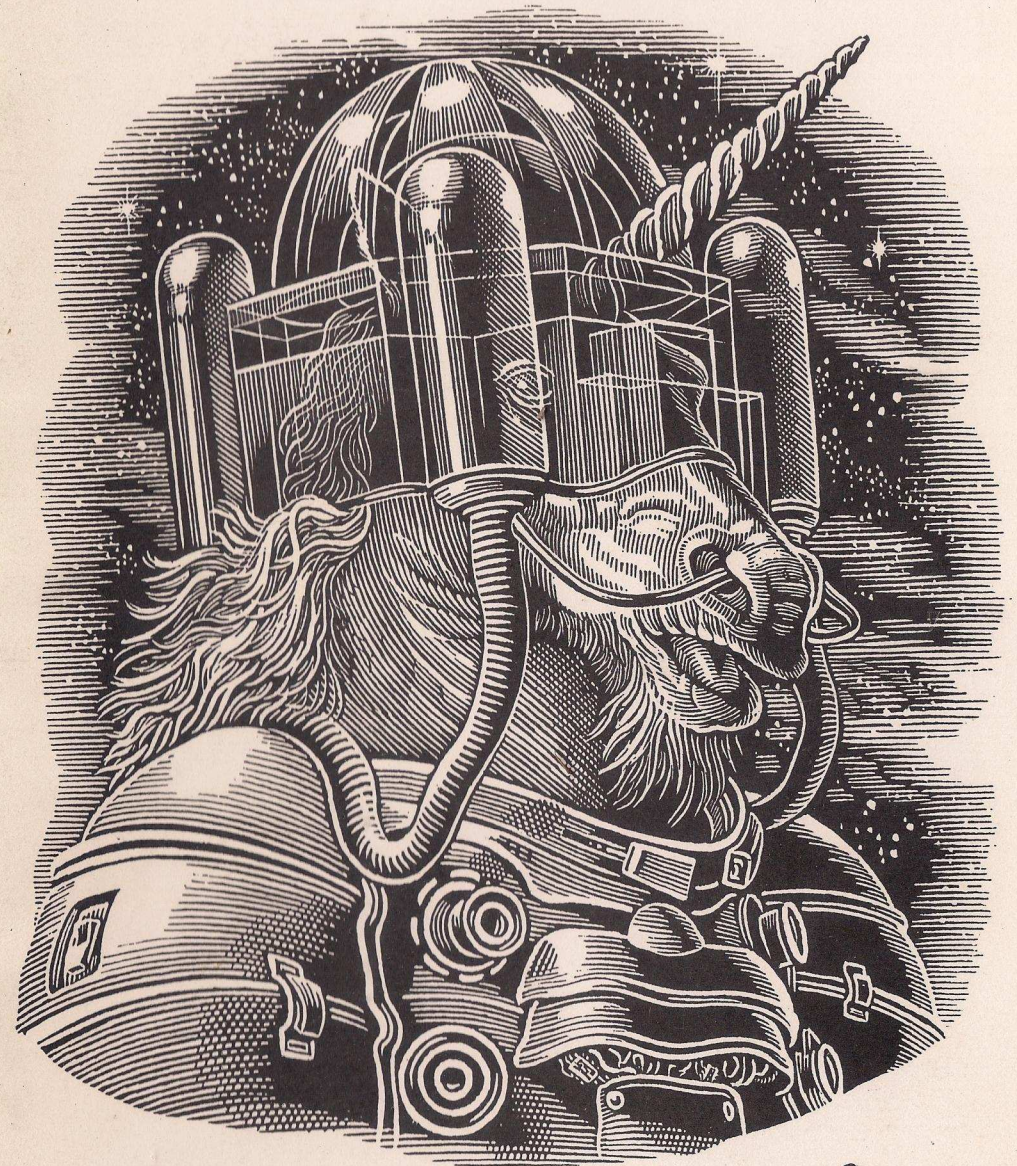


uniconze^{TRB}



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*Programme
Book*

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(...or, the bit the chairman forgot...)

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Uniconze

Unicon 11, New Hall, Cambridge
6-8 July, 1990

Welcome to Uniconze!

This is supposed to be the Chairman's bit. "Write an introduction for them," Gareth said. "Anything you like. Why not do a little piece about how the convention came about?" So here I am, wishing you all a very merry recovery from Uniconze (nobody's actually going to read this until well after the con, are they?), trying to think of how this whole mess started.

I suppose it all started over two years ago. I'd watched a whole pile of friends run Connote8 and thought "Hey, I'd like to do that." Run a convention, I mean. So I thought about it for a bit, and decided on trying my hand at a Unicon. The next step was to find a band of similarly inclined idiots, and as usual CUSFS came up with the goods. Nick, Graham, Richard, Alasdair, Paul, Julian and Douglas all failed to run away quickly enough, and the committee duly formed. Congealed, perhaps.

So it was that in Spring '88 that Uniconze launched itself on a world not so much unsuspecting as completely oblivious. Two years was a long time in advance to start a bid, we all thought, at least until we started hearing rumours of an Oxford bid. Thoughts of vying for a quater blue in varsity convention bidding were, alas, not to be, as Oxford Poly pulled out on the unfortunate Sponine (now to be run this December, which means I get to go to both it and Uniconze!). However, at about this time, our own problems were coming to light, causing no end of hassle to a committee still rather new to this game.

A certain amount of improvisation later we turned up to U-Nicon in Belfast, ready to battle against the apathy that comes when your prospective voters are pretty much guaranteed not to be able to afford a mainland con. To be honest, I'm not quite sure why I bothered getting so worked up. The only people who actually turned up to the bidding session were those who had come from the mainland in any case, and they voted for us unanimously, as did all seven postal voters. Never, in the field of human endeavour...

All proceeded smoothly into this year, with one major exception. Time. When the con committee first came together, we expected that several of us would be first year PhD students with plenty of time on our hands. Instead, we got a fistful of Part III and Diploma students with ludicrous workloads, and a couple of people with busy jobs away from Cambridge. This hit publications particularly hard, leading to all the trouble with late PRs that has plagued us. Eventually, increasing work pressures lead to Alasdair resigning, but not before Gareth had been added to the committee (without, I might, being much aware of what a con was! I hope the shock hasn't been too much). Even so, this Programme Book is coming to you as a very much eleven-and-a-halfth hour production. At the time when we should have started working on it, the entire committee, student and non-, came down with chronic work crises. I don't know about anyone else, but

I've started praying...

Actually, although I've successfully made the whole production sound like a complete disaster area, it isn't. It's that the disasters are the bits that make the best telling. In fact, putting this convention together has been great fun, and I hope that it will (have) prove(d) enjoyable for you too.

Rhodri James, Chairman.

The Committee

So who are the Uniconze committee? We asked them, and here are their own words...

Rhodri James, Chairman

Distinguishing marks: alternating read and blue shifts, high pitched "weeble" sounds. A tendency to disappear during daylight hours, ostensibly to "Harlow", has nothing to do with his general pallor.

Non-distinguishing marks: beard and glasses.

OK, so it's my own fault, I haven't got anyone else to blame. It's just that when I said "I'd like to run a convention" I never expected anyone else to believe me, never mind hold me to it. Now here I am, running round in a mad flat panic, trying to find the rest of the committee or even the convention for that matter. Sorry, what day did you say it is today? Oh dear, oh dear, I'm late...

Richard Crook, Memberships and Ops

Also non-distinguished by beard and glasses, but distinguishable by a tendency to sing random bits of Wagner opera when under pressure... Manic musician with occasional tendencies toward computing, who has ended up on the committee despite the best attempts of all others involved not to tell me about it. Now they wish they hadn't. Other specialities include pedentry, panicking, and irrelevant uses of the word "wombat". Holder of awards for the least-visible ever chairman of CUSFS (87-8), and even less visible Membership Secretary (88-9) (if possible). About to get a shock on finding out what conventions are really like, having only ever made it to two...

Graham Taylor, Treasurer

In the fateful autumn of 1987 I was approached by Rhodri [*Lies! Slander! -RMJ*] and asked if I was interested in being on a Unicon committee. "Hey, this sounds fun" I naively thought. At first everything was fine and the money flowed freely in. But slowly the meetings started getting longer and more frequent. Then people started asking me for money and to do more and more time-consuming things for them. Slowly but surely Uniconze started to take over my life. As July approached I was rapidly losing control. So be warned - Unicon running really does screw you up. Just say no.

Julian Todd, Publicity

So excellent at publicity that this is being written by someone else... beard, hang-gliding, caving, mathematics, computers, budding author with an enormous pile of Interzone rejection slips.

Nick Haines, Secretary

\$ more bio

April 1987 - held at knifepoint until I would sign a nomination form. Apparently they always pick on first years.

May 1987 - elected Secretary of CUSFS. They say it's an easy job.

June 1987 - entered pit of despond.

December 1987 - Joined Uniconze committee. Can't be any more work than CUSFS, surely.

April 1988 - Held a first-year at knifepoint until he would sign a nomination form.

May 1988 - Free at last! I suppose I should look at Uniconze soon.

June 1989 - Uniconze? Still a year to go. Loads of time. Put it off.

June 1990 - Aaaarrgh!

\$

Gareth Rees, Publications

I was an unsuspecting first-year at Cambridge and I had never been to an sf convention when I was asked to join the committee of Uniconze. "Why Not?" I thought naïvely to myself. "Can't involve much work, can it?"

