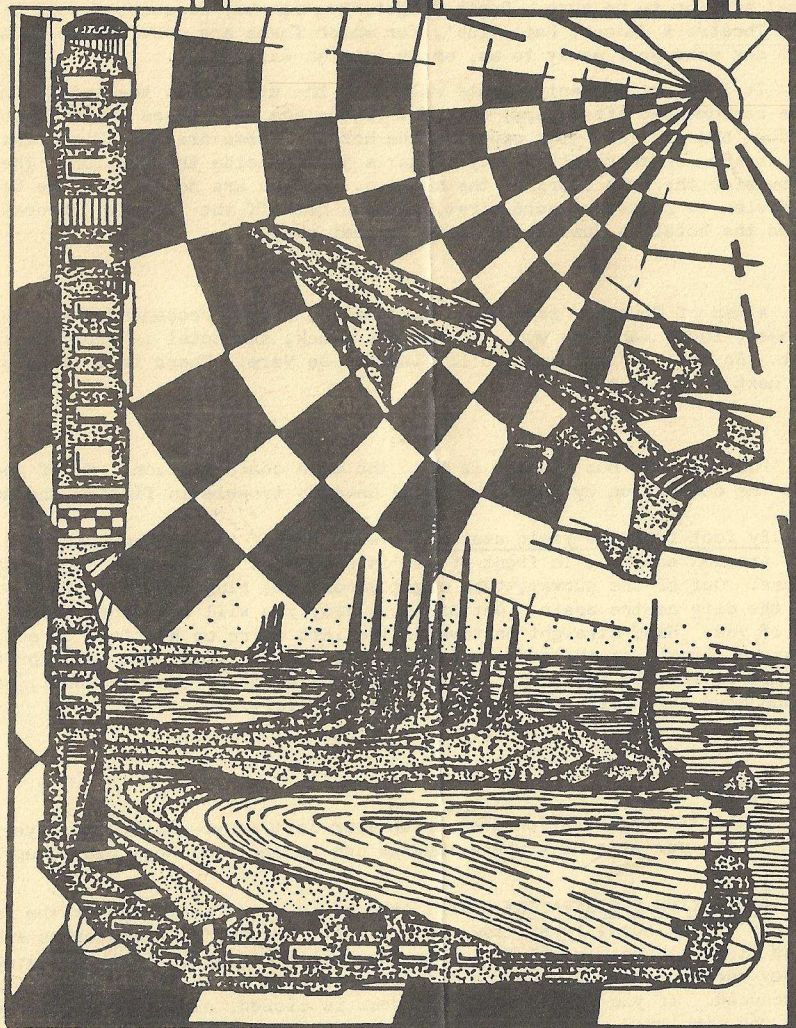


NOVACON

Fifteen

PR
3



1ST - 3RD November 1985
De Vere Hotel
Coventry

GUESTS of HONOUR:

Dave Langford
James White

GETTING THERE

BY RAIL

Coventry is a mainline British Rail Station, so you should have no trouble remembering which stop to get off at! If you are coming from London, you're to use the Euston Street Station. All other direction, please contact your local station to be sure. Don't forget, you can buy discounted rail tickets from the 'Theatre & Concert Rail Club', for which forms are provided in this PR. Please do not send your money to us, or to British Rail.

It is about a twenty minute walk from the station to the hotel; this is not to be recommended after dark, however. There are two 'buses which go to the Pool Meadow 'bus station, just opposite the hotel. These are the 27 and the 17. The fare is 15p. or there are plenty of taxis just outside the station. The 'bus stop is outside the main doors of the station. If you are to stay in the Leofric Hotel and wish to register there first, you can get off the 'bus at 'French Connection' and the hotel is just to the left of that shop.

BY CAR

A map of Coventry is printed in this PR, but we recommend that you bring the enclosed, loose map with you. If you get stuck, the hotel is right beside the Cathedral. So aim for that and you'll find the De Vere. There is a 'long stay' car park next to the hotel.

