





an article (one of the rules is that all articles overflow by a few lines onto a pristine page) and so it is not torn up after all.

The Faber ad comes late, with many apologies from their Susan Oudôt, who punctuates all phone conversations with bursts of hysterical laughter. Rob Holdstock, paranoid as ever, confides his belief that someone at Faber tells her a series of dirty jokes about Rob Holdstock whenever Rob phones her. Rob has not been the same since Richard Cowper opened criticism on a story of his with the words "Whom the gods wish to destroy, they first call promising".

Now Key is complaining about the picture of him (see cover) provided for the booklet by my little brother. Little brother is taking liberties, he says. Little brother will be pummelled if he does not produce something a bit more flattering. The something is not forthcoming; Skycon will be very short for brother Jon. (Never mind; I gather his single is selling well since someone called John Peel began to plug it: the lad is drummer for a group called, if my aged ears do not deceive me, *The Mekons*. Soon I shall be able to put "Brother of the famous Jon Langford!" on the cover of *TD*.)

George Hay has sent a query for the H.G.Wells Society ad. George wants to know whether, when we say an A4 page, we really mean an A4 page. Do we not rather mean a double-page spread? Or do we in fact, on the other hand...? He is a man who will not take Yes for an answer. He sends a photocopy of the advert he will one day provide; it is cunningly reduced in size in order to mislead us. Next, a letter from the H.G.Wells Society itself arrives; this contains an advert five millimetres high and two centimetres long. When the tranquilliser bottle is quite empty I find that this is a correction to the main ad which does not arrive for another two days. Meanwhile the SF Book Club sends ads for PR4 and the Programme Book, each making reference to the little-known avant-garde writer Robert Silvergerg. After some soul-searching we correct this also.

Yes, it's fun to exert Power and abuse one's privileges. Ruthlessly I truncate Skycon members' names to fit them to the inflexible three-column format. I daydream of getting *four* columns to a page, with terse names like *G.Pickersg.* and *Kevin Sm.* Meanwhile, for the first time this year, the disgusting GPO decides that parcels which won't fit my letterbox must be taken back into custody instead of suffering the usual wind and rain in the porch. Hazel blesses the postman for his solicitude as she runs all the way to the sorting office to collect still more vital ad copy... The Faber ad proves to be about two inches oversize all round, with a black margin of improbable thickness. Scruples dwindling further, I surreptitiously cut it to size. Rob Holdstock rings up to check on what Faber are saying about him now, and is disgusted to learn that they have not mentioned his unforgettable books *Me Among The Blind* and *Breakwind*. "The sons-of-bitches," he says incredulously. It will be very easy to convince Rob that his name in fact appeared upon that sliced-off margin.

Key is still writing his interminable Chairman's Welcome on fourteen column analysis paper nicked from the temple of accountancy. He is desperate for material and even incorporates the fact that Peter Weston rings up to ask whether he can arrange to share a room with some fairly clean and respectable substitute for Tom Shippey. "Martin and Liese are handling all that," I reply. I do not ask why he didn't phone *them* since I know there was a telephonic rudeness contest or something of the sort last time Peter and Martin spoke, Martin having taken immense exception to the bit in Seacon PR1 about Eve Harvey

being more efficient than his beloved computer... In fact, Uncle Peter is so cut up by this that instantly he sends me a letter. He has an occult premonition that *Twill-Ddu* will hear of this incident, and wishes to be sure that I present a balanced view:

Martin has probably given you a detailed account of my sins. He was extremely ratty when I spoke to him about this ad, apparently because he had taken umbrage at my editorial in our first SEACON progress report. Well, I hadn't intended to get at him, but was only reaching out for superlatives for Eve Harvey, as I think the text makes reasonably clear. But since Martin *was* shirty I did retort that, so I understood, the computerised mailing system for SEACON *hadn't* worked properly, somewhere along the line, because several irate members of the SEACON committee let me know in no uncertain terms that they'd had to write out somewhere over 900 address labels. "It's nothing to do with me, directly," I told Martin, "I'm leaving it up to Eve Harvey."

And he rang off. So, I don't know where that leaves the Worldcom committee. I imagine we'll have to sort things out at a committee meeting and decide what, if anything, needs doing.

