

CONFIDENTIAL

MINUTES of a Britain in '87 committee meeting at Duckett Rd HQ, 15 July 1984

Present: Chris, Malcolm, Dave, Martin, Hugh, Colin (from whom, apologies for vile lateness) and Lucy Huntzinger (token US agentling, from whom we expect apologies for disrupting the afternoon with her chart of UK fannish sexual relations etc).

Headings 1-7 below are nicked from ME's agenda of 6 July.

1. Minutes of last meeting. An ingenious failure to circulate these beforehand allowed them to pass without dispute, bar pedant Langford's observation that Bryan Barrett is not spelt Brian Barrett.

2. Matters arising.

DL reported that Marty Cantor has confirmed reception of our two-page ad for the LA-Con programme book---also of the \$270 fee telexed (it says here) by HM.

ME explained he'd already done an ad for the Westercon programme book but had received no invoice as yet. He'd also dealt with Aussiecon PR1. DL to send one-page ads for remaining Aussiecon PRs beginning with number 2, deadline 1 August. These to consist merely (for PR2 anyway) of Margaret Welbank's triffic artwork, as giggled over at this meeting and included in the LA-Con ad, with appropriate addresses typed in below.

HM said we had some £400 on deposit, the current account having been bled dry by the LA-con ad. In generous response to this, ME handed over 'some money' from memberships and DL produced 10 Swedish pre-supporters paid by Giro transfer via Ahrvid Engholm. Debts included an outstanding Seacon 84 ad invoice (that con's noble hopes of waiving such worthy causes' fees having gone phut), the £50 or so for the first Aussiecon PR ad, and Westercon as above. About £300 would remain.

DL vaguely recalled something to do with Brum Group donations, which MT said he'd check discreetly. DL to write to the Unicon Steering Committee (chiefly Chris Hughes and Jan Huxley) asking if, having so frequently offered financial aid to Ansible, they'd care to do so for Britain in 87. (Done---DL.) Other sources of income to be furiously thought about by everyone (this means you).

(Marty has since written with his own financial report. In general he's been recycling money into bid parties at eg. Westercon, to which Bruce Pelz took \$150 for this purpose but was able to return over \$75. A bit over \$70 remains overall in Marty's 'Britain in 87 account'---I don't know whether this has been set up as a formal bank account.)

3. Site selection.

The earlier minutes reported the horrors of Harrogate, including staidness, lack of space, and bizarre regulations such as no dealers' tables on Sundays: ME's powerful rhetoric of grimaces and groans disposed of this venue at our Seacon 84 meeting.

CA and ME have since revisited Brighton and conferred with the Brighton Centre's conference officer Tony Burgess, and the Metropole's conning/banqueting manager Clive Ramsden. The relevant ensuing letters were given out at this meeting, but in summary: the Metropole quotes 1985 prices, suggests 10-16% inflation by 1987, and offers rooms at £16/person/night inc. VAT and English breakfast. (A supplement of £10/person/night inclusive is asked for a single room, and £30 for a suite: ME pointed out that these can be adjusted---eg. there are proportionately so few singles that £3 can be knocked off the single price by shifting 50p to the twin price.) Conf. rooms are offered for the entire period, 27 Aug to 2 Sept, for £2000+VAT (the Metropole's own) plus £5250+VAT (the draughty bit at the back). The Centre will cost us nothing, ho ho, and is tentatively reserved for us for four days, Thursday to Sunday.

Comments followed. The Centre is basically a whopping big hall plus a few odd bits like bars and a gigantic foyer. The hall will seat up to 5000 people, 1000+ on the central flat floor and others banked on three sides. ME suggested the hall be used for all huge events like GoH speeches and Astral League ceremonies, with all registration being done in the foyer since it has a very convenient 100' cloakroom counter (cf. inevitable bottlenecks at the Metropole). There will be a

charge if we want the seating built up at the back of the flat area. At the moment we needn't make any final decisions on how frequently we'll use the Centre.

The Metropole reportedly didn't do at all well from Seacon 84 and hence will not offer any facilities free. Instead, lucky us, there will be the Metro Night Club and, somewhere in the recesses of the basement, an Indoor Heated Swimming Pool. (The meeting failed to swoon in awestruck wonderment.) CF mentioned a 1984 room allocation problem with people ending in half a twin after trying to book singles; he noted the quotation for suites was the same as the 1984 cost but "they gave us three suites free." CA/ME/whoever to try and wangle similar GoH concession in later negotiation. ME mentioned a 1979 goodwill problem owing to Americans---a few, anyway---booking rooms and not turning up. Some discussion on vast reported losses on beer sales by the Metropole: though certain Seacon 84 co-chairmen may have ascribed their own drinking habits to fandom at large, it was felt the hotel was partly to blame for poor bar siting/staffing. CF said the Brighton magistrates had allowed an extension of bar hours to 3am. for the first time ever, only for the hotel to cook things up by eg. closing all bars simultaneously for the agreed hour per day. (NB---in later conversation M.Hoare insisted that simultaneous closure was required by the magistrates for their own eldritch reasons.) CF added that we need someone local to keep in close touch with all this.