BY COACH

Pool Meadow 'bus station is also the main coach station. So if you're coming to the convention by coach, you will have no trouble in finding the hotel.

PSBy foot from the train station -- walk out of the station and turn right. Go out of station square. In front of you is a subway. Follow the signposts to the city centre. Out of the subway, turn right across the ringroad to another subway. Head for the city centre again. Out of the subway you will see three church spires in front of you. Head straight on towards the left spire up Hertford Street pedestrian precinct. At the statue of Lady Godiva, turn right and head for the centre spire. This is the old Cathedral. Walk round the front of the Cathedral, past the new one and down the hill. The De Vere is on your left.

WHEN YOU ARRIVE

The hotel registration desk is on your left as you enter the foyer. On the right is the porter's desk where luggage can be left and keys picked up and deposited.

CONVENTION REGISTRATION: will take place from 2pm to 8pm on the Friday. This will be in the hotel foyer, towards the left. Please do register as soon as you can as floods of people all trying to register at once will only delay matters. On Saturday morning the registration desk will be open in the foyer again, times to be announced. If you arrive after the desk is closed, please do contact a member of the committee as soon as possible as you will not be allowed to be served at the bars without your convention badge.

Programme...

Most of the main programme will take place in the main hall, the Connaught suite. A map will be included with the programme book so you know where to go. And we'll scatter a few signs here and there just to be sure.

Each year it's getting harder and harder to think of some really original ideas for the programme. Especially when the Eastercon committees comes up with the same ones (must be telepathy at work!). Still, with a bit of careful thought, and much burning of the midnight oil, we have managed to devise a few goodies. Firstly there's the films. This year you can see The Right Stuff, Airplane Two, Topper, BladeRunner, Silkwood, Dr G And The Bikini Machine and Splash. There will be the usual panel discussions on some not so usual subjects. For instance, Roger Peyton and Rod Milner will be defending 'Venture' against Sherry Francis and Avedon Carol, representing 'The Women's Press'.

As well as the guests of honour official speeches, we have invited a few other speakers. Robert Rankin is one, the author of some very comic science fiction, plus Shaun Hutson (writer of some very gory horror) and Terry Pratchett. With two discos and a barn dance, this year should have something for just about everyone.

The Fan Room

"Greetings. M-M-Max Fanroom here, otherwise known as Tony Berry. I'm responsible for giving you a choice as to how you spend your valuable time at Novacon: do you waste it on the likes of Rog Peyton auctioning worthless books, on boring films, or do you spend it on more interesting pursuits. The Pine Room is the place to be. Small packets of freeze-dried Instant Desperate Fun can be bought at the door -- just add beer and stir.

Mainevents are a couple of very cerebral quizzes: the ever-popular University Challenge to test your sf knowledge (if you can come up with four people to make a team, let me know), and then there is Give Us A Break. If you have ever listened to DLT on Saturday morning you know what to expect. It will be a quiz based on Snooker, with a couple of changes to that on the radio. The individual contestants will be mercilessly grilled on their General Knowledge (non-sf).

Other triffic things are the odd panel, silly games and Synchronised Drinking (again I need teams for this event, even teams with one member! A Ghetto Blaster will be provided, so bring your own tapes, and don't make it too long, I mean, drinking to Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture could be fun, but your arms will get tired.)

On the display side of things, I would be grateful for any fannish posters, photos and old fanzines you don't want. To watch over this lot and make sure it's not borrowed, are there any responsible types out there who will act as minders for a couple of hours during the con? I'm buggered if I want to sit there for two and a half days.

Hopefully this will provide lots of entertainment. But if it all goes wrong we'll just play music and get drunk instead."

TONY BERRY

Nova Award

When Martin Tudor asked me at the Silicon to write something about Nova-eligible fanzines, my first thought was, "Me? The person who can never remember what she's read a week later?" So I took a poll of the people I was sitting with to figure out what their choices were for the most likely contenders of the past year.