However, there *were* moments of fun, and working for a convention did encourage me to get out into the world of conventions and fans to meet people and drink beer and do all the strange things that fans do. However, it has occurred to me recently that I used to read sf...

What I do know now is: don't join a convention committee unless you're certifiably insane.

Douglas Reay, Programming

The chairman cornered me like a well trained sheep dog.

"Douglas, you want to write 100 words on your self, don't you?"

"100 words! Be serious. What's there to say? I pretend to study physics and philosophy. I can be recognised by my excess of beard. I like cider."

"You could mention your so called puns and horrible humour."

"Horrible? What about the game of killer where I used a poison umbrella and a flight of ICBMs to destroy Cambridge?"

"Precicely."

Paul Treadaway, General Dogsbody

Another lazy so-and-so who hasn't handed in his 100 words, so I'm sitting here at 3am making something up for him. Busy computer scientist, ex-geologist, comic fan, provider of the videos at Uniconze.

Alasdair Grant, ex-committee member

Honorary mention here for Alasdair, mainly to fill up this tiny gap at the bottom of the page. This person knows more about more different sorts of computers than any other human being on earth. He also contributed very usefully to early Uniconze publications, hampered by the dreaded Computer Service (renowned worldwide for their Big Brother impersonation).

Barrington J Bayley

Vivid Visions

The thing that struck me about the first Bayley novel I ever read was the colours. The writing was so energetic that I could see everything happening in vivid, fluorescent colours in my mind's eye. Many years and many books have passed since then, and still I get that same visual kick out of every Barry Bayley. Nothing else is ever remotely the same.

Bayley is the sort of writer who packs so many ideas into his books that you find them wriggling around on the floor, as it were, brightly coloured things that have fallen out of the plot for your amazement. Who other than Barry Bayley would ponder about the robotic spirituality (*The Soul of the Robot*)? Who else could produce a multidimensional theory of time so dazzling that it seems to work (*The Fall of Chronopolis*)? Who else... the list seems endless.

The man himself is as colorful as his creations, as you'll see. He shot to infamy a few years ago with a successful court case against a publisher that was hailed as a great victory for the rights of writers. Unfortunately the publishers went bankrupt before paying out the expenses awarded against them, leaving Barry to pay the legal costs himself. This was not good news, for all that the whole of fandom rallied round.

Whatever the reasons, I do recommend Barry Bayley the author. Just sit back and watch the colours, man.

Rhodri James

What we should read, see, write and think:
publish and be sent to hell!

Something seems to be happening. I can remember when it was a crime to bring William Burroughs books into the country. I can remember the famous Lady Chatterly trial, when the judges, need I repeat once more, suggested to the jury that they might not like their servants to read such a book. People were proudly sporting copies of the prosecuted but available Penguin edition. My own reaction was merely that as a novelist Lawrence had something as a poet; but that as a poet he was pretty rosey, with the exception of a few notable pieces, and I would have liked to see the jury echo the mob in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*: "Burn him for his bad verses!"

We thought we'd more or less left censorship behind, didn't we? The fusty smell of literary repression had been blown away. Every cosy corner newsagent had a shelf of magazines whose covers showed blowsy women frantically masturbating. Town councillors raged impotently against lesbian love scenes in their cinemas. Yet even then there was a worm in paradise. For were not Mary Whitehouse and friends praying in the corridor outside the court-room, asking God to send a young man to prison for offending their religious feelings? What an orgasm of gratification there must have been when sentence was passed!

Could Mrs. W have known that is digging up one of England's thousands of

forgotten laws she would be the future ally of those willing to bomb and assassinate, driving a Booker prize-winner into hiding in fear of his life, having offended adherents of an alien religion, and that in a way baffling to the average Englishman. (Still, let us not go rushing to compare Islamic Barbarism with Western tolerance. The Muslims will at least give you a clean death. Mrs. Whitehouse's lot when they had the power to do so, would have burned you alive in the town square, herding the neighbours from their houses to watch at the point of a pike.)

And more recently one has been able to sense a slow, steady reversion to the attitudes of the pre-1960s, in matters of censorship as well as in everything else. Custom is changing, and where custom goes the law is not far behind. The girls on the display racks no longer masturbate, only display themselves with vacant stares or forced leers. More podromic, perhaps, is the half-hearted acquiescence in some political and even literary quarters that the demands of the People of the Book be satisfied, and Mr. Rushdie's novel be banned to prevent trouble.

What targets might religious fanatics have in mind next? One can imagine an entire rectification of extant literature. What about Michael Moorcock's *Behold the Man*, which depicts the historical Christ as a sexually inadequate neurotic from the 20th century? What about William Burroughs' *The Naked Lunch*, which has the Prophet drinking in a bar and trying to pass doubtful cheques, ordering one more drink before going home to write another sura? Will it again be a crime to import this novel into the country?

The justification for censorship is that certain material will cause some people to think, feel and act in an undesirable way. (Curiously, in liberal countries the would-be censors concentrate their ire on sexually stimulating material, the sexual instinct, because of its power and insistence, exerting a peculiar horror upon the minds of those wishing to mould society in their own image—only belatedly, as an afterthought, did Mrs. W and colleagues widen their objections to include works revelling in sadistic violence.) Opponents of censorship sometimes argue that this is not so—a mistaken tactic, because it probably is so. We are all, in varying degrees, influenced in what we will permit ourselves to do and even think, and it is silly to claim that books, films and videos are uniquely without influence.

And the libertarians themselves can usually find something they would prefer to see out of the way. I was struck by the shocked reaction of a visitor to my house, an old friend, who happened to see an issue of the comic 2000AD lying about. In those days some of its strips verged towards the banned horror comics of the fifties. "Barry, you shouldn't let your kids read stuff like this," he said seriously. I would not have thought him a 'Square' person—his sexual preferences, at any rate, later led to his choosing suicide before imprisonment, an event which gives me a personal reason for disliking our laws on sexuality. And while I naturally did not agree that I was a bad parent, I, even I, a Bohemian of the old school, have felt displeased with my neighbour for allowing his very young daughters to sit up past midnight watching video-nasties like *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. "They should have been in bed getting enough sleep to be ready for school," I would say huffily next day, noting the dark bags under their eyes and wondering if the more sickening and suggestive of this type of material does not constitute incitement to murder.

There is a certain circuit judge who take this line of thought to the logical end,

dealing in the harshest way with porn merchants, but showing leniency to an actual sex murderer, seeing him as the hapless mind-controlled victim of the 'strangling video' he claimed to have been watching. And who knows, considering the mental quality of some of our enfranchised fellow-citizens, he may be right.

So there it is. A dilemma. Such material *can* wreak harm to society. Yet we authors, we untouchable literary types, must be free to write and publish anything whatever. To plumb the depths of human depravity (in the end even Einstein wished he had become a plumber) without let, hindrance or comeback.

There's only one answer to it. *Punish instead the people who read the filth we write.*

And what of the other reason for censorship—offending people? Yes—offend them all to perdition! Else they'll have our heads on the block before you can look round! So here it is—public suicide attempt Number One—

THE PROPHET PEDDLED HIS ARSE IN THE BAZAARS!

May it be proclaimed from loudspeaker vans in the streets of Bradford!

Come on then, you scimitar-wielding lunatics. Make me famous. Cost the taxpayer millions for my protection. Make Uniconze the first sf convention subject to jihad.

Bang goes my holiday in Saudi Arabia. (Exits stage right, runs for cover).

Barrington Bayley



Ian Watson

The Watson Experience

One day in the never-ending dreamtime of sf a fan who had tried his hand at writing picked up an issue of *New Worlds* and it ran a story called 'Thy Blood Like Milk' by an Ian Watson, whoever he was. As he read on, the fan was soon thinking, 'bloody hell, this bloke's good'. The story was written at full tilt. It had pace, energy and freshness. It got better and better, stronger and stronger, then reserved its strongest blow for the end and wallop, left you feeling stunned.

Yes, I was that fan. But who was this Johnny-come-lately, this Ian Watson, breezing along to outwrite everybody else around? I got a better idea on my next dip into the Watson Experience, a novel called *The Embedding*. And what was *The Embedding* about?

Most of you probably know what *The Embedding* is about. As its title suggests, it's about something pretty queer. Something to do with language, and intensified consciousness. As I read it (and once I'd started I could think of nothing else) there stole over me that curious mixture of elation and despondency on encountering a piece of work far surpassing one's own capacities (not a state of feeling entirely new to me, of course). Previously I would have dismissed the theme of *The Embedding* as too difficult to handle convincingly. Yet here was the difficult being done before my very eyes, with seeming ease (which never means that it actually was easy), and yes, convincingly.

After that they've just kept on coming. The Martian Inca, another tour de force and companion piece to *The Embedding*, dealing as it does with enhanced human consciousness. The Garden of Delights, an ouroboros of a novel whose final revelation wipes out its own beginning—and so on, a stream of works which blow to the winds any suggestion that sf is tired or worked out, proving instead its regenerative powers.

Or let me offer a citation for story-telling skill on the smaller scale, as in 'To the Pump Room with Jane', 'Sitting on a Starwood Stool', or especially 'Programmed Love Story', an O Henry-like tale which wraps together computer wizardry, astrology, personality oversteering, and Japanese social values, all, believe it or not, in less than two thousand words, so perfect an example of the short story that it ends by mocking its own perfection, and yet still leaves us moved.

So throw your typewriter up the chimney, Bayley. The guys who can do it properly have come to stay.