A powerful and sinister restraint in that second paragraph... It's amazing what fun can develop from such a simple sentence as "Yet how can I cope with someone as efficient as Eve Harvey, who wants to take the membership records away from the computer because she can handle them much more quickly?" (P. Weston). Enough of this. To preserve Balance I shall not record the backstabblings within the Seacon committee ---as revealed to me by sedulous eavesdropping---Suffice it to say that... no, I'd better not. Really, I expect, they all love Uncle Peter and are merely pulling my leg. As for Martin, he has his own troubles: just say "Ron Bennett!" to him suddenly, or "Paul Begg of the SF Book Club!!", and listen for the whimpers of anguish. No doubt Liese will reveal all in the next *Southern Vole*; or perhaps not, as I believe she is busy writing a novel after the manner of Barbara Cartland.

Now Kev has finished his article but cannot think of a title. He types the piece out quite quickly and stands around sulking and kicking the duplicator until I brilliantly suggest some clever play on Kev's accountancy qualifications, like *Kev the GalACatic Hero*. He cheers up them and kicks me instead. "Then how about some witty echo of a Sheckley title," I whine. At once he is on the floor squinting at the S shelf and muttering "*Dimension of Miracles* is overstating it a bit." I offer *The Prize of Peril* and he snarls once more, nor will he accept the title of that classic Sheckley short *The Accountant*. In the end we settle on *The 29th Victim* (subtle, subtle) and I rush downstairs to commit this to Letraset before Kev can change his mind.

The writing goes on; the misprints are ruthlessly extirpated, including all references to "The swimming po" (this keeps turning up at the ends of lines), and the stark warning "The hotel staff have instructions to ignore anyone with a badge", which may just be prophetic but needs a slight rewrite. My subconscious seems to have subeditorial tendencies: there is a bit in Leroy's article about "the sound coming from John Piggott's room that sounds like an electric toothbrush being used deep into the night if nothing else" and somehow I type "fan" instead of "toothbrush", earning much veiled contempt from the master of fannish prose. At least we spell Bob Shecklie's name correctly, most times, though there is trouble over his book *Calibre .50*; I do not find out about the .50 bit until we have gone to press, whereupon Chris Morgan turns up with a copy of the book itself (to be sold to Rog Peyton so that he can resell it as part of the great Sheckley Cash-In). Checking the Sheckleyography sheet I find

that the vital .50 is lost in a drift of line-numbers and calculations scribbled on the paper by Geoff Rippington, who nearly used said bibliography in *SF Arena* but sent it to us instead... Chris is unable to get back to sunny (or in this case, snowbound) Dorset, so he stays for two days of feasting and revelry.

Fuelled only by a half-gallon of elderflower wine, the booklet roars on. There is great difficulty in writing witty things about the committee without causing total disintegration; various bits like the following are censored in the interests of Niceness---

*KEITH OBORN has long been one of the most inarguable members of this committee; yet another spawn of OUSFG, he has devoted his exiguous fannish career to the task of not looking like John Brunner. For Skycon Keith has shouldered the mighty responsibility of hiring electronic games machines, a job whose myriad ramifications have taxed him to the very limits of his capability. He has also contributed greatly to committee meetings by his mere presence, and even more so by his absence. Amazingly efficient, fantastically conscientious, beloved of all fandom---none of this and less---he will function throughout Skycon as the Universal Scapegoat for Everything. Yes, the committee is not afraid to lay it on the line and let the blame fall where it may: it's all Keith's fault, and that's official! There is nothing more to be said about Keith.*

It's a hard weekend. Kev leaves in the small hours of Monday morning to audit things in Peterborough, and after a brief sleep I rise early to add the last little finishing touches. Fortunately Kev rings up in the afternoon, reminding me to eat something; the convention booklet reaches the printers fifteen minutes before they close, and while I am handing over the copy someone steals the windscreen wipers from my car. Aagh.

\* \* \* \* \*

Later it turns out that spare wipers for Vauxhall Victors are out of print, or something of the sort. In my usual naive way I wander down to Reading's official Vauxhall dealers, who hilariously inform me that it will take many days, if not weeks, to order such weird and esoteric items. A day's phone-calling at the expense of the M\*n\*stry of D\*f\*nc\* establishes that the only such wipers in Berkshire are in the hands of those noted international stockists, Spratley's Garage of Mortimer. Fortunately Mortimer village is not far off my route to work, though naturally it rains heavily all the way and I have to drive with my head stuck out of the window. ("Why did you not turn on your wipers?" lisps the cretinous reader. "Kindly re-read the last several lines," your friendly editor replies after breaking a chair to calm his feelings.)