We could think of dozens of excellent individual pieces of writing, only to realize that they appeared in fanzines which were themselves not eligible. Gosh, that Anne Warren, she's really been doing great stuff -- but Somedays You Eat The Bear hasn't come out twice in the last year. Nigel E. Richardson, he's lots of fun -- but it seems that he, too, has been crushed under the frequency threshold. Then we cringed when we thought of another one that was eligible (but not very likely).

We finally were able to pull a handful of titles from sleep-worn and booze-soaked memories. We narrowed this small list down to an even smaller one of our Top Four. In no particular order, they were: Nutz (Pam Wells), Stomach Pump (Steve Higgins), Epsilon (Rob Hansen), and Prevert (John Jarrold).

Pam Wells has managed an admirably frequent schedule for her zine in the recent past, and published some reasonably competent and interesting articles. Unfortunately, her own editorial presence is somewhat weak. Even Pam agrees that she still has some work to do before Nutz really falls together.

Epsilon has been carrying a lot of tripreports lately -- a section of Rob's TAFFreport, a bit of TAFFrep from Peter Roberts, and Ted White's report of his trip to Britain in July. As has been remarked before, Rob always edits his letter column into a smoothly running, cohesive whole, and he tends to get some great letters too. But the Ad-Hoc Committee to Write This Article had no trouble deciding that Epsilon hadn't quite sparkled as much as the other three titles we'd chosen, and anyway Hansen already has a couple of Novas. We gave Epsilon 4th place (or Miss Congeniality, which ever comes first), and placed Nutz in third.

The last issue of Prevert (August 1985) included an interesting illustrated letter of comment from Ashley Watkins which began on the cover and ended with a bang. (Ashley is a man who knows how to dress.) Previous issues had some pretty triff things, too -- like Judith Hanna's fine piece on travel in Australia, and Abigail Frost's revelations about how she got into fandom and what she did with it. Jarrold's production values have stayed reasonably clean and Prevert usually has a pretty good look and feel to it.

On the other hand, Stomach Pump printed a pretty good Abi Frost piece too in the last year, as well as demonstrating some coherent and well thought-out editing. I must admit I thought Steve's idea that you could have such a thing as "objectivity" in criticism was a little bit, um, romantic, but he certainly made sure fandom didn't lack for criticism of some kind this year. His reviews in SP #9 could be an example to us all -- while carefully examining several of his favourites for flaws, he lets you know when he thought a zine was successful, and so his criticisms fell in a largely constructive and painless manner.

But then the committee deadlocked over first and second place. Half of this table full of drunks insisted that Prevert was the best of the lot, and the other half stood equally firm in the belief that Stomach Pump had a strong edge. So we consulted another party: the deadlock was broken by Gregory Pickersgill. Greg had gotten sick of Jarrold singing songs Gregory had previously liked earlier in the day, and declared Stomach Pump the winner by a mile.

But hey, you be the judge. You are under no constraints to listen to the advice of a bunch of beer-sodden fools in the last stages of total convention dissipation. These are all fanzines worth reading, and it would certainly upset Jarrold's political analysis of fandom if he actually won the Nova. Certainly, all of these people have been working in the right direction and deserve recognition for it.

AVEDON CAROL.

COFF AWARD

In a dark and dingy pub on the outskirts of Solihull, Steve Green suddenly slammed his pint down onto the table and very nearly jolted Kev Clarke into sobriety.

"I've got it!" he exclaimed, typically overdramatic, and before Kev could even ask if it was contagious, continued: "We finally have a chance to put the record straight over the Concrete Overcoat Fan Fund."

Kev opened his eyes and feigned coherence: "Nhuuh?"

"C'mon," Steve groaned. "You remember how Phill Probert used the Novacon 14 programme book to launch that ridiculous rumour about you founding COFF just so I could be judged the fan most deserving of a concrete three-piece and a one-way swimming lesson in the Birmingham canal system?"

