

NOVAcon 22



Progress Report 2

NOVACON 22

Guest of Honour Storm Constantine

Royal Angus Hotel, Birmingham

Friday 6th to Sunday 8th November 1992

Committee:

Helena Bowles is Chair with Bernie Evans on Registrations; Richard Standage as Treasurer with Tony Berry as Ops Supremo and Guest Liaison. Carol Morton is organising the Programme and Steven and Jenny Glover are on Publications.

Staff:

Mick Evans is overseeing the Bookroom, John Harold is in charge of the Art Show. Vicky Evans will be on hand to help with the Playroom and babysit by arrangement.

Membership and Enquiries:

This will cost £20 until October, then £25 on the door (but there is a membership limit of 300). Contact Bernie Evans (121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands B66 4HS tel: 021 558 0997) with cheques or queries.

Advertising Rates:

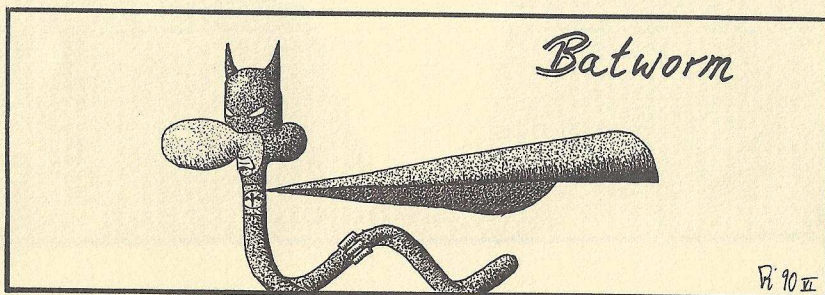
Advertising is welcome for the next Progress Report and the Programme Book. If interested, please contact Bernie Evans (details above). Camera ready copy should be sent to Steve and Jenny Glover, 16 Aviary Place, Leeds LS12 2NP (tel: 0532 791264) and the deadlines are July 51 for the Progress Report and October 1 for the Programme Book.

Bookroom Rates:

Tables will cost £15 per table and this rate will cover the whole weekend. All dealers must, of course, be members of the convention. Mick Evans is the person to contact (121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands tel: 021 558 0997).

Acknowledgements:

Our thanks to Kim Cowie for the Storm piece, Steve Jeffery and Vikki Lee France for general information about Storm Constantine (they run the Storm Constantine Information Service at 44 White Way, Kidlington, Oxon OX5 2XA) and to Thomas Recktenwald for arranging the artwork. We would also like to thank Mark Nelson for providing us with a fanzine review at extremely short notice. No thanks to the folk from YEB who switched off our power supply, losing us the first version of this PR and about half a hard disk!



PROGRESS REPORT 2

The Chair Speaks Helena Bowles

Another year, another Novacon ... another split site committee leading to the usual deadline problems. Despite dedicated commting from Leeds to Birmingham, this PR is late and its lateness is due entirely to the malice of Leeds GPO in calling a strike right before the deadline. Having done their best to ensure a late delivery of people's pieces, the post office proceeded to lose articles by Bernie and myself not once but twice. (Any grey hairs visible in the coiffures of our inestimable Publications People are entirely due to this).

So it is finally here and in your hands. What can I tell you of the forthcoming feast of delights? Carol Morton has the programme well in hand (see page 4) despite the loss of a very close family member. Our heartfelt thanks for carrying on during a difficult time, Carol. Richard Standage, our Treasurer, assures us the financial side of things is fine (but what are those plane tickets to Rio I see in his wallet ...?)

As you are no doubt aware, Novacon in its perennial wandering, has once again alighted upon the Royal Angus Thistle Hotel. This small hotel, much loved by previous Novacon members, can only take 300 delegates (see Bernie's piece below). So if any of you are reading this who have not yet joined or who have friends who have not joined the message is this: Get in quick or you may not get in at all!

On a pleasanter note, the hotel are being extremely co-operative. Cheap food will be available - what and how cheap is being hotly negotiated now by our team of ardent arbitrators. Watch this space. One piece of good news is that the hotel are laying on real ale in the form of McEwan's 70/-, which is not too common in our neck of the woods. Enjoy.