Maybe the answer to who Ian Watson is is contained in a volume I have not seen, from a speciality publisher, *The Book of Ian Watson*, which according to Bruce Sterling contains "Many demented short stories; also essays, polemics, autobiography, even a play... a chummy insider's look at his (Watson's) thought processes." I must admit I'm curious about this one. Why wasn't it called *The Book of Being Ian Watson*?

Well, some time later I did get to know this Watson character, and oh, terror! He can talk just the way he writes!

And for all I know—it wouldn't surprise me—he can write just as fast as he talks.

Barrington Bayley

The Surgeon General

Only have time to snatch a quick breakfast this morning. Sort of kedgeree, of cereal and fish. A swig of water. Filtered, not Perrier. Then off to work. Guess it'll be a busy day; and it is.

First patient presents shortly after seven-thirty. Hardly have time to sharpen my scalpels. This is a routine abortion. Seems a well-developed foetus; could have grown up to be quiet healthy. The mother also dies after a while. Basically, till after the abortion, I wasn't totally sure that the patient was a female. Communication between surgeons and patients is sometimes fraught. Need to rely on guess-work and experience. Though of course I suspected so from her swollen sides and swagger. What else could she be demanding by presenting thus?

Abortions always involve radical hysterectomy. Which is why patients always succumb. Still, the population has to be controlled.

Spend time taking tissue samples and doing blood tests.

Next: a major hip dislocation. Hate trying to deal with these; I'm not a bone-setter. But I manage as best I can. By giving physiotherapy manually I manage to keep the patient moving around for, oh, fifteen minutes, maybe twenty, before leaving him in recovery. Pat, pat, pat. His shattered pelvis responded, though his legs still dragged. I'll come back to him later. He won't exactly be running away.

Most of my patients seem to have very high blood pressure. Also, there's an increasing tendency towards violence on their part. One tries to bite me.

Especially when taking tissue samples there's always a risk of infection too. So I have to swallow pills every fortnight to purge myself of the squirming white things in my stools. Occupational hazard.

A lull about midday, so I volunteer myself for ambulance service and rush several extra patients back to my operating room. This leads on to dissection. Post-mortems bore me. Prefer to leave that to others.

Next, a real challenge: plastic surgery, a complete bodily reworking.

Relax with a couple of simple amputations.

I attempt a head transplant but this isn't successful. So I tackle some more much-needed abortions during the afternoon. Back in recovery my hip case is displaying remarkable tenacity and has moved himself out of the full sunshine. I put him back. Have to be able to keep an eye on him.

At last dusk arrives. The orderly looks annoyed as he clears the lawn. Admittedly, a few more patients than usual! His wife looks daggers, but she hardly understands surgery. She dresses a lobster for dinner and doesn't allow me a single scrap. She cuts up some fresh liver, though. So did I during the day; so did I.

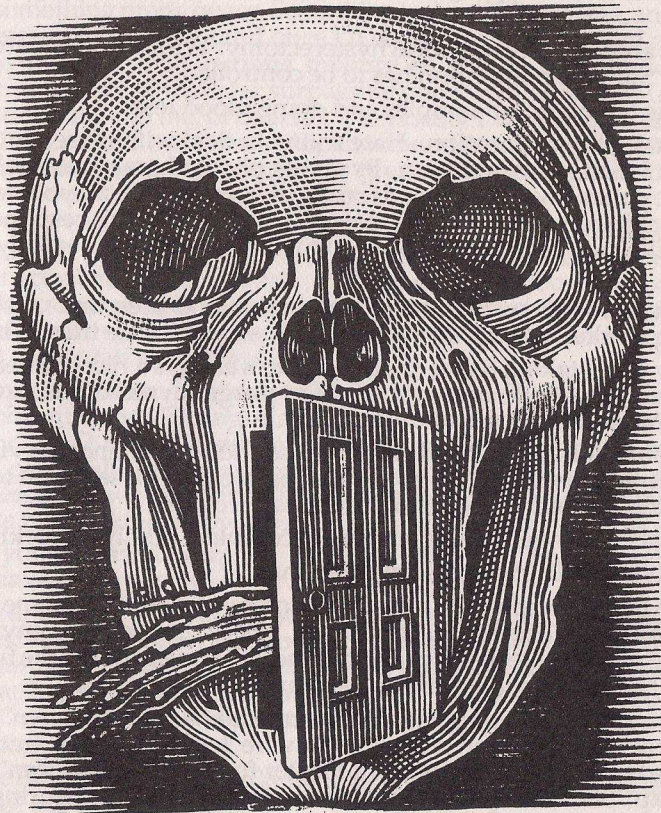
This is bigger liver. Pig's. Lip-licking good.

I'm tired out. So presently the orderly carries me up to bed and makes love to me after his fashion while I stretch out beside him.

The orderly's starting to look so old. Lots of lines around his eyes. Could do with some cosmetic surgery himself. How about a little nip and tuck here and there on his face.

No, he's too big to operate on. Yawn. Busy day tomorrow.

Ian Watson



The Programme

Rather than reproduce the entire programme pullout here, which struck us as rather wasteful and boring if nothing else, we thought we'd provide some longer notes on just a few of the items. Here they are.

The Cocktails Workshop and Wincon 2 Launch Party

Strange as it may seem, this is a serious item. Well, partially. The general idea is to create interesting and novel (and preferably drinkable) cocktails with the supply of alcohol provided. Paul Treadaway and Ivan Towlson will be applying their massed ingenuity to the task, and everyone is welcome to join in and experiment. There may be a nominal charge.

The event is being sponsored by the Wincon II committee, and also marks the official launch their convention. They will be explaining what they intend to do with Wincon II during the course of the workshop, and will be taking memberships.

Masquerade

Some form of costume competition is rapidly becoming traditional at the Unicon, and we intend Uniconze to be no exception to this trend. The Masquerade is open to all members of the con, and it's never too late to enter. Costumes can be put together at a moments notice (I seem to remember The Luggage on one occasion being something of a last minute entry!).

If you think you might be interested, come along to the Masquerade Workshop being run by Kate Solomon and James Steel. Kate and James are both experienced costumers in their different styles, and will be on hand to advise on how best to put ideas into practise as well as describing their own experiences. Material and sewing kit will be available.

Alternative Technologies

This is the sort of programme item that spontaneously generates very late at a good party. You know, everyone is sitting around too tired to go to sleep or get any more food, when someone says "I wonder how you would actually do X?" John Dallman is a past master of this sort of thing, and will be cheerfully firing "serious scientific ideas" into the air and seeing what theories his floating panel can come up with. Share and enjoy.

Storytelling

A venerable Jomsborg tradition, this. The assembled company gather round in a candle-lit room to tell each other stories. Everyone can have their turn, telling a complete story or, more frequently, telling part of a story and letting someone else pick it up and continue it some more, until finally it is over. Usually someone else will then think of some more! Douglas Reay will be leading proceedings, setting up the candles and keeping order.

Film '90

What do you think of the SF and Fantasy film releases of this last twelve months? Tim Broadribb, Rob Meades, Andy Morris, Huw Walters and Paul Treadaway will be giving their verdicts, spreading critical mirth and mayhem far and wide in search of a film they all liked. Does Back To The Future 2 create more time travel paradoxes than it solves? Is Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles faithful to its original, and should it be? Why would anyone cast Arnold Schwarzenegger as the hero of a film of a Phillip K. Dick story? All these questions and more will be completely ignored in the search for perfect SF.

Skeptics

We are fortunate in having Wendy Grossman of the *British and Irish Skeptic* at Uniconze to present some skeptical views of the Paranormal. As former editor of that magazine, Wendy has had a great deal of experience with examining unusual theories of UFOs, ESP, spoon bending and all manner of strange goings on, and will be talking about how these have stood up to investigation. An interesting topic, one close to many fans' hearts one way or another.

Art Workshop

This item is something of a departure from the norm for Uniconze. Guest Artist Bill Sanderson will be running this workshop, intended for all budding artists and illustrators, with a view to sharing his experiences as a professional as well as giving advice on the how and why of art. We hope that this item will prove valuable to anyone thinking of taking up SF or Fantasy art in any way.

Book Buying

This is the sort of programme item that people keep saying will never work, and which always do. At first sight a group discussion on how to evaluate the condition of a secondhand book may seem like an hour of stating the obvious, but to a collector the state of the cover, the edition, the age and so on can make a considerable difference to what they consider to be a reasonable price. Ken Slater has had many years experience of bookselling, and will be acting as our Fount Of All Knowledge. This item should be of interest to all fans!

Filking

We don't have a specific room set aside for filking at Uniconze. We don't have a specified time for it to start. We know perfectly well that it's going to do its own thing at its own time, so if we just say that the Real Ale Bar will be available in the late evening we can rest assured that suddenly a pile of these odd guitar-wielding fans will appear and start a filk.

What is filk? Well, it's a misprint for "folk". It's the musical tradition of fandom. It's a strange mix of styles from classical to rock and back again by a different route. It's an interesting way to spend an evening. Try it and see.

Floating Panels

You may have noticed a few programme items on the pullout are labelled as being "Floating Panels." This is the result of wanting to have programme items *with* an audience, not *at* it, and what it means is that the discussion will be run with a "floating panel" whose members will be rotated with fans from the audience at regular intervals. This way if you feel strongly about a subject, you can have a chance to air your views the way you want to, and not just be stuck listening all the time. There is still a panel chairman to stop it turning into a rabble, but we hope that his or her job will largely consist of inviting the audience to take a more active part in the proceedings.