Berkshire is full of grotty little villages like Mortimer and (worst of all) Tadley, barely recovered from *n* generations of incest amid a depressing expanse of stagnant waters, marshy ground and groundlike marsh: the MoD thought it just the place to build their top-secret thingies. If *Cold Comfort Farm* were rewritten today, the authentic local colour would surely include a Research Establishment in Ticklepenny's Field---vivisectioning the water-voles, filling the wains with radioactive sukebind and breeding fresh varieties of King's Evil to ravage the doomed crops. But I digress.

¶ ...It must have been a nursing mother who first said "It isn't the teat, it's the tumidity". This fanzine is one long digression.

Before moving on to the learned and edifying letters sent in by *Twll-Ddu*'s eccentric readership, I must mention that the fickle finger of fate has once again poked me rather forcibly in the gut. This time it's GUFF, the Get Up-&-Over Fan Fund, a once-off affair designed to bring an Australian fan for us all to gape at in 1979. A gigantic conjunction of fannish Heavenly Bodies, including those of delectable Chris Priest, rugged Greg Pickersgill and mysterious, sultry Leigh Edmonds, led to the elevation of self-effacing me to the post of UK Administrator for the fund. It's run exactly like TAFF; further details by and by, and meanwhile you can send your vast donations c/o me. Also---though *Twll-Ddu* is theoretically available only for letter of comment, trade or whim---I'll slacken my principles once more and accept 20p for GUFF in lieu of any of these. Meanwhile (Egyptological Titbits Strike Again!)---did you know that one of the most interesting Egyptian items in the Ashmolean Museum was a faience model of a cucumber?

TERRY HUGHES, 4739 Washington Blvd., Arlington, VA 22205, USA:

LETTER OF COMMENT (An Act In Three Plays)

SCENE: Interior of 22 Northumberland Avenue; rear wall holds a neon sign flashing "TWLL-DDU". DAVE LANGFORD is reading letters and smiling broadly.

DAVE: Egoboo, sweet egoboo, thy slightest touch doeth [sic] give me pleasure beyond compare. (Looks stage right.) Bloody hell!

BLOND AMERICAN (enters stage right): FANZINE FANATIQUE? (He extends hand towards DAVE.)

DAVE (shaking hand and pointing at sign): No, it's TWLL-DDU.

BLOND AMERICAN: Howdy Dave. I'm Terry Hughes, author of this play and well known vichysoisse.

DAVE (hurriedly releasing hand with look of disgust): What brings you to Britain?

TERRY: An airplane. (TERRY then bursts into laughter as DAVE stares blankly, as usual.) Get it?

DAVE: Subtle American humour, no doubt. Come meet Hazel.

DAVE and TERRY cross to stage left as a Cornish Chorus prances from stage right, following DAVE. (Cornish Chorus distinguished from Greek Chorus by their orange socks.) CHORUS: Number Ten! Number Ten!

DAVE: Ignore them, Terry. They're always talking behind my back. (calling off-stage) Hazel!

HAZEL enters stage left and ad lib introductions are made, except for Chorus who are ignored.

TERRY: Hel-lo, Hazel. (His face reflects lust, hers reflects disappointment.) I've heard about you Berkshire college women.

CHORUS: Digression, digression. For shame!

TERRY walks over to Chorus lead and knees him in the groin. Lead falls to floor, ad libbing groans and writhes in agony. Remainder of Chorus exit stage right doing the Attacking Budgie.

TERRY: Now, where was I?

HAZEL: Nowhere.

Just then a group of Greek soldiers enter stage right, pulling a huge wooden horse. SOLDIER (looking at actors and audience): No, this isn't it. Let's try the next theatre. (Soldiers and horse exit stage left.)

HAZEL: What the bloody hell was that?

DAVE: More subtle American humour.

TERRY practises looking put upon as a band of RATS enters stage left, led by Graham Charnock playing lead guitar. They are doing a disco version of "A.S.T.R.A.L. L.E.A.U.G.E.".

TERRY: Oh, wow, Man. I'm a big fan of your Group. WOW! What instrument do you play?