The questionnaire sent out as part of the membership form was filled in and returned by a paltry twenty people. Of these, four voted for live music, eight for a disco and eight for a ceilidh. As entertainment had to be booked quite urgently (like last committee meeting!) the filthy prejudices of the Chair have been taken into account and we're having a disco. Sorry ceilidh fans, but next year there is a new committee.

Hotel Forms, Receipts and Stuff Bernie Evans

Right, you lot, let's have some membership forms in, especially from those of you who want to display art work, sell books, have a child in the playroom (I mean PUT a child in the playroom, not ... oh, never mind). In fact, anyone who wants to do anything besides just turning up and watching really, really needs to send a form in, 'cos my crystal ball's in for repair, and if I can't pass some gophers on to Tony Berry he may loose some of that legendary cool.

The other form is your Hotel booking form, no deposit required, Convention rates Thursday through to Monday, send the form to me, NOT the hotel. The usual rules apply for booking a room, fill your form in, send it off at once, change your mind a week later and phone me. Seriously, though, the usual rules are first come, first served in the main hotel (with the occasional exception which is entirely at my judgment and never open to discussion, but I'm good at listening to complaints), anyone wanting a single room send the form yesterday, any lone traveller refusing absolutely to share, don't be too shocked if you end up in the overflow hotel. We haven't got one yet, as we don't know whether we'll need one. Fire regulations limit us to 300 members, so we may be OK, just, please, bear it in mind. If we do need an overflow, it'll be in the city centre, a mere walk away, but remember Birmingham's flaming subways.

Receipts, in case you haven't gathered by now, I hate fiddling with receipts, and most of you know me well enough by now to trust me, and know the ropes well enough to realise that if your name's on the list, then I've got your money. If you're nervous, or a filthy pro and want to claim expenses back off the tax man, I've probably already given/sent you a receipt. If you want one or think you should have one, and haven't already got one, give me a call and I'll make a special effort for you.

Finally we really mean 300 members, so if you know anyone who intends to come and hasn't joined yet, do tell them, as once we hit 300 that's it, Joe Bloggs or Arthur C Clarke, 301 means no entry.

Programme Notes Carol Morton

This year's Novacon Programme is based (loosely) around the mechanics and motivations behind writing. There will be panels on writing as a collaborator as opposed to writing on one's own; another on pseudonyms and style, in other words why when an author writes under a pseudonym can his or her style become radically different – maybe it's the author's real personality coming out? Why is there more humour in Fantasy than in Science Fiction or are Science Fiction and Humour just not compatible? This promises to be a panel worth seeing; also the analysis of why shared worlds are becoming so prevalent. These are just a few panels to whet your appetite.

This is not to say that the traditional Novacon stalwarts won't be in the programme, we will have a party on Friday night – not a signing session, and for that we are hoping to have a knockout punch(!). The scientific talks and the book and art auctions have not been forgotten, the Guest of Honour interview and a discussion of Storm's work will certainly keep our GoH busy. The BSFA and Friends of Foundation are both having meetings at Novacon, so bear those in mind if you want to attend. Pam Wells as the most recent TAFF winner from Europe to the States and therefore also the current TAFF administrator on this side of the pond, is hoping to interview the TAFF candidates: of course, we can't tell who they will be as the nominations are not open yet, but they will be in August. The Disco on Saturday night will be a sixties/seventies disco and the Committee will be laying down the law about the type of music to be played – so hopefully last year's despondently disappointing disco will not be repeated. Of course, the film buffs amongst you have not been forgotten so there will be a film programme: just which films we will be showing is dependent upon availability – more details about this will be forthcoming at a later date. In addition, we are hoping to



run an all-night video programme for the insomniacs amongst us. There will be an independent writer's workshop held over the weekend, so get your pencils sharpened and your brains in gear and we will give you full details of the workshop in PR3.

As for the rest of programme, I want to keep that under wraps to leave you some surprises. Remember, though, this is your convention so please do participate in shaping the programme by letting us know if we have left out any of your bright ideas or, indeed, included your pet hates.