Space Travel: Where Has It Gone?

The Cambridge University Space Society will be doing a presentation on the past and future of space travel in fact rather than fiction. Here is their preview of that item.

In 1969, NASA had just succeeded in putting men on the Moon. They put forward a plan for how to build on this achievement. If it had been accepted, and had worked, Man would have walked on Mars in 1982. In 1984, a permanent Moonbase with 50 inhabitants would have been established. There would currently be over 200 people living and working in space. As it is, the Moon has not been touched since Apollo. The Space Shuttle actually carries a much smaller payload than the old Saturn 5. Even a permanent base in low Earth orbit is still 5 or 6 years off. What happened? Was space travel a silly idea to begin with, only used to bolster national pride?

Some say that the problem was political. Once the USA had won the space race, people lost interest, and went back to spending their money on other things. Economics certainly plays a part, with the great world depression of the 70s and 80s putting a damper on all public expenditure.

Others claim that the problem lay in the space agencies themselves. As many authors pointed out, the sensible way to do things was to start with a good launcher, then to build a space station, and only after this to go off exploring. In fact, the reverse has been nearer the truth!

How do things look now? Have we learnt from our mistakes? Could space travel be approaching a renaissance? Many things have changed. Computers and new materials have revolutionised aerospace. The superpowers have lost their monopoly on space. Remote sensing and satellite communications are actually profitable. Twenty years of experience has made rockets cheaper, gentler, and more reliable. Twenty years of (mainly Russian) missions have given us priceless information on how man can live in zero gravity. And now people are again talking of permanent Moonbases and missions to Mars.

Is Space back? Come and decide!

Paul Francis

Dave Langford

An Appreciation of Sorts

It has to be said that Dave Langford showed promise of greatness at a very early age by being Welsh. Not that this reflects any bias on my part, you understand, it is simply that the Welsh have always been good at being great. The only reason that this is not more widely recognised is that the rest of the world is jealous.

For whatever reason, Dave secured fame and respectability by reading Physics at a certain Other University before blowing up selected portions of Oxford, thus avoiding the mistake of blowing the place up *before* finishing your degree. Students may wish to take note. Even a brief spell as Scientific Civil Servant at Aldermaston, one of the worst paid jobs in the known universe, failed to dent the Langford charm.

An early interest in SF rapidly developed into fully-fledged fandom, and Dave's various fanzines quickly became eagerly awaited treats for the discerning fan. *Twll Ddu*, *Cloud Chamber*, *Ansible* of blessed memory and *Sglodion* are all excellent 'zines, showing their author's sharp wit, keen eye for the absurd and critical knowledge. This isn't just my opinion; international fandom has awarded Dave numerous Fanwriting Hugos, and for once I agree with the voting masses. Still more amazingly, the writer of these fannish masterpieces actually turns out to be a nice person to talk to, virtually uniquely amongst the big names in fandom. Just buy him a drink and find out.

This would be quite good enough for most people, but not Dave. He is a pro as well as a fan. Somehow or other he manages to squeeze in a variety of magazine columns, all of the same high quality – the disappearance of his *Critical Mass* review column from the pages of *White Dwarf* was the main reason I stopped reading that no-longer-august journal. Then there are the short stories, the novels, the collaborations – the man never seems to stop! Pick up anything of his, be it fiction, criticism or general natter, and you won't regret it.



Cuisine Unauthentique: Dave Langford

"Tell me what you eat and I will tell you what you are," said famous food junkie Anthelme Brillat-Savarin in 1825 (only I gather he said it in French). Looking at my friends, I doubt that this means of psychoanalysis is reliable.

Chris Priest, for example, moans to me about his local Chinese restaurants, on the ground that they're too good. "I like Chinese *junk food*," he wails, "the sort of dishes they never actually made in China, things like instant chop suey..." I daren't ask if he's also addicted to those greasy chunks of fried pork coated in bullet-proof layers of calorific batter with thin red sugary slime drooled all over the starch-laden result, the whole mess whimsically called "sweet and sour".

This came to mind when the 1987 World SF Convention asked for a contribution to its planned fannish cookbook. A little essay on unauthentic cuisine sounded just the thing, and if a few other things hadn't got in the way (like putting together a 40,000 word fan room booklet all by myself – more fool I for volunteering) I'd probably have contributed more than the recipe for "Sinister Langford Apple Chutney" therein.

For example, when Hazel and I feel all upmarket and sufficiently demented to have more than one course at dinner, it's usually the work of a moment to nip round to the local Asian grocer's (mysteriously called "Eurofoods") for some big squidgy avocado pears. This fruit is almost my sole concession to the weird notion that raw green vegetable things are in fact suitable for human consumption.

Well, everyone knows how to cut them up (an axe is not advised), to balance the hard bit in a bottle of water and to overrun the house with tall weedy avocado plants each having exactly two leaves at the end of a long naked bumpy stem... but the eating part involves decisions. Hotels usually fill the unfortunate avocado with a curdled pink mess, studded with shrimp which have not led cleanly lives. The alternative tends to be some species of French dressing, which as far as this picky household is concerned Does Not Quite Work in the unique post-structural context of the avocado. Hence the development in our mighty research laboratories of...

Hazel's Stupendously Unauthentic Non-Vinaigrette For Avocados

Take:

A lot of soy sauce.

A lot of sesame oil.

About one-sixth of a lot of vinegar.

About one-fifteenth of a lot of Lea & Perrin's Worcester Sauce.

Mix together in any order and with any variations suggested by prejudice or experience... shaken, not stirred. Put in a bottle or something, and give one last vigorous shake at the table. (This offers incentives for good discipline in the careful replacement of bottle tops. Either that or it offers an interestingly brown-spotted ceiling, like ours.) Pour quite a lot into the hollow of your half-avocado. Sensuously carve out drenched gobbets of avocado flesh with a spoon. Put in mouth, masticate, etc. Why do recipes always stop just before the interesting bit? You never even get three asterisks and a new paragraph starting with

"Afterwards".)

The stuff stays usable for strange aeons, except when avocados are in season, and can even seem to improve with time. Try with various grades of soy sauce, from Dilute Tea to Creosote. There is probably no real substitute for the Worcester sauce, but fans with cosmic minds might prove me wrong.

My thoughts on green things remind me of the conceptual salad which my old pal Martin Hoare and I have elaborated from time to time, when we're in pubs far away from the potential threat of a kitchen. Never actually created in cold blood, the Langford/Hoare salad is a thought experiment in the avoidance of "rabbit food". Both of us were heavily conditioned against this at university, thanks to a college chef who believed that limp lettuce had inadequate protein value and preferred to beef it up with some nice meaty slugs and greenfly.

If it were ever to emerge from its ideal niche among the Platonic Forms, this salad would very probably include grated cheese, cold boiled new potatoes, hard-boiled eggs, sliced red and green peppers, lumps of avocado (a hot point of contention—Martin suspects this of being rabbit food), chopped onions of various kinds, radishes, sweetcorn, garlic, chives, and some suitable admixture of cold cooked meat or fish... Perhaps it would be easier to list the items which would *not* feature, such as lettuce, tomato, cucumber, olives, mayonnaise of any description, vinegar in greater than homeopathic doses, or any of the horrible sticky proprietary messes which are called salad dressing. ("Ay e," said a sceptical Macbeth, "in the catalogue ye go for salad dressing...")

STOP PRESS: Martin now claims to have consumed the ideal salad, but carping critics (me) suspect that there is a degree of unauthenticity which violates even our fuzzy definition of salad. "It was great," Martin enthuses: "We made it from a pound of beef and a lot of onions and nothing else."

Sometimes one does need to abandon these dizzy theoretical speculations, narrow one's focus from its habitual cosmos-wide scope, and tackle the problem of giving visitors some actual food. Hazel usually falls back on the all-purpose roast recipe whereby you take a chicken (or equivalent mass of pork, beef, lamb or honey-smear peacock stuffed with larks' tongues and fattened dormice) and put it in the oven for hours and hours, while I try to remember dear old Professor Kurti's differential equation which gives the precise cooking time provided only that you have a perfectly spherical joint. But occasionally my excuses about inability to cook fail me, and I sulkily try to remember the formula for...

Chris Priest Memorial Chinese Casseroled Thing

(as never actually thrust upon Chris, but see my opening paragraphs)

This is guaranteed to be as authentically Oriental as Charlie Chan, the insidious Dr Fu-Manchu, or my pal Martin when he had jaundice. You need something suitable for lengthy cooking, e.g. quite a lot of cheap nasty belly pork (remove any fat, curly tails or nose-rings), or a similar amount of better pork when you feel solvent, modulating into stringy chicken should you feel bored with pork, or kosher, or whatever. The last time I cooked this, some 2 1/2 pounds of pork filled four people very full. You also need:

1 enormous onion (actually optional).

1 1/2 cups of Unauthentic Sauce. This is made by looking up Kenneth Lo's classic sweet-sour recipe in one of his cookbooks, which then reminds me of all the ways in which I do it differently (i.e. wrong). In the following, a "tbsp" is a tablespoon and a "tsp" a teaspoon. These are not exact SI units: for the rigorous, I've consulted Katharine Whitehorn's deeply cheering book of desperate improvisations, *How To Survive In The Kitchen*, and she says that 1 tbsp equals 4 tsp, while 1 cup equals 5 tbsp of flour, sugar etc. but 10 tbsp of liquid (since flour protrudes obscenely to form a "rounded tablespoon" while liquids are perforce confined to a humble "level tablespoon" unless possessing staggering viscosity or amazing surface tension). 1 cup is about a quarter of a pint, a pint being 20 fluid ounces (if you wish to use the puny short measure on non-Imperial pints, do your own conversion), and can I please skip the metric equivalents of all these? Thank you for this small kindness.

