazy conversations. Everyone had fun, though they looked totally beat by the end. (AM) ((Transcribed verbatim: desperate fun, eh wot? AJF))

MONEY MONEY MONEY MONEY SEX MONEY MONEY

Would David V Barrett please contact Pam Wells to collect his auction proceeds.

REGISTRATIONS

Final tally is 357, about 100 up on last time.

QUIZ RESULT

Pros massacred fans; Clute, (Edwards, (M), Stewart and Newman 181; Edwards (K), Headlong, Moir, Lawson, 116.

THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING

Caroline, Lilian, Christina, Atom, Vince, John, Rob, ZZ9, Martin, John S, Kev and Neil, Martin T, Mabbitt E, John D, 1/2r, Bruce, Alison, Liz, Maureen, LINDA, and everyone else who helped.

Today's help credit goes to Chris "why the hell do i pay £5 to come to this scruffy little convention and end up turning the damn duplicator" Suslowicz.

Special thanks to Ann, who probably wrote more than I have. (AJF)

TAROT WORKSHOP

Even with the late notice, about ten people showed up. Rachel Pollack reckons it went quite well, but then she's biased.

HAS IT BEEN WORTH IT?

- WHY ARE ALL WOMEN FANS GOING DEAF?
- WHAT IS TO BE DONE ABOUT ANDY ROBERTSON?
- OR COME TO THAT ALISON MACDONALD
- WHAT IS TRUTH?
- WILL THERE BE A NEXT TIME?

or what Anne Hamill's convention did next...

The trouble with being an intrepid reporter is that you actually have to write things, and by the time you've got up specially early to write and stencil your first report, you can't find you don't actually have sufficient time to live and do interesting things before you need to do the second episode...

The best bit of Saturday afternoon, however, was definitely the Women in Fandom panel, where Andy Robertson and Dave Wood took the floor as People's Stooges and said lots of things that made the audience laugh. Dave Wood having said that there was a place for women in Fandom caused Kate Solomon to point out that as women were now in fact dominating committees and fanwriting and general activities, the real question became Was there a place for MEN in Fandom. This caused Andy some annoyance, and he attempted to put Kate in her place with the statistics about the percentage of women in different areas of fandom. Questioned on his sources, it transpired that these conclusive figures had been compiled by Andy himself, Dave Pringle and Ashley Watkins. Stung, Ashley leaped to his feet from the front row, and objected to the use of his name in connection with these figures, since he hadn't known what they would be used for when he was asked for his opinion. Further investigation revealed that 'compiled' actually meant 'guessed', and Ashley gave a graphic description of being asked Hey Ashley, how many women would you say were involved in fanwriting? and him responding ooh well, looking around and just talking off the top of my head here, ooh well I should say there must be between 30 and 50%. It was suggested that reporting this as 40% was possibly tending to lend an area of spurious accuracy... Trying to restore some sense into the proceedings, Chair Christina Lake put it to Andy; Let me get this straight. These figures represent an average of a number of guesses, by men, of how many women there are in different parts of Fandom? After this, no one seemed very interested in the actual data.

Dave Wood managed to take control for a time after this, by the simple expedient of having a louder voice than Kate, and made some moderately acceptable statements about how there have always been women in fandom, unfortunately marred by citing examples almost entirely culled from American fandom. He finished his

intervention with the staggeringly obtuse statement that Lee Hoffman was really central in Fandom - why many people had thought she was a man, as she certainly wrote as well as a man! Ask him. He'll tell you it was a joke. None of the women on the panel had enough energy to tackle even the basics of this one.

After a digression by Ron Gemmell into why Andy thought there were only pure women in fandom (which turned out to be a mishearing of 'fewer', but allowed Andy the opportunity of expressing extreme doubt as to whether there were ANY pure women in Fandom), Avedon took the floor with an impassioned cry for sf writing that represented real roles that are relevant to today's sexual realities. She spoke with fluency on publishers who cling to demographic data that tells them What The Public Wants To Read through thick and thin, and ONLY after sales have plummeted to new depths do they even CONSIDER whether their fifteen year old data might be a tad out of date... At this Ted White leapt to his feet to object in the strongest terms that in 20 years in the business he had never seen this happen, and he was sorry, Avedon was wrong, publishers were not this perceptive.