Playroom Bernie Evans

As mentioned on the membership form we sent with PR1, we can't provide our usual creche, as the law on child care has changed, and Vicky isn't qualified in any professional sense, and we can't afford to provide a hired professional. We do still believe that children need a break from the con, and the con needs a break from children, so we are providing a playroom, or Parent & Child room for your convenience. This room will have a bed, a cot, a TV, toys and stuff, and parents can take their children there to care for them themselves. Vicky will be available for some of the time, in a helper capacity only, she cannot take your child unsupervised, for the reasons already stated. Baby-sitting is different, if parents want to make a private arrangement with Vicky, please speak directly to her and she will do what she can to help. I'm sorry it has to be like this, but a similar arrangement worked at Mexican, so I see no reason why it shouldn't work at Novacon. Extra helpers welcome as usual, of course.

The Nova Awards

The Novas are awarded annually for best fanzine, artist and writer in the preceding year by members of the Novacon convention and now is the time to start thinking about reading some (or producing one, since to qualify, a minimum of one issue has to be produced between October 1991 and September 1992). The idea behind the awards is that they should be decided by informed voters who have seen at least six fanzines in the last year. If you haven't and want to, then Mark Nelson's fanzine review below can provide a jumping-off point. Alternatively, fanzine listings can be found in either *Critical Wave*, *Matrix* (the BSFA bimonthly newsletter) or *Shards of Babel*, Europe's SF newsletter.

Nova Award ballot forms will be sent to members in advance and will also be available at the convention. If you have any comments, queries or suggestions, the current Nova administrator, Harry Bond, (13 Merrivale Road, Stafford ST17 9EB) will be pleased to hear from you.

The Bewitchments of Love and Hate Helen McNabb

When a book, or a series, becomes a cult, it is hard to look at it objectively. The first Wraeththu book I read with enjoyment. The second I came to with the sense of reluctance which comes when you are perversely determined to swim against the tide. (I won't like this one because it's too popular). It has happened to other cults, the books are condemned almost because they are *Star Trek* or *Hitchhikers* or whatever, rather than for inherent faults. It is not an edifying practice, nor a fair or intelligent one, but it undoubtedly happens. The Wraeththu are now a cult and this book will sell in vast numbers to the people hooked on it, which is fair enough. Nevertheless, I initially felt that being an objective reviewer would be harder than usual, until I began to read. It is as good as the first book, it is a continuation which tells more about the world and the Wraeththu themselves, it is well written, the characterisation is good, the plotting well thought out and always in control. In short, it is a good book.

It does not pick up where the last one ended (you do not need to read these in order). Instead of Pel as the protagonist, we move continents and characters to a minor character in the first novel, who is the protagonist in this. Swift grows from childhood to adulthood in the opposition camp, the very folk that Pel is set on destroying. Into this claustrophobic community comes Cal - returned from the dead so to speak, enabling us to see more of his mysterious past, but not to understand him, not fully. It is a real continuation of the first book and if you enjoyed that you will enjoy this. I did, anyway.

The Complete Constantine A Storm Constantine Bibliography

It has never seemed particularly sensible to us to include the GoH bibliography in a convention programme book. Even if you see it during the con, there's hardly likely to be the time to go to the Dealers' Room and hunt up that elusive story, never mind actually reading it... This way, you get to see a Storm Constantine bibliography in plenty of time to chase up the ones you want to read.

Novels:

The Enchantments of Flesh and Spirit
(1987 Macdonald hb, 1988 Futura pb, 1990 Tor pb USA).
The Bewitchments of Love and Hate
(1988 Macdonald hb, 1988 Futura pb, 1990 Tor pb USA).
The Fulfilments of Fate and Desire
(1989 Drunken Dragon Press hb, 1989 Orbit pb, 1991 Tor pb USA).
Monstrous Regiment (1990 Orbit t/pb, 1991 Orbit pb).
Hermetech (1991 Headline hb, t/pb, 1991 Headline pb).
Aleph (1991 Orbit t/pb).
Burying the Shadow (1992 Headline hb).