Where was I? Ah, the sauce....

2 tbsp brown sugar.

1 tbsp cornflour (or less, and it's optional anyway).

4 tbsp water or, better, chicken stock.

2 tbsp orange or pineapple juice (in juiceless times I have been known to throw in some crushed pineapple instead).

2 tbsp soy sauce.

2 tbsp medium-dry sherry. The technical term for this variety is, "For the love of God, Montresor!"

2 tbsp vinegar.

2 tbsp tomato puree. Tomato sauce may be substituted, but don't let the People's Republic hear about it. If you compromise by whizzing a tomato in the electric blender, the result will be more dilute than real pure—reduce the water/stock content as suggested by sheer guesswork. NB: I'm switching to tsp units now. This warning might seem needless and fussy, but I remember the chutney I made using tablespoons rather than teaspoons of powdered cloves. It was good for applying to hollow teeth.

1 tsp sesame oil.

1/2 tsp chilli powder. (Or more. Or lots more.)

1/2 tsp five-spice powder.

Stir all sauce ingredients together until Godot arrives or obvious lumps have departed, whichever occurs first. Put meat in a suitable casserole with a lid, together with the chopped huge onion, which I have just decided is probably optional too. Pour on sauce, thrust into a coolish oven (Eminent authority in the form of K. Whitehorn says this means 225°F or 110°C, but I doubt that it's necessary for you to check this to 0.5° precision with a pyrometer) and leave to its own devices for say 4 hours. As the moment of truth approaches, have a look under the lid and—if the gooey parts seem a bit thin and runny—add more cornflour stirred into sherry. (Add some sherry anyway. Have fun.) Wait a few minutes more, serve with rice, and be sure to use a washable tablecloth.

One of the great secrets of unauthentic cooking is that most ingredients, all proportions and all cooking times are negotiable... so don't fret about precise chronology and amounts. This is one of those squidgy dishes which anyway never turn out the same twice running—largely because in spite of those

frighteningly scientific tbsps and tsps, one ends up (a) judging half the quantities by eye, and (b) throwing in interesting-looking extras for luck. Water chestnuts and cashews were both Good Ideas. Sugar-coated fennel seeds, Asian style, were agreed to be a mistake. (I'd actually been reaching for the next jar along. This sort of thing used to happen all the time when I worked with nuclear explosives.)

I think I'll skip the Langford pear wine recipe, since it may only work with the peculiarly vile and maggot-ridden pears produced by our garden, and winemaking technicalities are even more tedious than tbsps, and—the clinching argument—I've lost the bloody recipe anyway. It would, however, be unBritish to close without some vaguely booze-related items. The following have been tested on recent overnight visitors, and provide ideal conversation pieces at breakfast. They can also be eaten, on toast....

Really Quite Authentic Post-Party Welsh Rarebit

This comes with an epigraph from Don Marquis ("the bilge and belch of the glutton welsh as they smelted their warlock cheese / surged to and fro where the grinding floe wrenched at the headlands knees") and shows how Britons can bring themselves to consume beer even for breakfast, with the aid of:

Cheese, the delicate variety known here as "mousetrap", i.e. case-hardened old cheddar from the fridge, and any and all wizened, dried-up bits left over from last night's party food. Only good cheese is *verboden*.

Black pepper, to taste.

An egg. Maybe two if you're making an awful lot.

Bread.

A little bitter beer (if none is available fresh, there are the dregs of glasses and bottles from that party, and after that you can start shaking and smelling abandoned cans to verify that they contain some stale beer but have not been adapted as impromptu ashtrays. As you see, we're talking real sleaze here).

Grate all the cheese and moisten the resulting flakes with the quantity of beer considered to be "enough", producing muck of sufficiently stiff consistency that it can be spread on toast but will not flow off it while cold. (Think "slime mould".) Stir in either the tediously separated yolk of the egg—which is marginally more authentic—or the egg's entire contents: in either case, this is what keeps the spread from flowing merrily off the toast when it is cooked. Slice and toast some bread; spread with goop; sprinkle with pepper etc. as desired; grill until brown and bubbly; eat. The first stage of this recipe will always produce more of the gooey mixture than you expect, even when you know what to expect; but people are generally happy to carry on eating the result until supplies fail. "God help us, for we knew the worst too young."

It was famous Aussie fan Judith Hanna who forced the invention of this succulent slime, one groan-laden morning after a Langford party. She started converting odd remnants of cheese, milk and things into a sort of breakfast fondue. After long stirring and perspiring comments of "I'm sure this is the right way to do it," she found herself with a revolting viscous mass which squatted sullenly in the pan and refused point-blank to dissolve in an orderly fashion into

the thin steaming pus which surrounded it. Before starting again and coming up with unauthentic rarebit as above, we poured the results of Judith's alchemy into an unloved tree-stump which had persistently refused to stop sending up shoots. It died within a month.

Meanwhile, for those with a sweet tooth, there is always...

Langford Patent Juniper And Quinine Lemon Marmalade

The ingredients are even less rigorously quantitative than before:

Many lemons.

Quite a lot of white sugar.

Some water.

Some more water (solid phase).

The all-important MARINADE.

This is not a recipe for the faint-hearted. Our most recent batch of this marmalade was two years in the making. (You will need a spare corner in the freezer, by the way.) It is the marinade which makes the process such a prolonged one, since only a small amount of lemon can be properly treated at one time.

The marinade should be prepared in the six- or eight-ounce liquor glass of your choice; it consists of approximately one part of gin to four (or two, or six, or one; who am I to cramp your culinary style?) of a good proprietary tonic water. "Diet" tonic water will completely ruin the flavour, although the marmalade will probably turn out OK. Ice may be added, and one slice of lemon is then slid delicately into the glass.

(Americans sometimes seem puzzled by subtle allusions to tonic water. Soda water might be good enough for T.S.Eliot's foot-bath, but is *not* the same: you want the stuff which is or used to be flavoured with quinine. Throw away those malaria chills, and walk again.)

It is a well-known phenomenon, extensively documented by Charles Fort, that this marinade evaporates with startling swiftness. Quite soon the prepared lemon slice can be removed from your suddenly empty glass and dropped into a plastic bag in the freezer. It is now permissible to treat another slice... and so on while supplies of marinade ingredients hold out and the cook can remain upright.

An admixture of non-marinated lemon is permissible: our 1987 batch of this fine preserve gained additional, subtle flavour from the inclusion of (a) partially mildewed half-lemons discovered in the fridge after periods of slackness in marinade treatments; (b) lemon slices included with takeaway Indian meals, and thus interestingly flavoured with a soupçon of tandoori sauce; (c) country-of-origin labels accidentally left sticking to the occasional lemon rind.

When "enough" has been accumulated—meaning that the plastic bag is full, the previous batch has run out, or one's spouse is complaining loudly about lack of space in the freezer—the final preparations are easy. All the lemon shards are thawed, pips and things (especially moving things) removed, and the whole lot chopped thinly (perfectionist method) or shoved brutally through a mincer (my method).

It all goes in a big pan with the amount of water indicated above, being as little as will see you through the next stage. Bring to the boil and simmer for an hour or two, stirring with lackadaisical grace, until the bits are soft. During this period you are free to realize that you should have shut the doors and windows, since the penetrating smell acts as a long-range lure for enormous kamikaze wasps. Add *exactly* the amount of sugar specified above... no, I tell a lie, we just tip in more sugar until it tastes "right", meaning not too bitter to be eaten thinly spread on the substrate of your choice. Another half-hour of simmering and it can be ladled via a large jam funnel into previously heated jars. Put on the lids before too many loathsome spores drift in, hoping to surprise Sir Alexander Fleming. (Our 1987 batch behaved in a semi-miraculous way: on the third day, instead of rising, it finally condescended to set.)

Certain aspects of the procedure are sufficiently boring—especially the long simmering and the even longer wait for the stuff to set firmly enough to be tried—that to pass the time one finds oneself irresistibly impelled to start work anew, marinating lemons for the next batch. Any fan wishing to drop in and help, thus cutting down that two-year preparation time, will be very welcome. Bring your own marinade ingredients.

Scholarly references:

Kingsley Amis: *On Drink*, 1972; *Every Day Drinking*, 1983.

M.F.K. Fisher: anything and everything.

Maurice Healy: *Stay me with Flagons*, 1940.

George Saintsbury: *Notes on a Cellar-Book*, 1920.

Katherine Whitehorn: *How to Survive in the Kitchen*, 1979.

Colin Wilson: *A Book of Booze*, 1974.

MJ-Balls

You may have heard of the legal tomfoolery facing British UFOlogist Jenny Randles. If not, suffice it to say that her comments on the furore being created by American UFOlogists over the alledged "Majestic-12" coverup were misquoted by the Manchester Evening News. As a result she is being sued by one American UFOlogist for what amounts to disagreeing with him. Actually it's somewhat more involved than that—ask Dave, he'll tell you with all the specifics. Anyway, Jenny is on the receiving end of what can only be described as malicious legal action, and since legal aid is not available in cases of libel and slander and she is a poor humble researcher (mostly poor), she is somewhat stuck. This is where we come in.