"Sounds fair to me," quipped Kev, ducking just a second too late to avoid the ashtray.

"Well, this year we can make certain I have no chance at all of winning," Steve added, grinning from ear to ear. Or from there to there, I forget which.

"Let me guess," Kev replied. "You increase the votes from 10 pence each, so Martin Tudor can't afford to stuff the ballot box like last year?"

"Wrong."

"You divert the money raise from fannish good causes like TAFF and GUFF to investment in South Africa, so everyone avoids voting altogether?"

"Wrong again," Steve snapped. "You simply appoint me co-administrator and enforce the rule that no one in control of COFF can ever win the award. You know, the one you created to guarantee you'd never win it."

Kev nodded reluctantly, increasingly conscious of the shotgun barrel now resting between his knees, and so ensured his new-found partner would be barred from following in the footsteps of previous COFF winners Bob 'Fake' Shaw (1982), Simon Polley (1983) and Richard Bergeron (1984).

Of course, he carefully neglected to remind Steve that he could still come second, but that's another story.

EDDIE TRENCHCOAT

Actions Speak Louder Than Words

Each one of us is, in some way, responsible for the present famine in Africa and other unpleasantnesses in what we drisively term the 'Thrid World'. Of course, we all put our hands in our pockets. Some of us even bring them out again. We all tell our MPs the governments ought to do more. Some of us even go out and work in refugee camps. That does not signify. We are still responsi-
-ble.

You are probably now demanding I justify such an outrageous accusation. Here goes.

Let's go back a few years, to the oilshock, when the OPEC countries doubled and redoubled the price of oil ostensibly because we Western states were doing sod all to keep our Israeli clients out of territory that wasn't theirs (plus ca change, mais c'est la meme chose). As a result, incredible amounts of liquidity flowed into largely Islamic coffers, the proprietors of which were then faced with a small problem. What to do with it. They couldn't spend it fast enough; even they couldn't lose it in Crockfords, and the Koran has some real nasty things to say about banking as we know it. So what did they do? They called in the experts.

The experts in this case being us, the Western states with our 'highly developed' banking system.

Now, I know the odd thing or two about the Western banking system. It puts bread into the mouths of my family. I have been a very minor acolyte in its high temple. The high priests of this system sometimes change their hats and become government ministers. When they don't, there is a very good chance the ministers are brothers or cousins, and the higher civil servants are always close relatives. Government decisions are always taken in the light of the expected consequences of those actions upon the pockets of these individuals. Remember that. It is very important in this tale.

Anyway, all this liquidity could not be absorbed entirely by the Western economies (but we did try!), at least, not without a modicul of inflation. You may know the word. Faced with this slight difficulty those money men solved it by recycling those funds outside the usual run of borrowing countries -- specifically to the Third World. So massive were these loans that the debtor nations had an absolute requirement for a sustained world wide economic expansion of a scope and duration hitherto unprecedented, if they were to pay off their debts without it getting too much of a burden on their domestic economies. So the debtor nations found themselves competing with the Western economies, and, do you know, they didn't do half badly -- which isn't surprising given their brand new capital stock (bought from us Western nations, naturally) and the sort of wage costs which would bring a blush to the cheek of Norman Tebbit. And it is here things begin to get a trifle complex. You see, the debtor nations needed an expanding market to sell into, but the creditor nations also needed an expanding market for their goods so they could earn the cash to pay for imports from the debtor nations, and because it was the high added value items which brought in the quickest return the debtor nations were trying to sell to the creitor nations exactly the same goods the creditor nations were trying to sell to them. Which is why you drive a Datsun rather than a Ford.... It doesn't need too much brain to see the contradiction here. But have no fear, for as soon as the pin striped banker left Khartoum or wherever, he stepped off the plane, changed his bowler for the peaked cap of a uniform and stepped straight back into the plane with the intent of selling these newly cash rich debtor nations precisely what every self respecting emerging nation needs.