After the excitement of the women in Fandom panel the evening seemed to settle down a little. I vaguely remember being on a panel and asserting various reasons for Why I Write, most of which seemed to revolve around having these great ideas which people ought to be told since they obviously weren't able to think up anything half as interesting themselves; and how writing let you tell them these ideas without the bastards interrupting you all the time with irrelevant comments. Not a very successful panel, really, nobody at all wanted to buy me a drink afterwards...

I wandered around for a bit, a high point being a spot of D. West baiting, since I knew he'd be waiting for my reaction to the article he'd been long threatening to write putting me in my place...

"I enjoyed your article D..." D. looks as if this was not his intention.

"Quite interesting - not up to your usual standard, I thought... Of course you spelled my name wrong... Both of them... and you criticised my article on the grounds of being an extended metaphor, which it wasn't - Malcolm's was, of course... Still, it was enjoyable."

"How nice," he grits.

"Yes - it's good to see that even the great D. West gets it wrong sometimes..."
At this point I have to lose my dignity by running away.

WARP 2 cont.

The evening winds on, with the usual trips to Upper Regions, ending with a decision that Ted White Ought To Know About Peaknuckle, especially as he would be so good with the JRD. After a couple of hours explaining the rules, the room was beginning to swirl attractively. Things got funnier, and eventually the continuous inane giggling and smoking caught up with my diaphragm. Deciding the only way out was with savoir faire, I rose to my feet exclaiming Excuse me everybody, I'm just going next door to cough my guts up. A circle of shiny red faces smiled and bobbed, and a roar of laughter greeted my witty statement, so I then went next door to cough and sick up in the loo. It all seemed very amusing at the time, especially trying to work out when I was well enough to make a dash back home so I could get into some serious throwing up. (I made it too.)

An hour and a half later I wobbled down to the fan room which had the tail end of a party going on in it. I joined Ted White and Eve Harvey for a terrific discussion about waking your partner up to make him apologise for being beastly to you in your dream. Then we discussed Bedwetting, and was it fair on your partner. At this point Pam Wells joined us, looking like someone had taken her to pieces and then had to put her back together again in a rush, that is to say, as if she wasn't exactly sure where her head was. Can anyone join this conversation, she asked innocently. Sure, we say, we're talking about bedwetting. The conversation has nowhere to go but up, now. There is a short embarrassing silence, then Eve leaps into the breach by offering to tell us her John vomiting stories. There are a lot of these. We decide we were wrong about the conversation. Jimmy caps these with a description of how he threw up in a glider at 3000 feet, and the bastards hadn't told him where to find the little brown bags. The bit about the vomit on the glass was particularly telling. Ted White contributes with a description of projectile vomiting. Shortly after this several of us decide 4.00 am is a jolly good time to go to bed.

Elsewhere in the con a new religion is being founded, based on celibacy. Their motto - 'I don't need it' - the evangelical branches motto 'Why should you have all the fun?' New methods of diving the future are considered, including BRomancy based on cancellations from rail timetables

and liftomancy based on the random movements of a passenger transport system. Celibate badges are distributed.

In other parts of the hotel, all unknowingly, couples are coupling. In callous disregard for the hallowed birthplace (?) of a new religious force, I figure to join them. It seemed like a much better idea at the time.

BEST SELLERS OF THE CONVENTION

Unsurprisingly, the new book dealers (Andromeda and Fantast Medway) report that their best sellers were by authors present at the convention, Ian Banks, Geoff Ryman and William Gibson, and by Joan Aiken who of course should have been here. Italo Calvino was a good seller, and children's fantasy in general moved well. Unicorn, publishers of Gwyneth Jones 'Divine Endurance' failed to supply copies to Fantast Medway in time for the convention, but the book was in demand. 'The Wizard of the Pigeons' which was recommended as a good fantasy in the 'Question Time' on Friday, sold out in Andromeda.

Dealers complained of loneliness and boredom in their small separate rooms, and of restricted access to their tables. On the other hand they were warm when the rest of the convention was complaining of cold. Financial results were mixed, with some dealers quite happy and others less so. C.M.

KAETI IS COMING

The green sweatshirts with the white 'K' logo and the mysterious fliers and advertisements mentioning Kaeti are aspects of the not-so-subtle advertising by Kerosina Publications, a brand new publishing company, about to publish its first book, 'Kaeti and Company'. No one is actually saying who the author is but it's not all that difficult to guess. (Hint: try looking up some back issues of F. & S.F.)