In the best traditions of Private Eye, the MJ-Balls fund has been set up ("MJ" being another code name for "Majestic") to provide Jenny with legal aid in a fundamentally unjust situation. Send your fivers in to Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berks RG1 5AU, or to Paul Barnett, 17 Polshoe Road, Exeter, Devon EX1 2HL, who will welcome you with open wallets. Please make all monies payable to "MJ-Balls"

This is serious, people. To a very large extent the scientific method itself is on trial here. Please give generously.

Lionel Fanthorpe

...Man of Many Parts

The first thing that boggled us when we got in contact with Lionel Fanthorpe was his letterhead. For, you see, the man who can justifiably claim to be the most prolific author of SF in the world (and possessor of more pseudonyms than most writers have had hot dinners) is in addition a priest and headmaster with an impressive array of qualifications. This may not be news to you, but it was a great surprise to us. I don't know why, really, we just didn't expect... the Spanish Inquisition. Cor.

After that, we met him and discovered how, in a way, he has been playing Grand Inquisitor. Not with people, I hasten to add, but with mysteries and unexplained setups the world over. The mysterious gold of Rennes-le-Chateau. The Oak Island Money Pit. These all sound like flights of fancy as wild as those of Lionel's SF days, but they are real and he has been chasing them down, worrying out evidence and coming up with new nuggets of fact.

In person he doesn't really look the way you would expect a writer of his reputation to either. One expects either a giant, bronzed space-opera hero, or a wizened, bent figure with inky fingers and 18-dioptre lenses. This small, serious-looking man wrote all those stories? Then, as you get closer, you notice the impish sense of humour that explains all the apparent contradictions. He is such fun to be with that you stop being surprised by anything much!

Rhodri James

Unsolved Mysteries

At some time or other every sentient entity is likely to ask itself one or more of the fundamental questions.

What exactly am I? How did I get here? What is my own personal purpose and destiny? What is the meaning of the universe as a whole? What happens after death? What is the true nature of this thing which we human beings call time? Are their other dimensions of existence as well as the apparent ones? Can I get into any of them? Do probability tracks exist in the form of alternative universes? What other Life Forms are sharing the universe with us? Can we contact them?

That's only a very small sample.... There's epistemology and semantics and a host of other very curious opponents with whom the mind can attempt to wrestle if it feels so inclined.

Answers range from the rock hard certainty of a twentieth century saint like Bishop Anselm Genders who sums up his philosophy by quoting: "I come from God; I exist to serve God; at death I shall return to God," through the amorphous vapours of genuine agnosticism (which neither knows, nor believes that it is possible to know, the answers to the Ultimate Questions) to a materialistic,

pragmatic form of atheism which boldly scorns, or stringently denies, the existence of everything except beer, fish and chips, and the latest football results.

As a Christian Priest, I stand four-square behind Bishop Anselm Genders: though I have less than one percent of his holiness - and that's on my better days! But taking up a firm theological or philosophical position doesn't disqualify you from being keenly interested in unsolved mysteries. God is still God, whether He runs one universe or an infinite number. God is still God whether time runs backwards, forwards, or into an infinite number of alternative realities. God is still God whether he rules monodimensional or multidimensional microcosms and macrocosms. God gave us ourselves. God gave us the minds which pose the questions: He certainly isn't going to object if we use them.

Over the years I've found that many of my friends who share my interest in Science Fiction and Fantasy also tend to be interested in 'real-life' (whatever that is!) unsolved mysteries as well; so let's meander through a page or two of some of the more intriguing ones.

A few months ago Patricia, Stephanie and I were walking on the beach of Smith's Cove, Oak Island, in Mahone Bay, just off Chester in Nova Scotia. Less than 100 metres out into the Atlantic were the visible remains of a coffer dam. This was either the original one that the mysterious builder of the Money Pit complex had constructed a long time before 1795 (when three boys came across his pit by accident and started the longest and most expensive treasure hunt in history) or it was something that one of the many unsuccessful expeditions of treasure hunters had erected during the intervening centuries.

The modern half of the story began in 1795 when three lads out for a day's adventure rowed out to the then uninhabited island and started to explore it. They came across a thirteen foot wide circular depression below a large oak tree. One branch of the oak had been lopped and trimmed and a rotting ship's block and tackle hung from that stark branch. Their minds full of tales of pirate treasure, the lads began to dig. At ten feet they hit a platform of oak logs. With a herculean effort they got the logs out: nothing underneath. Realising that they needed more man-power and more equipment, the boys went back to Chester. A subsequent adult expedition dug down to ninety feet, encountering oak platforms every ten feet on the way down. There were also layers of coconut fibre and layers of putty in some places. Just below the ninety foot level they thought they'd found something significant: their crowbars jarred against iron or stone, or perhaps the reinforced lid of a thick chest. The clay was getting unpleasantly soft and wet at the bottom of the shaft where they were digging, so they abandoned their work for the night. At first light the shaft was full of water to within a few feet of the top. Craning to get a good look at it, one member of the expedition fell in. His friends helped him to safety, and he spluttered out his news: the water he'd swallowed was salty! Whatever was flooding the pit came from the Atlantic!

Over the intervening years massive amounts of energy, brainpower and hard cash have been deployed in one unsuccessful attempt after another to solve the mystery of the Money Pit. The flood water has beaten every treasure-hunter to date.

Whoever built the complex, and for whatever purpose, had apparently constructed at least three flood tunnels to drain huge quantities of water from the Atlantic into the base of the shaft. There were broad, fan-shaped drainage

systems, hidden by stones and coconut fibre, on the shore of Smith's Cove, from which thousands of gallons of sea-water raced into the Money Pit. Once the oak platforms were removed and the putty and fibre seals were broken...in came the water.

Some theorists believe that the complex was designed and built by Francis Drake's men; others give the credit to Captain Kidd, alleging that his mysterious 'Isle of Pristarius' mentioned in the sea-shanty is actually Oak Island, Nova Scotia. Some favour the idea that a party of retreating British Redcoats hid an army payroll there to keep it safe from the French and the American Colonists during the American War of Independence in the mid-eighteenth century.

The most unusual theory yet is that the box contains not treasure as such but the body of a much revered ancient Egyptian Holy Man, an 'Arif' (a sort of Coptic Christian sub-priest) who had led a party of refugees to North America to escape persecution at home, and whose men eventually buried him with all the care and protection normally accorded to a Pharaoh! This highly original explanation is the brain-child of a retired Nova-Scotian surveyor, George Young, who knows the geology of the area very well, and has made a detailed study of Oak Island over many years. Unlikely as it sounds, when you actually hear George arguing the case, there's a lot of mileage in it. His views are strongly supported by a retired professor of ancient languages who has translated a mysterious stone tablet found in the shaft to the effect that it is a religious text in some strange form of Coptic script. Other authorities have translated it to read: "Forty feet below...two million pounds are buried." As the old fairground barkers used to say: "Yer pays yer money and yer takes yer choice!"

Then there's the infamous Croglin Hall Vampire Mystery which tells of how a young woman was savagely attacked and bitten in the village of Croglin towards the end of the last century, and how her brothers pursued something of very unpleasant appearance to a tomb in the local burial ground and eventually destroyed it.

The amazing moving coffins in the Barbados Vault at Oistin, near Christchurch, which apparently lifted themselves and rotated inside their sealed stone chamber (not just once but persistently) in the early nineteenth century are another very strange phenomenon.

Who was Kaspar Hauser, the boy who appeared more-or-less from nowhere in Nuremberg on May 26th, 1828, and died even more mysteriously on the 17th December, 1832?

Where did Benjamin Bathurst go to on November 25th 1809? He seems to have walked around the heads of the horses waiting to draw his carriage away from Perleburg - on the road between Berlin and Hamburg - and was simply never seen again!

On February 16th, 1855, "The Times" reported an amazing line of footprints in the snow, in single file like the steps of a man but shaped like a small donkey's hoof. They appeared all over the estuary of the Exe in South Devon, and were seen in Woodbury, Lympstone, Exmouth, Dawlish, Teignmouth, Totnes and Torquay...sometimes 'running' in through the front of a derelict shed and out between broken boards at the rear.

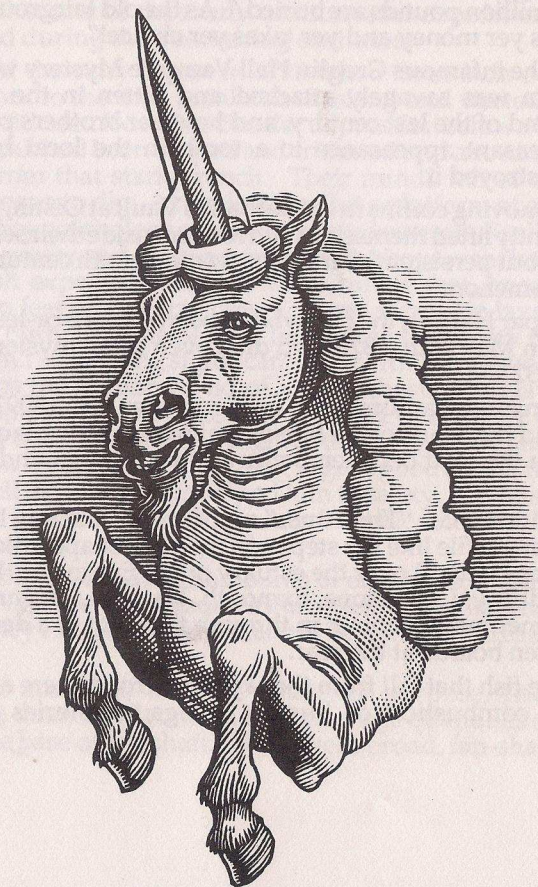
Then there are fish that fall from the sky - and frogs; there are mysteries of the spontaneous combustion of human beings; mysteries of the mind like

teleportation, astral projection, telepathy, telekinesis, clairvoyance and clairaudience...

