

ALBACON III

THE 37th BRITISH ANNUAL SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION



Here we are, alone in the bunker; just a committee and a pile of used memberships. Is it safe to come out? Have they gone? Will we emerge only to be asked to show Rocky Horror just one more time? Have the beer stains dried in the bar and has the last burger been sold? How can we tell?

A shaft of inspiration lights our collective unconsciousness - send out a dove - no, needlessly Biblical - send a gopher. The last one pegged out on Tuesday. OK, how about a post-con report? If it's sent out and doesn't come back than the con must be over. Let there be report.....

You were there. You saw it. What is there left to tell? It happened on an Easter weekend: you came, you saw, you conked out around 4.30am at that room party. You saw the films, read the books, drank the beer, listened to the speakers. You were happy. Yes, that's the key. You spent a weekend doing something unusual: smiling. At least most of you did. There were very few complaints at the business meeting and most of them were about unavoidable difficulties. The others have been noted and they won't happen again. Hopefully.

The Guests: Joe Haldeman and his wife Gay, Clive Barker, Pete Lyon and John Jarrold all got home safely. They each contributed to the pleasure of all of us in their own way - so we will take this opportunity to thank them in print. Thank you.

Everyone agreed that the hotel staff were marvellous. They performed their jobs to perfection and then went further, adding sparkle to the atmosphere by showing their enjoyment of the event. No reports have come in of surly barmen giving short measure and short change. Instead, there remain a trickle of convention reports in fanzines which single the staff out for special praise. Without doubt, Albacoon was most fortunate in having the Central Hotel as its venue.

The members, namely yourselves, were well behaved as usual. Unfortunately, when you get 1000 people in an enclosed space there are bound to be accidents. These include the now traditional damage to lifts and broken windows. So the accounts published overleaf must yet again show a goodwill payment made by the convention towards the cost of repairs. Note that the hotel did not charge us for the hire of the function rooms for the first time. They do like us really.

The programme had its usual high points and disasters. Thanks must, however, be made to all those who took the time and trouble to participate in any programme items. The Guests did more than was asked of them as did ASTRA who provided more than one item per day.

The committee - well, the survivors are a sorry bunch. Some may never con again. Special mention must be made of Duncan Lunan who appeared on five consecutive programme items, and Michael Molloy whose covers for the Progress Reports got him the Ken MacIntyre Award for best fan art of the year (copies on quality card available from Albacoon at £3.00 the set). Although he denies it, Michael was also effectively the chairman of the committee, as he will be again in 1987. Ian Sorensen edited the Programme Book, ran the fan room and repro room then announced his retirement from running Glasgow conventions. The cheers continue to echo.....

But what's this? Light breaks through - the bunker door is swung open on its massive hinges. A thin, alien figure is outlined against the dazzle. It comes towards us, crouched in the corner. It lifts up a scrawny, mis-shapen arm. It speaks!

"Can I have the badge machine, please? It's time for XIIcon."

A scrabble of feet, a break for the door. Freedom.... freedom.... freedom....