C.M.

RUCTIONS AT AUCTION

Opinionated auctioneer Greg Pickersgill, who refused to sell at least one lot at the price offered, as an insult to the book, later disagreed publicly with CUSFS chairman Alison MacDonald over the scarcity of a collection of Philip K. Dick short stories, with Greg maintaining it a scarce book and Alison asserting otherwise. Record lot went for £11, for the complete Dorsai by Gordon R. Dickson, which was auctioned unseen by the audience. A good time, and some good books, were had by all.

CACTUS TIMES 5 - 6p.m. Sunday. ARRIBADERCI!!

NOE can be revealed the final results of the ultra significant Gringo award - in general voting seemed fairly well considered in the serious section but tending to the - ah - frivolous in the silly section. There was also rather a lot of evidence of block/slate voting (hands up the 'Darroll Pardoe Groupies' and the Leeds Group/BAFFS) but then that's nothing new for fan panels!

About 51 voting forms were filled in small : oddest (and disqualified) forms were those that filled in every category as 'Vomit, vomit, vomit' and the person who put in 'Les Fletcher's ... (something or other)' in every possible place. Who is Les Fletcher? I think we should be told...

Serious awards

Best fanzine was a tie between Still Life by Simon Ounsley and Prevert by John Jarrold. As Simon can't drink, we gave John the wine and Simon the plasticine award... Runner up, as ever, was This Never Happens, by Christina Lake and me. Sigh...

Best writer was Simon Ounsley, fairly convincingly winning out from Linda Pickersgill (whose vote was split between writer and apa writer) and another eternal runnerup, Nigel 'Sarcastic Sod' Richardson.

Best apa writer was Texan beauty Sherry Francis (is that sexist enough), followed not especially closely by Lin Morris (also of TWP) and, you guessed, Linda P. (Note the absence of men) Dotty of the Soft Toys Apa also has a fan club..

Best one shot was (we thought you'd forgotten) The Foetus by the coyly anonymous TNH team, followed by Challenger (ie the Space Shuttle - sick, people, sick!) and Interzine.

Best cover artist was a runaway slate victory for Sue Williams (presumably for Prevert), followed by Atom, Ros Calverley and Dave Harwood all joint second.

Best cartoonist was a runaway victory for D west.

Best blast from the past fanzine, designed to be a sort of Roll of Honour

award - only near contender was True Rat.

Finally in the most decisively voted for category - near unanimous - of best article, the winner was Simon Ounsley (again!) for Welcome to The Pleasure Dome in TNH 6.3/4 (yaaay).

Not so serious awards

These answers were not, shall we say, so rigidly tallied...

Worst beard cut a swathe through fandom, almost everyone you can imagine getting at least one vote and sex no defence. What did Linda P do to have the 3rd worst beard? Winner however was poor ol' Laurence Dean, with runners up Mike Ford and my personal choice, Kevin Rattan.

Best con was indubitably Yorcon 111 (Becon runner up) which was also, oddly, least likely success (oh ye of little faith..) Runner up to that category was the truly wonderful Tony Berry for his Novacon fanroom and Nigel Richardson, just for being. Worst apa administrator award a poorly voted category - lets just say the winner was barely Alan Dorey. The Dave Bridges Award went, in a display of spontaneity, to Dave Bridges. The Nigel Richardson Award, on the other hand, (for the fan you'd most like to see dressed in mini skirt and suspenders went over-whelmingly to Ashley Watkins, famed fannish transvestite. Let's see those spike heels again, Ashley! Lots of people also fancied seeing Nigel himself. Geoff Ryman and gulp - Joy Hibbert so apparreled. Boy. Back at the categories, most celibate fan was another wide-scale entry. Leaving out the obvious 'all of PAPA', clear winner was Welsh Woody Allan lookalike, ALUN HARRIES, though someone did have the grace to add 'at least since Silican'. Most mentioned person was actually 'me' but you can't give 'me' an award...

The fan you'd most like to have on a desert island, in a sandpit and on a waterbed seemed to confuse you lot. It was meant to be something you'd enjoy! Lots of people, to collate a few votes and guess, appeared to be voting for their worst enemies. So as a totally arbitrary selection: it's D West on a desert island (at least he could go on killing rats), Ashley Watkins on a water bed (the people's choice, regardless of sex, I suppose) and Avedon Carol in a sandpit. The last may or may not be pejorative...