Short Stories:

"By the River of If Only" 1988 *Paragenesis*, 1991 Fear, January.
"So What's Forever?" 1989 *GM Magazine*, Vol 1 #7 Mar.
"God Be With You" 1989 *GM Magazine*, Vol 2 #4 Dec.
"The Pleasure Giver Taken" 1989 *Zenith 1*, Sphere.
"As It Flows To the Sea ..." 1990 *Tarot Tales*, Legend.
"Last Come Assimilation" 1990 *Digital Dreams*, NEL.
"The Time She Became" 1990 *Zenith 2*, Sphere.
"Did You Ever See Oysters Walking Down The Stairs?" 1990 *More Tales from the Forbidden Planet*.
"The Heart of Fairen De'ath" 1990 *Weird Tales* (USA).
"Lacrymata" 1990 *Deathwing*, GW Books.
"The Vitreous Suzerain" 1991 *The Gate* #2.
"The College Spirit" 1991 *Temps*, Penguin.
"Immaculate" 1991 *New Worlds*, Gollancz.
"They Hunt ..." 1989, *Drabble Project* #1.
"The Deliveress" 1992 *Villains*, Penguin.
"A Change of Season" 1992 *Weerde*, Penguin.
"Priest of Hands" 1992 *Interzone*.

Forthcoming:

"Poisoning the Sea" 1992 *Dedalus Book of Femmes Fatale*.
"The Law of Being" 1992 *Eurotemps (Temps 2)*, Penguin.
"The Preservation" 1992 *REM Magazine* #2.
"How Enlightenment Came to the Tower" 1992 *Scheherazade Magazine* #2.

Magazine Interviews:

GM Magazine (January 1989)

New Voice (October 1991) with Dan Critchfield. This is the alternative news and arts magazine of Hofstra University (available from Room 201, Student Centre, Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY 11550)

Interzone 58 (April 1992) with Stan Nicholls

Mother of Sighs (Lorraine Simnot, 35 Summertown Road, Ibrox, Glasgow G51 2QA)
Inception 3 (Steve Jeffery and Vikki Lee France, 44 White Way, Kidlington, Oxon OX5 2XA)

Dreams From Within (Darren Bentley, 74 Monteith Crescent, Boston, Lincs. PE21 9AU)

Interviews by Storm Constantine

Storm is manager for two bands, *Litany of Fear* and *Empyrean*, and is pretty much involved in the alternative music scene. She appears in Mick Mercer's book, *Gothic Rock*, and has interviewed Carl McCoy (*Fields of the Nephilim*), *Creaming Jesus* and *Every New Dead Ghost* for *Siren* magazine, both of which are available from Pegasus Publishing (Bradford

Court, Bradford Street, Birmingham B12 0NS).

Fanzine Articles

Fanzine articles by Storm Constantine appear in *Inception 4* ("Seraphilia: The Allure of Angels"), *Inception 5* ("Building Worlds"), *Arrows of Desire 4* ("Fear and Loathing in Hate City") and *Dreams from Within 11* ("The Everness Kiss: Courting the Vampire") and short fiction in *Inception 6* ("Lions") and *Paragenesis* ("By the River of If Only" - a revised version appeared in *Fear* (January 1991)). A short story "An Elemental Tale", donated to *Inception* will be published as a small illustrated limited edition sometime this year.

Wraeththu and Beyond: A Personal Look at the Work of Storm Constantine Kim Cowie

The first work of Storm's I read was *The Bewitchments of Love and Hate* which is, I still think, the best of the three Wraeththu novels, a perfectly hermetic fantasy with strange characters, tension, drama, mystery, adventure, and wired sexual and social customs. The rhythm of the prose is synergetic with the themes in this book; more notably poetic than in any of the other novels. It's a nearly perfect creation, and rather well written too; anyone not charmed (as I was) by the introductory paragraph probably has a cloth ear. There aren't many fantasy novels as good as this, and in terms of originality, it almost stands alone.

The Enchantments of Flesh and Spirit isn't as good, partly because it is a first novel and suffers from rawness, and partly because the bones of the thing, its roots in youth culture, show through. The latter is not to its advantage (though the youthful fans may disagree) since to disrupt the hermetic effect and force the reader to try to contend with it in terms of SF or gayness breaks the spell.

The third novel, *The Fulfilments of Fate and Desire* isn't as good either as it lacks the dramatic underpinnings of *Bewitchments* and consists basically of a tour around another part of Wraeththu territory with Cal, a character who also appears in the other two books. It's diverting enough, but there is not enough tension to wholly sustain one's interest in what is a fairly long book. Also, while the first two novels are essentially serious in tone, a certain jokiness creeps into *Fulfilments*, and this trait becomes ever more intrusive in Storm's fourth and fifth novels.