No cigar to anyone who realises the item in question is designed to kill people.

And I'm not talking about a Big Mac.

Meanwhile, the permanent civil servants back home were doing their bit by stirring up the odd little local war here and there.

Makes you proud to be British, doesn't it? All that ingenuity.

Maybe, just maybe, if all that debt had been devoted to constructive effort the catastrophe we see today wouldn't have happened, but there was not a cat in hell's chance when most of it was spent on utterly unproductive weapons. And of course, our Iron Curtain friends were stirring the pot just as assiduously, if rather more conscious of their motives.

Now, then enter the dragon. This dragon being a fabulous concoction of lies, distortion and stupidity I shall call 'Monetarism'. The inevitable consequence of the application of monetarist principles was always going to be a very sharp contraction in world trade. Remember, a contraction was the very last thing the debtor nations needed. This contraction reduced industrial demand and the prices of those commodities which the debtor nations sold to us went through the floor. Suddenly Ghana and Nigeria and Mozambique (and our good friends in the Republic too, let it be said) found they weren't getting foreign exchange in exchange for tin and copper and the rest. In fact, they weren't getting shit because they weren't selling any tin or copper or whatever. Which didn't half bugger about with their debt repayment. After all, you can't pay the man on the knock when your pockets are empty, can you. For certain countries, of which Ethiopia is one, they had already turned to the growing of cash rather than food crops to pay their debts. In the context of this discussion that is more than a little significant.

As I say, this consequence was absolutely certain on the introduction of monetarist measures in the West. The people responsible for those policies were perfectly well aware of what would happen to the debtor economies. Which means that Ronnikins and Maggie knew they were taking food from the mouths of those who do not have enough at the best of times and giving it to those who have too much at the leanest of times.

But of course, those who were going to suffer were almost all black and mostly women.

Ah, someone at the back is whispering about a drought being a natural phenomenon. True. But Africa has endured drought before, only the the Ethiopians weren't growing avacados instead of maize, were they? And, as if that wasn't enough, next we send in the IMF to make sure those debtor nations wouldn't try anything tricky to tide them over the worst time, like subsidising domestic food production or introducing work programmes (anyone ever heard of the CAP or cruise missiles?).

Which brings us to our responsibility. We can't make it rain in Africa, but we can make sure our governments do not execute policies which will exacerbate harsh conditions. All of us choose to acquiesce in such policies because we choose not to see that our video, our car, our computer (yes, that's me) our weekend convention is being bought with the deaths of children who haven't the strength to stand on their own two feet. And don't pretend you can escape by saying you didn't vote Tory because all our political institutions are playing the same game, or that you didn't vote at all because that doesn't stop any government acting in your name. No. We are all responsible.

So, what can we do about it? Give some cash. Its better than nothing. Then give some more, and keep on giving until it hurts. Didn't you know suffering is good for the soul? But that isn't enough. A change can be made. We must assure the movers and shakers that we are not prepared to let this obscenity recur. And if that means no moonshot and no Trident, no Fortress Falklands and no

TV-AM...well, to coin another phrase, we can take it.

Which isn't going to happen. I know that and you know that. So what else can we do? Give some more money, but instead of making it a one off charitable donation of grain or a Mercedes Benz truck, make it something long term that will help these people help themselves -- clean water, a few of those little agricultural sleights of hand that multiply cropyield, etc. etc. etc. There are any number of ways. For instance, Cathie and I have 'adopted' a boy in Liberia and a girl in Egypt. This organisation is strictly nonpolitical and nondenominational, and the name of their game is self help. For eighteen miserable pounds a month we get the chance to receive letters from a little boy telling us that his father has to go 40 kilometres for medicine for which he has to pay, cash on the barrel, and that he is going to school now one morning a week, when he can be spared from planting and hoeing and whatever else needs to be done to grow food. Anyone out there think they've got problems? Admit it, you know you don't know you're born. None of us do. Nine quid a month, per child, which is 30 pence a day. Can't afford it? Get together with some friends. You've got friends, haven't you? Or whatever. If we all just DO something then, maybe, we wouldn't have to sit through another exercise like 'Live Aid'.