There are tales of the Yeti in Nepal and of Bigfoot, or Sasquatch, in Canada; the Bible itself mentions the race on Anakims, or "sons of Anak," who appear to have been giants.

Perhaps the most relevant unsolved mystery for Uniconze members would be the strange story of the manuscript discovered in the Colman Library in Norwich about 1670. Dated 1646, and apparently an original seventeenth century record, not a copy, this document recounts in great detail the remarkable events in and around Newmarket, Thetford, and King's Lynn that year. At Comberton, some soldiers on parade "...did behold the form of a spire steeple in the sky..." and at Brandon "...the inhabitants came out of their houses to behold so strange a thing as a spire steeple taking off from the earth." These phenomena were accompanied by "...a sound such as a whole regiment of drums beating a call with perfect notes and stops." Not a bad description for a seventeenth century observer of an astronaut firing a few retro-bursts to adjust the position of his ship, perhaps?

I believe Shakespeare was right when he said something to the effect that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in our philosophies, or - as a much more recent sage has suggested - the universe is not only stranger than we think: it is stranger than we are able to think!



Bill Sanderson

(..."who?"...)

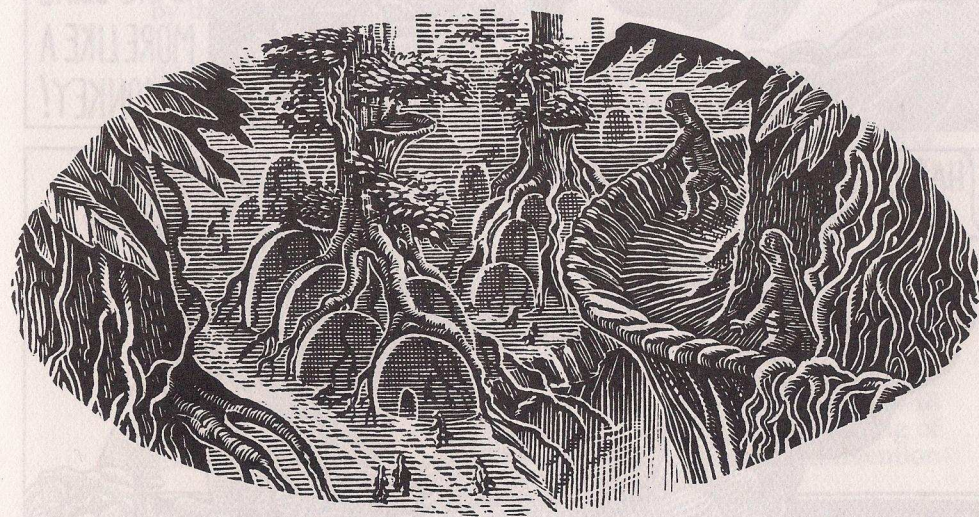
I first met Bill during 1988, when I was secretary of CUSFS and invited Harry Harrison to speak. When we finally arranged a date (in the middle of the exams, although that's another story) he said, "Can I bring Bill Sanderson?"

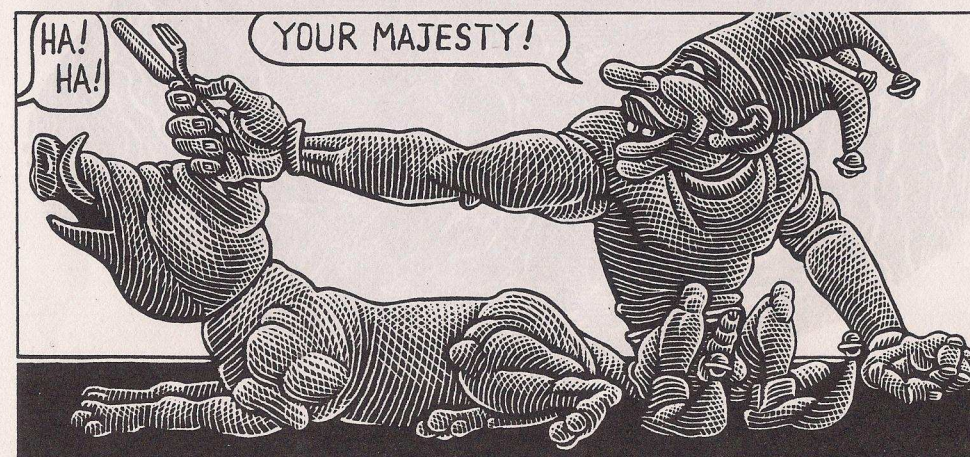
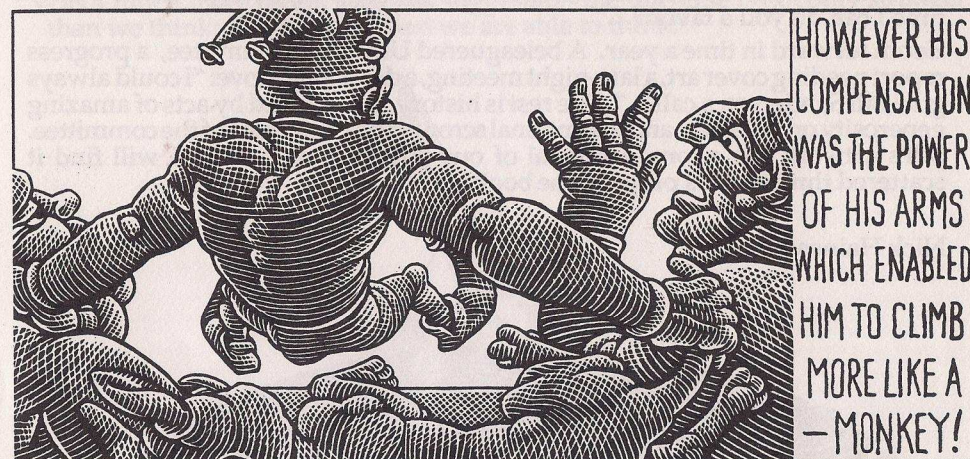
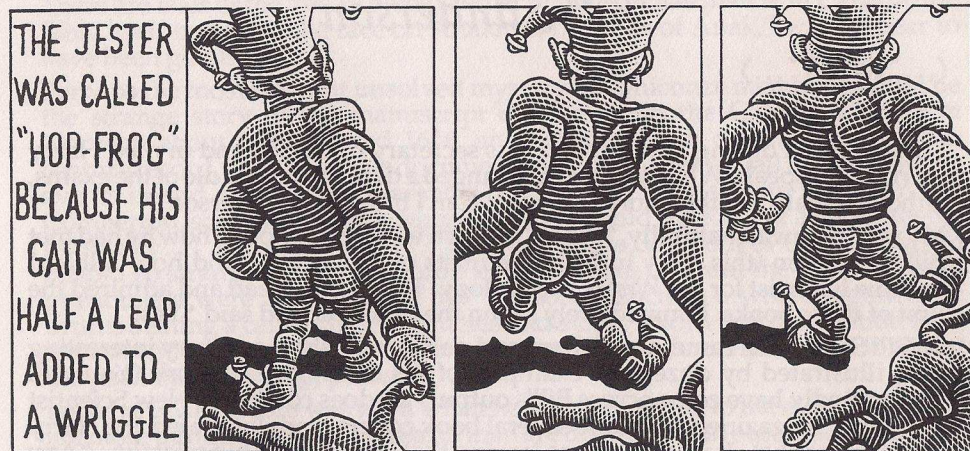
My response was, naturally, "Who?" He then went on to explain how he had met Bill Sanderson (this story lurks in the mists of prehistory), and how Bill had become his artist for the *West of Eden* trilogy. Having just read and admired the first of these books, I immediately sat on the treasurer and said "Yes!"

So Bill Sanderson came, ate with us, and delivered a short and very interesting talk, illustrated by dozens of examples of his distinctive artwork (You will undoubtedly have come across Bill's output - he does covers for *New Scientist* and other magazines, has done several book covers, and illustrated the *Harry Harrison* books). It was as he was leaving that he made his big mistake - "Any time I can do you a favour..."

Zoom forward in time a year. A beleaguered Uniconze committee, a progress report needing cover art, a late-night meeting, a desperate move: "I could always give Bill Sanderson a call...". The rest is history, punctuated by acts of amazing generosity on Bill's part and exceptional scrounging on the part of the committee. Bill's artwork has adorned several of our publications, and you will find it scattered through this programme book.

Nick Haines





The Unicon Charter

Insofar as it has been deemed necessary to perpetuate the Unicon series of science fiction conventions the following regulations are presented to distinguish these conventions from similar events:

(1) They shall bear the name Unicon and have a consecutive numbering or year suffix as all or part of their title.

(2) They shall be held in residential establishments of higher education, and shall use the accommodation and facilities there provided.

(3) The site of the convention shall be decided at the previous Unicon in a properly conducted business session or, failing this, by the Unicon steering committee.

(a) Bidding session.