Storm breaks new ground in *The Monstrous Regiment*, a more or less SFnal book, which also contains more descriptions of the background than in the Wraeththu novels. I never minded the lack of background in the latter, and echo Bruce Sterling's comments on the subject (printed in *Vector* 159 February 1991). I do think this thing where people spend hours designing thief's inns for fantasy cities is a form of mental illness. Enough of that. The description of the swamp and its inhabitants in the first chapters of *Regiment* is wonderful. The notion of exposing the excesses of feminism is a valid one. Unhappily the novel starts to go off about halfway through: culminating with some ill-judged excesses and more than a smell of *Deus ex machina*.

The reaction of several readers to *Hermetech* seems to have been that they thought Zambia Cervecour was wonderful but they were less bothered about the rest of it. Indeed, I found the scenes between Zambia and Malamute, and the Zambia and the youngsters, the best and funniest things in the book.

The main idea in *Hermetech* is that there is a psychic sexual force (the "hermetech" of the title) that can be harnessed to cause powerful real effects. This book displays itself as being more SF than fantasy so if the reader decides that the orgasmic energy potential is bunkum, there is a real problem. There is also uncertainty about how much the novel is light fiction or broad comedy and it wobbles between the two. But *Hermetech* is, all things considered, a pleasing book.

Storm's short stories, of which about eight or ten have now appeared in print, are sometimes charming, with various admixtures of SF and fantasy, but the earlier stories seem written in a minor key compared with the novels. Storm's stories "Immaculate" in *New Worlds 1* and "Priest of Hands" in *Interzone 58* are, however, an impressive leap forward, being written in a more literary and mature, if less quirky and individualistic style. They also tell good stories. The opening paragraphs of "Hands" seem over-elaborate, however.

Aleph is a sequel to *The Monstrous Regiment*; it continues the story of Corinna, who is now in

an idyllic rural community. Some off-worlders and mysterious forces add complications to the plot. This is a pleasant read, less uneven than *Regiment*, apart from the ending, where a *Deus ex machina* is once again dragged in and several of the characters are forced to act out of character just to wrap the story up. The lesbian General gets married, most unconvincing!

Burying the Shadow is a return to fantasy. It's rather difficult to get into at first, because it's not the most fast-moving of novels and the style is a little elaborate. The names of two of the main characters, the brother and sister Beth and Gemel, are a little unfortunate. Which is which! Wrong! Once one becomes engrossed in the story, it's charming and quite involving. Perhaps Storm's New Age obsessions are more palatable in the form of fantasy. The ending of *Shadow* is rather esoteric though.

One is left with a sense that Storm's novels have yet to show the development that has recently become apparent in her short fiction. While all the post-Wraeththu novels are an enjoyable read and have their good points, none of them surpass the clarity of style and plotting displayed in the two early Wraeththu novels. Each book shows a fresh side to Storm's writing, but we are still waiting for another novel as well integrated as *Bewitchments*.

Fanzines: An Overview

Mark Nelson

Even the recluses living in the fannish backwaters of the BSFA are aware of The Great Argument. We annoy our *Mother Superior* by rarely contributing to *Matrix* and it's an even rarer moment when one of us leaves our shallow pools for the strong currents and eddies of Fandom proper. Who needs to walk to the fan critics, when they are willing to walk to us?

Joseph Nicholas exclaims that "The Day of the Fanzine Is Over!" to which Michael Ashley retorts that "There are plenty of fanzines around; but they're almost all rubbish". As ever, the truth of the matter won't be found at either of these two lofty peaks of criticism, but in the green pastures in the valleys below.

Yet if the collection of fanzines in front of me is the fruits of twelve months' pubbing by fans, then there is nothing else to do but agree with Nigel Richardson's comment in *Slubberdegullion* 3 that "The mouldy old sponge pudding that is (or was) 'fannish fandom' has long since passed its sell-by date. But it refuses to die. It looks as if 'fannish fandom' has sunk down to being nothing more than a sleepy club for people who want to belong to something, but don't want to do anything too strenuous and don't want to put a clean shirt on first". Is Fandom slowly wilting away as fans become more interested in other forms of fanactivity (conventions, pubmeets, net-hacking)? Is it because potential fans find nothing to attract them into Fandom? Or is it simply because fans can't be bothered to provide any input?