And the music? Yes, well..... There was just one thing missing, wasn't there. One man who was there but couldn't sing or play because nobody can hear a ghost saying 'All you need is love'.

MARTYN TAYLOR

oooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

Every year we raise money for fan races, but wouldn't it be better to give money to the starving? I hope that Martyn's article will stir you up to agreeing with me. I know that many of you will have given when the Ethiopia appeal first began, but by now you will no doubt have earned some more. Why not give some of that now. Over the weekend, a box will be provided in some safe place, so that if you suddenly feel conscience-stricken at the mountains of food and drink you managed to consume, you can do something about it. The amount raised will be announced at the closing ceremony and will be sent to 'Live Aid' (or whatever its called now). The usual book and fanzine auctions to raise money for TAFF and GUFF will be held, but couldn't we do something extra as well? If a group would like to donate a prize for a raffle, they would be very welcome. Just let me know (Eunice) beforehand so I can arrange its promotion.

PS. Martyn's article first appeared in The Organization apa.

Eunice.

Wanted

Fannish poster, photos and old fanzines -- TONY BERRY

Gophers -- All the committee!

Teams for the beer drinking challenge (aka synchronised drinking), University challenge and Give Us A Break -- TONY BERRY

Money and things to raffle for FanAid -- EUNICE PEARSON

Artwork for the artshow -- CAROL PEARSON

Votes for the Nova Awards.

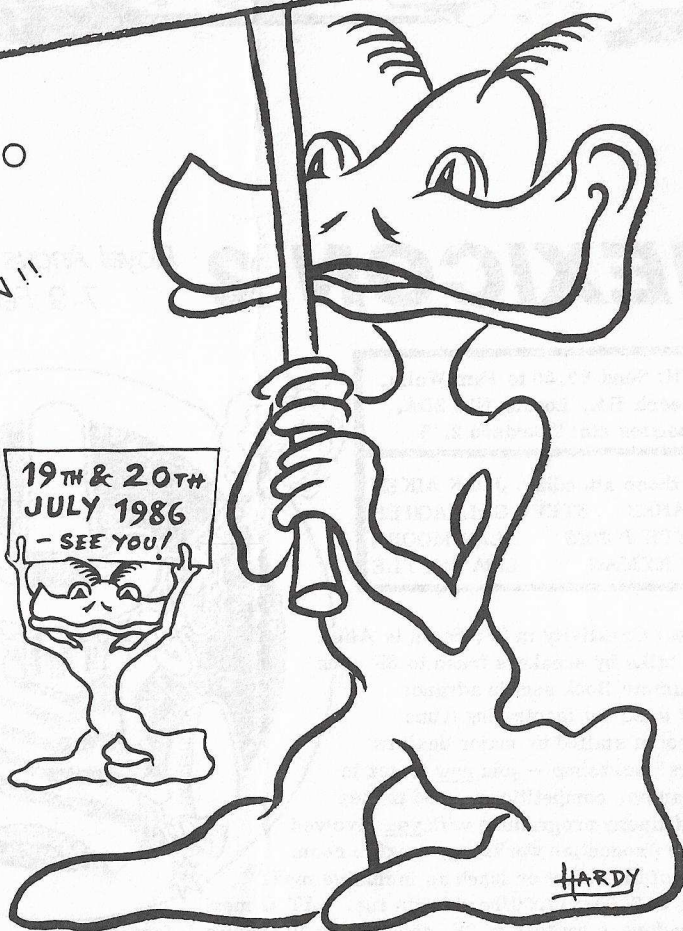
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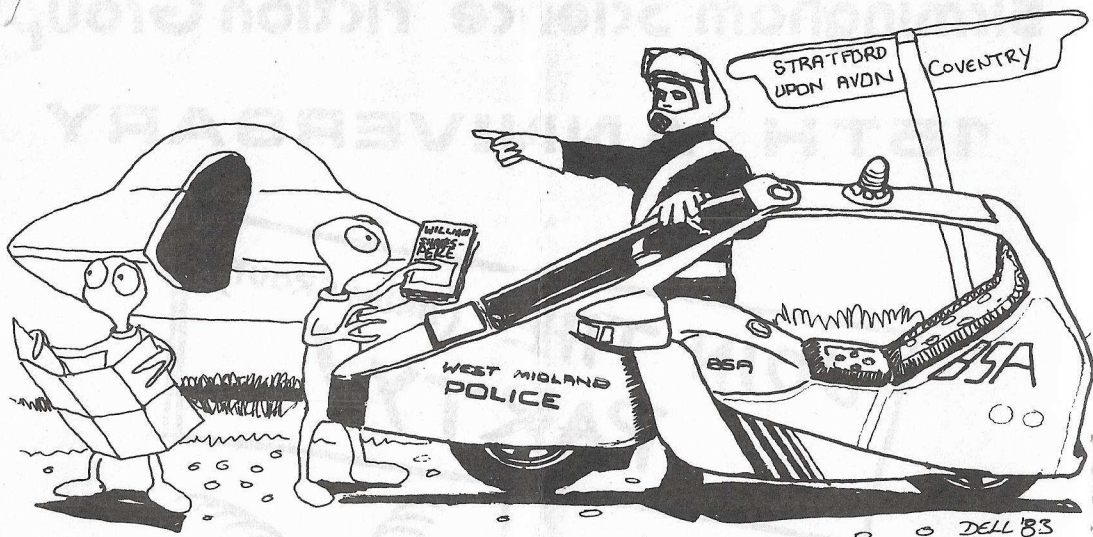
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15TH ANNIVERSARY