GRAHAM: The bloody tuba, you twerp.

DAVE: I'm something of a musician myself.

TERRY: Really?

HAZEL: Oh yes---Dave practises the base canard.

Cast turns toward audience for expected laughter, but is instead pelted with rotten produce. A quick exit takes place. Curtain falls.

*\*\*\*Hazel wishes it to be known that she does not say "Bloody hell". This dubious privilege appears to be restricted to the male of the house, which is probably all very sexist, but Lysistrata wasn't built in a day y'know. Anyway, more of these scandalous imputations and the full might of Egyptology will be unleashed against this Hughes character, whose only safety will lie in gabbling the following extract from the "Book of the Dead" (Coffin Texts, Spell 197):*

NOT TO EAT FAECES IN THE REALM OF THE DEAD. I am the companion of those two gods who ascend to the sky as falcons and I ascend on their wings; who descend to the earth as snakes, and I descend on their coils. I will not eat faeces for you, I will not walk upside down for you, I will not depart bowed down for you, I will depart upstanding. My phallus is on me, it being attached; my anus is on me, it being attached. I eat with my mouth, I defaecate with my anus...

*Or as it's summed up in Spell 205:*

Faeces is my detestation, and I will not eat for you; urine is my detestation, and I will not drink for you; walking upside down is my detestation, and I will on no account perform the recitation for you.

JOSEPH NICHOLAS, 2 Wilmot Way, Camberley, Surrey, GU15 1JA:

...Your statement that Helen McCarthy and I demonstrated afresh our mutual hatred of each other at Novacon is not wholly accurate, either. She did, after all, attempt to arouse me to the heights of unrestrained lust and passion by placing her thighs in close proximity to mine, entwining her arms about me and sealing my lips with her own; unfortunately, however, she neglected to remove the spikes from her nipples beforehand, and I retain the scars upon my person as mute testimony to this wanton assault.

...Doubtless I shall achieve but a mention in the WAHF columns; but then, if I received any larger allocation of space, Dave Rowe would only complain bitterly about how he didn't have time to read it. O! for my prose is faltering; eroded by the hastening caresses of time, it... [*Calm, Mr Nicholas. The doctor will see you now.*]

CELIA PARSONS, Girton College, Cambridge:

Who would have thought that such a corrupt encounter could take place in sunny suburban Surbiton? It all began on Saturday afternoon. I was eating my tea with Bruce (tasty!) when the door creaked open, and in walked Jack Robson and C.C. After suitable greetings and tea they vanished into the dark depths of the house... A few hours later, at eight o'clock, it was time to leave for the Party. Bruce called up the stairs, "Coral, are you coming?" Muffled response: "There's no answer to that!" amidst scufflings and rustles. Some, er, little time later the happy couple reappeared, none the worse for wear. After a demonstration of Coral's wigs in unlikely places we all set off....

The next bit you all know. C.C. did an amazing impression of an indiarubber Leaning Tower of Pisa while Mr Robson seemed to be cast in the rôle of pit-prop...

Since then, life has returned almost to normal. C.C. went up North (I believe it was somewhere near Newcastle-upon-Tyne) for a long weekend (Tuesday-Tuesday) over the New Year. I learn that in Surbiton fights have developed for the use of the telephone---when I ring up it's usually engaged (ooh! SCANDAL---GOSSIP---!).

...I hope you are keeping the sordid saga of the corruption of Boris under your hat, so to speak. I wouldn't want people to hear that he appeared in the reception hall of the Royal Angus at 3.00am wearing just his red boxer shorts and black boots---I mean we mustn't damage his reputation, now must we?

\*\*\*I too keep hearing things about Coral and Jack Robson. "Don't mention what happened on the dressing-table," Celia warned me in their presence. "It wasn't the dressing-table," Coral said quickly, "it was the wardrobe." I backed away from a confused discussion about the interesting uses of stepladders... Later on, the editor of "Ayam" leered "I'm only going to Faancon for one thing." "Yeah," said Greg afterwards... "Twenty years of accumulated lust to work off in one weekend."

But those hoping for debauchery at Faancon were disappointed, I hear from Dewi Williams. Coral and Jack were very self-effacing. In fact, they hardly ever came downstairs.