The Light Stuff 1 is not the start of a brave new movement in Fandom. It did not contain any great insights into fandom, nor fan writing of outstanding quality. But it was quite readable and there was material to comment on. The editor is a con-runner with an interest in filking who isn't sure if fanzines are interesting, but the editor is willing to "make the effort".

"I've often wondered just what it is people see in fanzines. I mean, I can see the point in newszines such as Dave Langford's *Ansible*, of serious discussion zines like *Reading Matters*, but the rest seem to be exercises in ego-inflation that just leave me cold. It seems that someone whose major hobbies seem to be conrunning and (oh horror!) filk singing cannot possibly be interested in real fannish activities and fanzines". Rhodri James wrote this in *The Light Stuff* 2.

Yet what response was there to this fanzine? One letter of comment. Only one fan could be bothered to send in a letter.

"This is the sort of thing that kills fanzines stone dead. I am not interested in slogging my guts out through several late evenings for such a total non-reaction. There is a chance I will anyway, because I'm stupid like that, but this is not the way to encourage the growth of fanzines. If you plant out some bulbs in the garden and then ignore them, there is a decent chance that you will end up with dead bulbs. Likewise, it's no sodding good telling people that they ought to write fanzines if you then pay no attention to the results. You just end up with dead fanzines, and people claiming that the art of fanwriting has gone the way of the dodo". Rhodri James, writing again in *The Light Stuff*.

And fans wonder what's happening to the next generation of fanzines? In *Slubberdegullion* 3, Nigel Richardson takes on and demolishes the concept that Fannish Fandom is, somehow, a

"special" Fandom that is intrinsically better than small-press publications and fanzines produced by other folk (or perhaps filk). At the most basic level, the only difference between fannish zines and other publications is that fannish zines contain references to other fannish zines. Or do they? Working my way through the pile of zines in front of me, I've become convinced that not only are most fans not interested in writing letters of comment to new zines, but most editors aren't particularly interested in other fanzines. Or maybe it's just that people aren't pubbing their ish.

Judith Hanna and Joseph Nicholas continue to plough ever onwards with *FTT*, a zine indifferent to the fandom that spawned it and that supplies most of the fans who respond to it. *Young Harry* [Bond] reviewed it, and Joseph's contention of the imminent death of fannish fandom, in *Pulp* 18 and makes a good job of it, even if *young Harry* is another who believes that fannish fandom is the pinnacle of small-press evolution, the thing that every publisher should be aiming at.

FTT is always an interesting read, yet despite its close links to fandom, you will have to look long and hard for any mention of fandom, for any mention of other fanzines. Is this because Joseph does not consider the present crop of fanzines to be worthy of comment? Or that a small nod towards fandom does not fit in with the more serious topics discussed in *FTT*? It is seemingly impossible to pick up a fanzine without a letter from Joseph discussing why fanzine fandom is in terminal decline; condemned to decay into nothing as the last remaining fans sail westwards. Joseph's obsession with the End of Fandom seems to date back three years. Despite the never-ending stream of letters on the topic, has he tried to do anything about it?

The exclusion of any mention of fandom is not specific to *FTT*, but is found in many current zines - in fact, common to almost all the zines I was given. This experimental observation fits in nicely with Joseph Nicholas' comment in *Matrix* 97 (January 1992) that "Unlike the fanzine fandom of the fifties, seventies and early eighties, the fanzines published today manifest no awareness that they are part of a shared community, or demonstrate any sense of collective endeavour".

Shipyard Blues has almost every ingredient you can think of to cook a rich fanzine. Rub together the intelligent use of fonts, excellent printing quality and good artwork to create a base that's a joy to look at. Mix in a collection of articles covering a range of topics (cathedrals, money and dreams in issue 7) and the distillation of sixty or so letters into a 20 page letter column and you have a zine to enjoy, a zine to read and a zine to write to. Yet there is something missing from the mixing bowl. There is little mention of other fanzines (well, none actually) and very little mention of fandom.