A £20 registration fee was spoken of as feasible. (Cf. \$75 at the door for LA-Con.) ME gloated that our total quoted costs for facilities are much less than what ConStellation squandered on the fabulous DiamondVision screen alone. In a heady outbreak of pessimism CF observed that lower UK worldcon costs would be taken by US nitpickers to indicate we've omitted something vital (like a Diamond-Vision screen): general agreement to be crushingly ready for such queries.

Returning from these fascinating byways, the committee jointly spat on Harrogate, sneered cursorily at Scarborough, and in a glorious moment of almost religious epiphany resolved that (the terms being Broadly Acceptable) Brighton was our venue.

Some remarks about Brighton's Image followed, owing to rude comments about the awful Metropole promulgated by Roelof Goudriaan (who is supposed to be our agent) and eagerly reprinted by Mike Glycer (who is also supposed to be our agent). DL to write to Roelof pointing out how everything is made utterly different (coff coff) by new factor of Brighton Centre. The Metropole---though as far as we know it hasn't a bad name in US fandom---will be but one of 3/4 designated main hotels.

4. LA-Con. Plans for same.

CA, ME and CF are going, lucky buggers; US agents like small but perfectly formed Lucy H. expected in force; some, though, like Marty C., will be a bit busy running con-things. In addition UK fandom can muster Rob Hansen, Paul Dormer and Peter Wareham. A registration desk is needed and---er, actually, at one point it says here 'CF will take charge' and at another it is implied that 'CA will be sitting there a lot'. Bryan Barrett will make a suite available for the two parties he recommends, Saturday and Sunday. Much mumbling re. drinks and nibbles for the parties. Some anticipated difficulty in importing hedgehog-flavoured crisps etc; will rely on Marty's assurance that 'British nibbles' can be found locally. Hotel will charge \$15 for 24 12-oz cans of soft disgusting drinks---Lucy H. said this was extortionate. Hopes for keg of British Beer as centrepiece: CF to talk to G. Bishop about possibilities of inviegling breweries. Apart from this, everything to be bought locally. Distinctive formal UKCommittee garb suggested, eg. Union Jack waistcoats, but time seems too short. Cassettes of Very British Things like Hitch-Hiker to be played at maddening length in parties.

LA-Con (ME thought) would be obliged to provide programme time for Worldcon bid presentations. He would exert his usual loud, forceful charisma on the same.

A need for publicity material was noted. Jim Barker should be reminded of his promise to do a badge-sized logo and further requested to be a sport and do a t-shirt as well (Margaret W.'s exquisite artwork being too fine for this). DL would ring Jim in the week (oh bugger, Faircon's started already and I forgot) while, as a secondary line of defence thanks to predictions of Langfordian amnesia, CF would violently poke Jim at Faircon. Stickers with little Union Jacks were agreed on as

suitable for the US Worldcon Ritual of Support (whereby mean buggers, who don't actually want to pay to join and thus get a real badge, receive an emblematic sticker to affix to their Worldcon namebadge): DL to write to British Tourist Authority and find where to get the things. (Done---DL.) Publicity flyer and poster to be prepared, an A4 flyer and A3 poster version of Margaret's artwork with Marty's and our main UK address typed beneath---to be handed by DL (real soon now, boss) to ME for furtive reproduction on the Gollancz office copier.*

ME will write to Marty about our registration desk.

5. Appointment of permanent treasurer.

Possibles were Graham Poole and John Steward. It was felt that vast previous experience on Seacon 79, plus an almost fanatical devotion to the cause, made JS the better choice. ME to ask him. (Later: He said yes and is now Treasurer---DL.) The protem moneyperson HM received a wild standing ovation either for his efforts or for his avowed intention of emigrating to Zimbabwe. ME and JS will 'get together' about things like accounts, financial projections, etc.

6. Any other business.

ME, for reasons known best to himself, gave an impassioned recitation from the Noreascon II Financial Summary. Appropriate oohs and ahhs greeted the news that eg. more than \$71,000 had been spent on facilities. Interestingly, the publications recovered only \$9000 of their \$29000 cost through advertising income---cf. Seacon '79's break-even position.