STEVE McDONALD, c/o Alcan Jamaica Ltd, KirkVine Works PO, Manchester, Jamaica, West Indies:

One Tun: Enter Rowe, with Garry Kilworth. McDonald, chatting to a neofan taken under the wing for the nonce, ups and dashes across the Tun, heedless of the poor denizens trampled by his snorkel.

ROWE: When you said six feet wide, I thought you were joking.

McD: Me, joking?

ROWE: Well, anyway, this is Garry Kilworth.

GARRY (shyly): Hello.

McD: Kilworth? Kilworth? Now where have I heard that name before?

ROWE: He won a recent Gollancz award for his book.

McD: Ah! (Espies a huge Irish Wolfhound lying sprawled by its owner's feet) Look at the size of that bloody thing!

(Kilworth, depressed, slinks away to die quietly, of heartbreak...)

...I could tell you a story involving Hilma Peterson and Ames.

\*\*\*So could I, Steve, so could I. The activities of those noted pseudonyms are the talk of the One Tun. But did you ever get to meet Coral?

MIKE GLICKSOHN, 141 High Park Avenue, Toronto, Ont. M6P 2S3, CANADA:

I have nothing to tell you about the issue. But I did enjoy it, and I even understood parts of it! Mostly the references to myself, of course, but every now and then I caught the sly and subtle way in which you oh-so-gently pulled the legs of some of your peers. Or your contemporaries, anyway, since you've never done anything nasty enough to me to warrant my calling you an equal of Greg Pickersgill. Actually though, I was just a little disappointed to be immortalised only for such insignificant talents as not loccing every fanzine in the world, being born in Portsmouth and taking pictures at parties. Surely kissing Malcolm Edwards is worth a footnote in fannish history? [Hardly.]

GRAHAM ENGLAND, 55 Colbrook Avenue, Hayes, Middlesex, UB3 1TQ

The plural of phallus is given in my Concise Oxford as phalli or phalluses. Phalloi goes back two languages, since our phallus is from the Latin out of the Greek φαλλος --- ΦΑΛΛΟΣ. Phalli is silly enough.

\*\*\*Good grief, intellectualism again. Hazel tells me that "phalloi" is OK in Greek as the plural from φαλλος (note correct form of the last letter), and after all I never said this was the plural of "phallus" when I typed it in TD10. For all you know I might have been putting in pretentious bits of Greek rather than being absent-minded. Maybe.



JOYCE SCRIVNER, Apt AG3.3, Hatfield Village, Hatfield, PA 19440, USA:

Your version of Milford reads much like the twenty questions from my Clarion summer. Such things as Who are the two virgins and why won't they play Harlan Ellison's game? What happened to the four dozen super eggs Damon bought? Why are all the squirt guns filled with jelly this morning? Mainly I avoid remembering.

PAUL BEGG, Readers Union Ltd, Brunel House, Forde Rd, Newton Abbot, Devon, TQ12 2DW

...I am frankly suprised that you haven't heard of Robert Silvergerg. He's an up and coming young writer with several pseudonyms. He has written *Close Encounters of the Fourth Kind* as Stovon Spoilberg, *All My Sins Remembered* as Joe Haldoman, *Barnadby Budge* as Charles Dikkens (a venture beyond SF), *Gateway* as Frederick Bohl, and is presently awaiting publication of *The Alchemical Marriage of Alistair Loomis* as Robert Shockley.

\*\*\*Thank you, Paul. Martin Hoare is even now preparing a Skycon badge for you, which reads "PULA GEBG (Miss)". You do speak Serbo-Croat?

MARY LONG, 1338 Crestview Drive, Springfield, Illinois 62702, USA (NB---COA):

...What happened was that [Mike Glicksohn] got out of the lift and there were a dozen or more chanting fen advancing on him, crying "Show us your KNEES! Show us your KNEES!" Well, he did, and reports that reached us say that he had such hairy ones (the hairiest in fandom, they said) that they could only inspect the site of the knees (since they could not actually see them!).