(i) All potential bidding committees who have made their presence known shall be invited to present their bid for a period not exceeding one half hour, except where only one bid exists in which case the time limit shall be set by the current Unicon.

(ii) Voting will be carried out by any reasonable means determined by the current Unicon committee.

(b) Steering committee.

(i) This shall be responsible for the maintenance and amendment of this charter, the administration of excess funds should no convention win the bidding ceremony, and shall act as arbitrator should disputes concerning Unicon arise.

(ii) Each past and present Unicon committee shall nominate one member of the steering committee.

(iii) The acting chairperson of the steering committee shall be the member nominated by the current Unicon and his functions will include: notifying steering committee members of transferring of excess funds from his convention, notifying all potential convention

bids of these regulations, and providing for each member of the steering committee and for both the treasurer and chairperson of the next Unicon an accurate statement of accounts for his convention.

(iv) The voting membership of the steering committee shall be the nominees of the last seven Unicons. A quorum shall consist of four voting members, and decisions shall be taken by a majority of the voting members, whether or not present at the voting meeting. Meetings of the steering committee shall be notified at least one month in advance to all members of the steering committee, whether or not they are voting members. A meeting shall be held at Unicon, and a written undertaking required by clause (7) shall be the notice of this meeting.

(4) The surplus funds from a Unicon convention shall be disposed of as follows:

(a) Where the sum does not exceed £200 the surplus shall be passed within a reasonable time to the convention that wins the bidding ceremony.

(b) Where the sum exceeds £200, 50% or £200 (whichever is the greater) shall be passed on as in 5(a) and the remainder shall be disposed of as the convention committee sees fit in a manner to benefit fandom, subject to the approval of the steering committee.

(c) Where no convention bid has been successfully made for the coming year the surplus funds shall be passed to the steering committee within a reasonable time.

(5) The convention shall be insured:

(a) Against loss of, or damage to, its property and that for which it is legally responsible, including building, machinery, plant, fixtures and fitting provided to it by the property owners or management of the venue for the purpose of the convention.

(b) Against loss resulting from the cancellation, curtailment, postponement or abandonment in whole or in part of the convention, the non appearance of a principal speaker or failure of the convention to vacate the premises at the termination of its tenancy.

(c) So as to be indemnified for all sums which the committee shall be legally liable for arising from bodily injury and property damage to employees and the general public arising out of an occurrence in connection with the convention.

(6) The convention committee shall undertake:

(a) To be liable for any deficit arising from their own convention.

(b) To cover any debts occurring in connection with any past Unicon which no longer holds funds, providing such debts do not exceed the value of the funds passed to them by the previous Unicon or by the steering committee.

(7) The convention committee shall agree to abide by the regulations presented in this document, and shall send a written letter undertaking to this effect (signed at minimum by the chairperson, secretary and treasurer of the convention, or the equivalent posts) to each member of the steering committee. Ambiguities and disputes arising from these regulations shall be settled by the steering committee in light of common sense and with a view to the continuity of the Unicon series.

Membership of the steering committee as of 1st July 1990:

Tommy Ferguson (chair)
Mike Cheater
Mike Abbott
Caroline Mullan
Tim Illingworth
Hugh Mascetti
Alex Stewart
(Jan Huxley)
(Chrissie Pearson)
(John Fairey)

(Bracketted members are non-voting)

Unicons Past and Present

Year Title	Location	Date	Guests
1980 Unicon 80	Keele University	5-7th Sept	Harry Harrison
1981 Unicon 2	Keele University	11-13th Sept	John Sladek
1982 Unicon 3	Keele University	10-12th Sept	Richard Cowper
1983 Unicon 4	Essex University	2-4th Sept	Ian Watson
1984 Oxcon (Unicon 5)	St Catherine's College, Oxford	24-27th Aug	Brian Aldiss
1985 Camcon (Unicon 6)	New Hall, Cambridge	13-15th Sept	John Christopher
1986 Consept (Un7Con)	Surrey University	8-10th Aug	Tanith Lee
1987 Connote8 (Unicon 8)	New Hall, Cambridge	3-5th July	Geraldine Harris Diana Wynne Jones
1988 Wincon (Unicon 9)	King Alfred's, Winchester	19-21st Aug	Patrick Tilley Geoff Ryman Michael De Larrabetti
1989 U-Nicon X	Queen's University Belfast	11-13th Aug	Harry Harrison Terry Pratchett James White Will Simpson Ian McDonald Iain Thomas
1990 Uniconze (Unicon 11)	New Hall, Cambridge	6-8th July	Barrington Bayley Lionel Fanthorpe Dave Langford Bill Sanderson Ian Watson

Death by Dyslexia

We tried to help daughter Amanda
 We really went out of our way.
 She mixed 'd' and 'b' as a rule
 So we'd say "Goob Bay" in place of "Good Day".
Dye-dye was bye-bye; *bog* was dog.
 We would often call her Amanba.
 Being extra helpful, right?
 Hence the video in her bedroom
 And that big four-poster Steve made.
 On the night when we went to the party
 Best friend Deborah came to stay;
 who hardly every laughed at Amanda.
 Why, both were practically teenage.
 Practically; a year or so more.
 Two peas in a pod with cocoa
 —"Gosh Mummy, it's yummy"—
 And Disney to watch on the box.
 Old enough to be on their ownsome
 For a few hours, eh? As I hugged
 Goodnight, did Deborah giggle a mite?
 But then squeal instead at a spider web
 So as not to embarrass or mock?
 "Be sure to switch off when it's finished,"
 I warned. "Tick-tock, tick-tock:
 That's debby-dye-time, remember, Amanba!"
 "Debby-dye, Mummy," said she.
 Alas, when we came back at midnight,
 Bed's dloob was all over the deb.
 We tried to help our darling Amanda.
 We bib our dest, I'd say.
 And now we send her mirror-letters
 Since she has gone away.

Ian Watson

Membership List

79A Michael Abbott	72A Mike Damesick	50A Vicki King	74A Roger Robinson
28A Phil Allcock	61P John F. David	93A Alice Kohler	84A Steve Rothman
108A Brian Ameringen	103A Roger Deamaley	113S Pompino the Kregoyne	82A Marcus Rowland
68P Kate Anderson	25A Paul Dörner	G Dave Langford	67P Dave Rowley
47A Simon Arrowsmith	78A Bob Dowling	119A Brenda Law	G Bill Sanderson
136A Philip Badger	63A Peter Dunn	12P Steve Lawson	33P Alison Scott
98A Amanda Baker	56P Martin Easterbrook	31P Ruth Le Sueur	106A Mike Scott
83A Henry Balen	102A Sue Edwards	15P Steve Linton	141A D M Sherwood
24P Sean Bamforth	71A Dave Ellis	120A Ken Longford	117A Mrs J.E. Slater
132A John Bark	17P Elvie	10A Bill Longley	118A K.F. Slater
G Barrington Bayley	111A David Elworthy	81A P H Mabey	62P A. D. Smith
65P Adrian Beattie	131A Juliet Eyeions	137A Marco	109A Dan Smithers
140A Peter Bibby	G Lionel Fanthorpe	77A The Magician	86A Robert (Nojay) Sneddon
95A Matt Bishop	18A Colin Fine	121A Chris Marrott	110A Kate Solomon
54A John Botham	14P Philip Fine	69A Paul Marrow	123A Neil Spenley
44A Alan Braggins	105A Nigel Fisher	100A Jane McKie	75A Simon Spero
114S Michael Braithwaite	129A Naomi Ford	9A Rory McLean	133A Stephen
76A John Bray	34A Susan Francis	127A Alan McTernan	80A James Steel
130A Paul Brazier	99A Bill Frugg	92A Rob Meades	96A Helen Steele
51A Jon Brewis	37A Gwen Funnel	88A Andy Morris	45S Marcus Streets
89A Tim Broadribb	87A Ye Gerbish	30A Caroline Mullan	107A Chris Stocks
19A Ben Brown	40P Darren Gill	91A Tom Nanson	58P Ganesh Suntharalingam
97A "Bug"	43P Steve Glover	60P Linda Parkin	4A Graham Taylor
32P Steve Bull	3A Alastair Grant	26P Jon Peatfield	6P Julian Todd
35A Mike Cheater	134A Grunthos	122A Alex Perry	21A Ivan Towison
94A Dave Clements	5A Nick Haines	16A Phil Plumbly	7A Paul Treadaway
104A Peter Cohen	126A James Halcrow	27A Henry Potts	59P Martin Tudor
42P Chris Cooper	11P Jackie Hawkins	23P Ellnor Predota	125A Vicky
13P David Cooper	66P Joy Hilbert	139A Ceri Pritchard	20P David Vines
135A Keith Cosslett	116A Martin Hoare	64A Larry van der Putte	138A Wendell Wagner, Jr
101A Adrian Cox	55A Valerie Housden	115A Rae Ramsbottom	38A D H Walters
52A Cardinal Cox	90S (Paul) Terry Hunt	8A Douglas Reay	46A Huw Walters
49A Jonathan Coxhead	41A Tim Illingworth	39A Gareth Rees	36A Peter Wareham
70A Paul Cray	1A Rhodri James	53A John Richards	G Ian Watson
2A Richard Crook	128A Kelvin Jay	48A John Rickard	73A Kathy Westhead
57A Rafe Culpin	124A The Jester	142A Andy Robertson	29P Mike Whitaker
22A John Dallman	85A Kevin R. Joyce	143A Sylvia Robertson	112A Sarah Woodall

Credits

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