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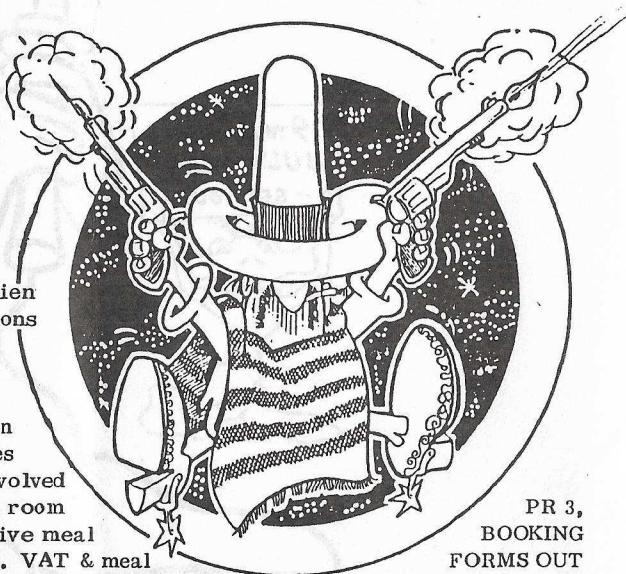
MEXICON 2

Royal Angus Hotel, Birmingham
7-9 February 1986

TO JOIN: Send £9.00 to Pam Wells,
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(Cheques etc: "Mexicon 2.")