\*\*\*Mary also sent many strange and wondrous adverts for Voodoo Wangas ("Generally used in the privacy of one's own home... We will not be held responsible for any evil which might befall victims on whom you invoke the mystical powers of a Wanga."), *Aladdin's Lamps* ("I was sure the lamp and its mystical legend really were the secret to happiness and success! ...I only have a limited supply of lamps for this scientific test... an authentic copy of my 'Alladin's Lamp' for your very own... \$7 for one, \$18 for three... (c) Good Luck Symbols Inc") and *Eyes of Horus*, almost another Egyptological Bit---

The Amazing Talisman that Allows Bio-Cosmic Energy to Surge into Your Body! HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED THE MYSTICAL SYMBOL ON THE ONE-DOLLAR BILL? It's True! Just take out a dollar and turn it reverse side up. There on the left you'll see an engraving of the Great Pyramid of Cheops. And above it, suspended magically in the air, is the all-seeing Eye of Horus. [Only it isn't.] ...Wealth...energy...good health...infinite joy and well-being...fertility and sexual fulfilment...extrasensory powers...\$9.95¢.

While we're on the subject of Bio-Cosmic Energy, Mary also has a query about the persons on the cover of TD10. They were, from left to right, myself and Leroy Kettle. (Perhaps Leroy was still clean-shaven when you left the country, Mary?)

SHORT BITS: Dave Wingrove "It was delightfully bland, an occasional fault of MAYA, but I hoped not one of yours. Not enough iconoclasm, polemic or dum-dum jobs in it for my liking." *Aughh!* Colin Lester: "I've been determined by recent incidents to reform my image as a DOM and am becoming instead a BOF (Boring Old Fart). So much more comfortable." Tom Jones: "The cover is crap, you don't look as deaf as that." Robert Day: "TWLL-DDU always reminds me of bananas... My all-time favourite piece of graffiti has to be IS THERE INTELLIGENT LIFE ON EARTH? ---YES, BUT I'M ONLY PASSING THROUGH." WAHF: Pam Boal, Paul Kincaid, Terry Jeeves, Keith Seddon, Andy Firth, Dave Griffin (for the last time), Andy Sawyer, Jim Barker, Alan Dorey, Leigh Edmonds, Chris Priest, Peter Weston, Jan Howard Finder, Brian Earl Brown, Wally Stoelting, Eric Lindsay, Andy Richards (he sent a 5 page Feghoot: ecch) and Sorrylostyerletter.

## Potsherds:

WHO IS THE TWLL-DDU MYSTERY MAN? In recent times he has (a) taken great care to exclude One Particular Member of the Skycon committee (already vilified at length in this issue) from his wedding; (b) helped cause a gun-waving cretin at the Oxford SF Group banquet to vanish in a pillar of flame and smoke; (c) injected beer into the fruit-machine of a pub whose bar-staff had been especially uncouth... You think you know him? Confront him, saying "You are the Twll-Ddu Mystery Man and I claim the prize." Should you be right, he will give you a cardboard cylinder with wires attached, and retreat into the distance, unreeling more wire and fumbling with a battery; presently you will receive your just reward.

THE OUSFG BANQUET was also enlivened by an open coffin, which could be glimpsed through the door as the serving-wenches came and went; by at least one thunderous explosion; by the smoking wineglasses, primed with dry ice; and by the aforesaid wenches' reactions to Al Scott's and Mike Rohan's extremely silly notion of putting dry ice in their coffee. For me, carbonated port was a sufficiently weird experience...

SUPPORT FOR THE BRAM STOKES EASTERCON BID comes not from the BSFA (sic transit) but from Edinburgh's Rob King, who agrees that fans are deliberately keeping conventions small and penurious. If it were not for the fans, lots of people (origin unspecified) would come to cons and spend lots of money, which would make them much better cons for several of the attendees. Obviously we must strive to emulate those superior conventions whose members sell each other comics in jolly fannish camaraderie, until at 10am there begins the day's official programme of buying comics from the smiling dealers. Meanwhile, Bram himself has made despondent noises, such as "I can't find anyone to help me..." Support Leeds and save this man the trouble of helping himself!

WALLY STOELTING (USA) wants to review fanzines for Twll-Ddu. Unfortunately, contributors have been required from time immemorial to be called "Dave Langford" (Different names are permissible in the letter columns, though many of these---like the preposterously orotund "Joseph Nicholas"---are transparent Langford pseudonyms). Tell you what, Wally: Greg Pickersgill is complaining of a lack of fanzine reviews

in his own *Stop Breaking Down*. And I know he has a very special feeling for American zines...