Conrunner continues on its mission to find the Perfect Convention by distributing articles on how to run conventions, issue 16 also contains the startling information that it isn't really a fanzine. Fanzines are something else. Both *The Light Stuff* 1 and *Conrunner* 16 contain material on Speculation, the 1991 Eastercon, differing accounts from differing viewpoints which make for an interesting comparison. D West contributes an article on distributing the profit from cons - making a mathematical blunder in the process. Still, he should be satisfied with mastery of one of the arcane arts.

Joseph Nicholas has a letter speculating that there is no longer a need for a large national convention, as different groups now have the proficiency to run their own cons. Will the Eastercons of the future be smaller affairs aiming at a more restricted audience? Perhaps Joseph has found his new letter-writing line here...

As well as *Conrunner*, Ian Sorensen also pubs *Bob?* a small friendly (if not furry) fanzine. This must be one of the few fanzines not to have printed a Joseph "end of Fandom as we know it" Nicholas letter. But if fandom's future is more fanzines like *Bob?* then it is on strong ground. The zine unfolds at a gentle pace with D West's "Famous Fannish Moments in Literature" neatly separating the zine into two distinct sections; the fannish section and the political section. Ian writes about how fandom has influenced his life, and the positive feedback from fandom into the real-world. Instead of fandom being full of people with no social skills, it was a way for Ian to develop his own social skills; a neat twist. With Ian's links with con-running people, *Bob?* may act as a link between fandom and the con-runners. In *Bob?*'s letter column, Vinç Clarke comments that con-runners seem to have lost sight of any purpose in running a con aside from the joy they gain from running it. Con-running for con-running sake. And many of the contributors to *Conrunner* seem to view fandom, and fans, with distaste, a necessary(?) evil of the job?

Perhaps they mean Michael Ashley, a man so evil, so, so cynical that he was allowed to join the Leeds Group at a tender age and where he has honed his skills to ruthless perfection. He's even rumoured to eat three con-runners a day for breakfast. The object of derision in *Saliromania* 6 is ...*To the Enchanted Convention*, the long awaited sequel to the fannish classic *The Enchanted Duplicator*. Michael considers the writing style to be pedestrian and the humour strained, even at its best. He dislikes the idealisation of fans as polite superbeings, always eager to help each other and interested only in seeking for bland, cosy comfort. He dislikes the lack of real emotions in this story which he describes as a vision of bland decency. Michael believes most fans live such pathetic nondescript lives that they will want to read this and try to act it out in their real lives.

Well, this is bad enough, but Michael believes that this portrayal of fandom is so idealised it will put off any non-fan who accidentally comes across it. Michael writes "If I'd seen this Willis and White effort, though, I'd have thought that fans were brain dead styleless nerds and got out quick". In short, Ashley considers it to be a waste of time. Hard hitting stuff. With its hard hitting, no punches pulled letter column, I suppose this is a real fan's fanzine. Despite this, it happens to be one of the best zines that I've been given to review. It's not bland, it's not polite. It's full of the emotion that Ashley believes is an integral part of fandom. This cynical look at fans and conventions is also found in *Slubberdegullion* 3. Is it something in the water?

If Michael Ashley is the young man's old man, then perhaps Ken Cheslin is an old man's young man. I think *Out House* 3 comes back to back with *A Child's Garden of Olaf* 11. *Out House* is full of people complaining about the good ol' days, when fanzines were fanzines and they all carried the secret missing ingredient that is now only known to one or two fans secreted away. It's all a rather sickly "things ain't what they used to be", even if Ken does print a list of all the fanzines he's received since the last issue; significantly, it appears that most of the ones he enjoyed were pubbed overseas. It even contains the mandatory letter by Joseph Nicholas. Turn to the other half of the zine, what do you find? A parody of old time fans lamenting the end of the good ol' days by Ted Tubb. These zines aren't much to look at and have little in the way of presentation. Yet where Ashley shouts and screams and denounces, Ted Tubb manages to make the same points by gentle satire. But, perhaps most significantly of all, Ken would rather publish his issue than go to a con.