Among those attending: JOAN AIKEN
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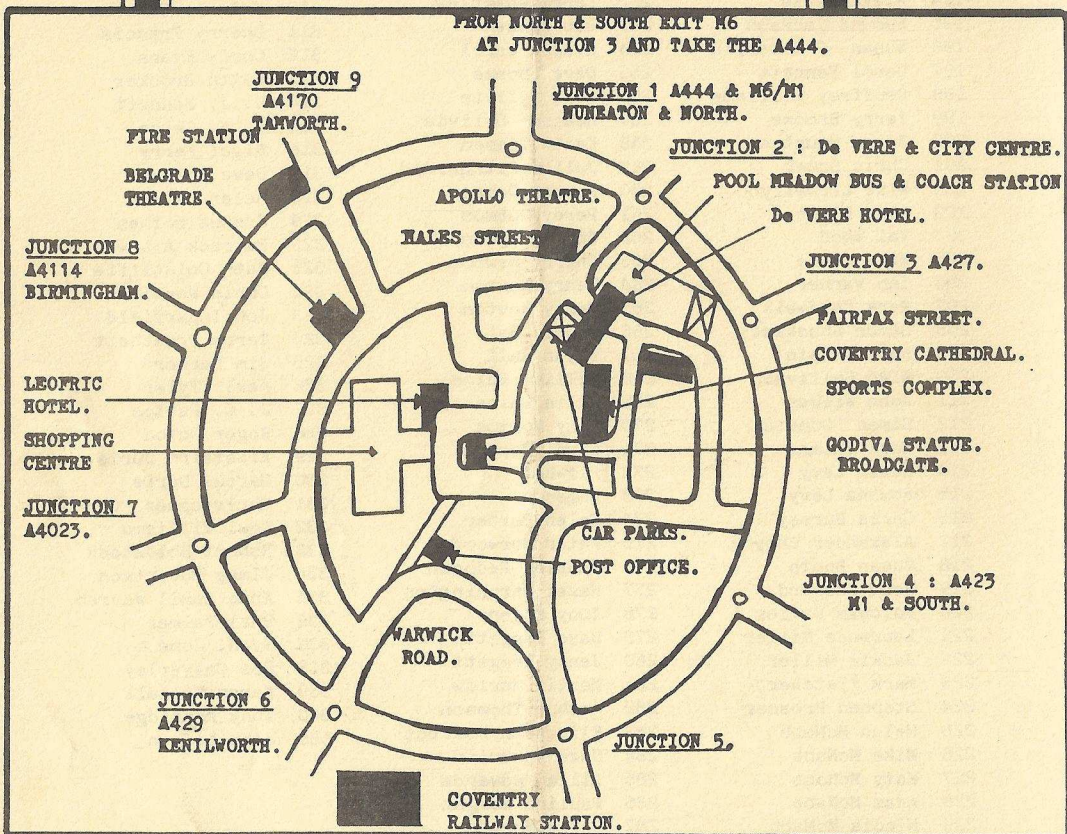
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222	Jackie Miller	280	Jenny Raggett	338	Ros Calverley
223	Mark Fletcher	281	Martin Harlow	339	Karen Kelsall
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225	Helen McNabb	283	Elizabeth Sourbut	666	John Ledson
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228	Adam McNabb	286	Pauline Morgan		
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247	Keith Mitchell	305	Neil Robinson		

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NOVACON FIFTEEN, 86 BERWOOD FARM ROAD, WYLE GREEN, SUTTON COLDFIELD,
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REGISTRATION ON THE DAY WILL BE £10.00... YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED !



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32 DIGBY HOUSE, COLLETTS GROVE, KINGSHURST, BIRMINGHAM B32 6JE.

GRAHAM POOLE: (TREASURER & REGISTRATIONS)
86 BERWOOD FARM ROAD, WYLDE GREEN, SUTTON COLDFIELD, WEST MIDLANDS, B72 1AG.

MARTIN TUDOR: (ADVERTISING)
121 CAPE HILL, SMETHWICK, WARLEY, WEST MIDLANDS,

CAROL PEARSON: (ARTSHOW)
C/O 32 DIGBY HOUSE, COLLETTS GROVE, KINGSHURST, BIRMINGHAM, B32 6JE.

TONY BERRY: (FAN ROOM)
567 HOLYHEAD ROAD, COVENTRY, CV5 8HW