TELEPHONE CALLS are a curse and an abomination, and of all people the most exasperating are those who feign bafflement when faced with a letter---who respond only to crackly messages via the GPO's low-fi system. Yet so numerous have they become that I've perforce had little amplifiers fitted to the phones at work (Tadley (07356) 4111 ext 4119) and at home (Reading (0734) 863453), to give me something like an even chance of deciphering the mystic garble. Ring me if you will, wretched phone people; be prepared to shout or shriek in any case. What worries me is that Keith Walker's threat to upgrade his fanzine by using a "multi-media approach productionwise" will begin with a programme of telephonic misreadings... If so, I'll come right back with the less than likely information that the Ancient Egyptians were familiar with the pineapple and the kangaroo (as stated in Jacques Champollion's *"The World of the Egyptians"*).

OVERLOOKED LETTERS are now due for a quick airing, for I dare not overlook such Names as BRIAN ALDISS: *"Thanks for sending me TWLL-DDU 10; although I hate the vile streak of racialism in it, I couldn't help laughing at all the jokes about coons, wogs and niggers. Keep up the bad work."*

And BRYN FORTEY: *"A deep rooted fannish instinct rises ever nearer the surface as Easter approaches. There are friends to drink with, foes to sneer at, a mass of unknowns to ignore, but I'm too old now to stay at home so I'm tempted to seek the peace and tranquillity of a convention."*

And MARY BURNS, and IRA M. THORNHILL.

## GREAT MOMENTS IN SF:

*"I am the BSFA!"* (Greg Pickersgill)

*"I don't like phoning R\*\*\*\*\* S\*\*\*\*\* in case he's stoned when he answers."* (Kev Smith)

*"Yes, the BSFA got it wrong again."* (Peter Weston)

*"May the farce be with you."* (Leroy Kettle)

D: *"...Dreams like that are probably supposed to mean that I want to return to the womb."*

H: *"It depends whose womb you want to return to."*

*(Young persons should not read the above)*

"You're in danger of becoming fandom's parliamentarian, Dave." (Malcolm Edwards)

"A man shall say this spell over a louse from his head; he shall place it on his knee, spitting (?) until a fly comes to snatch it..." (The Coffin Texts again)

THE FINGER OF FATE has once again poked me rather forcibly in the gut. I've typed that already, haven't I? Sorry. But, fixed so firmly at the end of the Long Arm Of Coincidence, this Finger just can't keep its hands off me, so to speak. It now seems that I'm administrating the Hugos in 1979; this was manifestly engineered by "Jack Robson" to make *Twill-Ddu* ineligible, thus eliminating his major rival. Other potential Hugo contenders are advised that their offers will be considered with the utmost impartiality...

SPECIAL SKYCON COBBLERS AWARD to Duncan Lunan, who offered the con a small ad in his *Space Outlook*, never apparently printed the thing, and has offered no further comment upon either this or the full-page Skycon booklet ad he promised at the time... And which leading lights of an SF group not a million parsecs from Norwich have showered us with rubber cheques? Why do Robert Scheckley's publishers spell

A COPTIC APOPHTHEGM—

An elder said, "In every adversity, do not lay the blame on someone [else] but lay the blame on thyself alone, saying "These things happen to me because of my sins."

Yes: had you led a better life, you might have avoided TWLL-DDU 11, from:

Dave Langford  
22 Northumberland Avenue  
READING  
Berkshire  
RG2 7PW  
United Kingdom

his name that way at least 50% of the time? Why do Greg and Kev agree that Ian Williams has the brain of a rocking-horse? These are deep waters...

THIRTEEN DAYS TO SKYCON as I type these fateful words. 700 programme books await the great putting-into-envelopes downstairs. Over 500 fans are registered for the great effort. The basic feeling of a committee member is one of being vastly outnumbered... I mention, not of course that it will be of any interest to anyone, that committee members with hearing aids will object strongly and violently to being thrown into the swimming pool. The muted hiss as a short-circuit scalds my ear off is a sound of no academic interest, and will in any case be drowned (ho ho, what subtlety) in a series of hoarse bubbling screams. It seems a little silly to prolong this advice, since most of you will be reading this after Skycon anyway: perhaps long after, if I don't meet you there and am in no state to post things for weeks afterwards. Maybe months, since I'm involved in a sordid attempt to make lots of money by writing a book. Thus the only predicted date for TD12 is Real Soon Now... Leeds for Easter '79, Pickersgill for the BSFA Council, and goodbye for now.