Erg is published by another old-timer, and goes on and on and on. With the page count kept down to 24 pages every issue and regular "departments" on new books (5 pages), artwork in the pulps (2 pages) and "weird and wonderful aircraft" (2 pages), there is little room for an editorial, letters and extras to be put in. Highlight of the zine is always Terry's autobiography "Carry On, Jeeves", currently covering Terry's 1980 trip to North America; it only seems a few issues ago that he was writing about his war-time activity. Although far from mainstream, and too "departmentalised" for many people's tastes, I always find something of interest in *Erg*. Issue 116 contains a short piece on the UK's shortest lived SF magazine, *Future Times* and Terry's role in it.

Filklore is "The magazine of filk, music and Science Fiction" and is confirmation, as if it were needed, that a brave new fandom is splintering off from SFdom. We may sneer at the pages filled with new, exciting, filk songs and at the fan fiction. But can we claim that we are a superior life form? The filk fans are, at least, out there, doing it, and enjoying themselves.

How can we reconcile the existence of publications such as *Conrunner* and *Filklore* with Joseph Nicholas' claim in *Matrix* 97 (January 1992) that "there's no reason why filkers et al can't produce fanzines ... but the fact is that they don't". Or is it simply the case that these publications "are not really fanzines, you know". Not Fandom as we know it.

We conclude with a thought from Nigel Richardson: "Whatever may once have been worth saying about 'fandom' has been said, and said a million times. 'Our' fandom is all used up, exhausted, drained of life. All that remains to say is this: there's nothing left to argue about".

A Child's Garden of Olaf: Ken Cheslin, 10 Coney Green, Stourbridge DY5 1LA

Bob?: Ian Sorensen, 7 Woodside Walk, Hamilton ML3 7HY

Erg: Terry Jeeves, 56 Red Scar Drive, Scarborough YO12 5RQ

Filklore: 45 Clarendon Villas, Hove, Sussex BN3 3RE (send large SAE)

The Light Stuff: Rhodri James, 25 Wycliffe Road, Cambridge CB1 3DJ

Saliromania: Michael Ashley, 9 Blakeley House, Kelmore Grove, Woodside, Bradford BD6 2RF

Shipyards Blues: John D Owen, 4 Highfield Close, Newport Pagnell, Bucks MK16 9AZ

Slubberdegullion 3: Nigel E Richardson, 9 Windsor Green, East Garforth, Leeds LS25 2LG

**Novacon 22 Membership Update
As at 10th June 1992**

076 Steve Glover	101 Jason Grant	126 Ian Sorensen
077 Ray Bradbury	102 Graham Joyce	127 Rich Fox
078 Kevin Joyce	103 Peter Dunn	128 James Steel
079 Robert Day	104 Robert Whitmore	129 James Saville
080 Steve Grover	105 Al Johnston	130 Tim Illingworth
081 Geoff Cook	106 Paul Kincaid	131 Kathy Westhead
082 Darroll Pardoe	107 Maureen Speller	132 Steven Cain
083 Ros Pardoe	108 Ian Brooks	133 Eileen Weston
084 Marcus L Rowland	109 Barbara Kershaw	134 Peter Weston
085 Doreen Rogers	110 Mark Meenan	135 Christina Lake
086 Ethel Lindsay	111 Malcolm Reid	136 Peter Thompson
087 Moira Shearman	112 Karen Cross	137 Jim Barker
088 William McCabe	113 Sue Jones	138 Terry Broome
089 Jeff Rolfe	114 Susan Francis	139 Kay Allan
090 Vikki Lee France	115 Alison Tomkinson	140 Jean Maudsley
091 Steve Jeffery	116 Neil Tomkinson	141 Alison Cook
092 John Brosnan	117 Martyn Dawe	142 Iain Banks
093 Colin Langeveld	118 Sue Mason	143 B A Blackburn
094 Philip Bell	119 Debbi Moir	144 Nigel Robson
095 Chris Donaldson	120 Mike Moir	145 John Jarold
096 Paul Oldroyd	121 Linda Krawecke	146 Victoria Burns
097 Tony Morton	122 Brian Davies	147 Roelof Goudriaan
098 Freda Warrington	123 Lesley Ward	148 Lynne Ann Morse
099 Mike Llewellyn	124 Alice Kohler	149 Gwyneth Morgan
100 Geoff Winterman	125 Rob Meades	150 Rob Hansen