Much natter about agents. It was agreed that the chief agents in the USA should be designated as Marty Cantor (West Coast), who has done all the visible work so far, and Mary & Bill Burns (East Coast). No objection to large numbers of roving accredited persons of great fame and niceness, notably Gary Farber and Bruce Pelz, who have taken many pre-supp memberships and are passing details to Marty. W.Paul Valcour (if I've spelt that right) wrote via Justin Ackroyd asking if he could be Canadian agent, incidentally offering a free ad in the World Fantasy Convention PRs/programme book. ME took a spare copy of the Welbank artwork to send him; at first it was felt that no specifically Canadian agent was needed, but later we thought 'the more the merrier' and decided to have him report via Marty and/or Mary & Bill. Roelof recommended further Euroagents including A. Engholm and J-D. Breque (already on our lists), and Hans-Juergen Mader (Germany) and Bruno Vallee (Italy, and it may not be spelt like that).

ME wrote to the San Diego bid (who offered to fold on condition that we endorsed their NASFiC bid, a course felt to be politically inadvisable) politely declining the offer but hoping between the lines that they'd fold anyway. (Later: They have. Officially. And heroic Marty has signed up the erstwhile chairman, Sean McCoy, as a Britain in 87 presupporter.)

ME waved a letter from Pam Boal re. the Metropole's lack of access for the disabled. Some random abuse of the hotel's designers ensued, but we dismally agreed that we were in no position to do very much about this.

CF mentioned that Seacon 84 walk-ins were lower than expected, only 40 on the Friday.

There was a discussion on the increasing of committee numbers by approaching fans of great organizing talent and things. CF was happy to carry on with his computerized registrations (and here I add what I forgot under item 2: his print-out showed 293 presupporters, to whom can be added the 26 gathered by Pelz and Farber at Westercon, Engholm's 10 Scandinavians, and more from Malcolm's wad of stuff handed over at the meeting). HM's job 'evaporates' with the appointment of a Treasurer, although there'll be tidying-up and various transfers to do yet. CF suggested Chris Donaldson as a triffic programme organizer, the Seacon 84 difficulties being the fault of others; ME was concerned that whoever is appointed should know and be able to browbeat both UK and US pres. The fan room would be no problem (continued ME) since there were millions of volunteers; the only difficulty was everything else. CF urged that the experience of the Albacon and Becon folk should not be wasted. ME savagely riposted that Kev Williams was a triffic con

organizer. (Later: Arnold 'Wee, Gloom and Misery' Akien writes remarking that with the sole exception of himself, the Gannetfans regard Big Conventions with an indifference bordering on active disdain.) CF, not to be outdone in this glittering repartee, wanted to know the position of the gloom-prone DL, who mumbled something about overwork-induced depression but hoped to hang on despite Hazel's urgings until the bid was safely won, at least.

The GoH question arose. CF suggested Alfred Bester. CA confessed to a passionate longing for J.G. Ballard, which was duly entered on Lucy H.'s chart; ME, forced despite himself to be realistic, admitted JGB wasn't very likely to agree to this. DL expressed fears of the Historical Imperative, the Golden Section, Manifest Destiny, and (in short, as the only survivor of the 1937 con) Arthur C. Clarke. ME put in a word for the Strugatskys but glumly noted that the Soviets were quite liable to agree and then send instead the USSR equivalent of Lionel Fanthorpe. Brian Aldiss's wish to 'do the hat-trick' and become the first author to be GoH at three Worldcons was dismissed on its own merits. Other suggestions, though numerous, tended to be silly.

There did not appear to be any more business. Probably there should have been.

7. Date of next meeting.

This will be arranged at or after LA-Con.

Dave Langford (unwilling secretary ever since Chris A. explained that for her to be secretary was sexist) 20-7-84

Circulation: Chris Atkinson, Malcolm Edwards, Colin Fine, Hugh Mascetti, Martin Tudor, John Steward, Marty Cantor, Mary & Bill Burns, Roger Waddall. Oh, and me too. I'll keep a few spare copies in case more should be needed. Do we really need to send this vital stuff to minor agents like our French one? I thought not.

PS: Since we have some space, and since Mike Glycer has raised the question of how it comes about that both 1986 and 1987 conventions are campaigning with reference to the '50th anniversary of the first ever convention', I shall now clarify the point. It is all Sam Moskowitz's fault. Unable, for apparently chauvinistic reasons, to accept that the first con was held in Britain in January 1937, he insists on the honours going to a 1936 event. This consisted of a social outing of New York (I think) fans who visited Philadelphia, gathered in the home of a local fan, and as an afterthought declared the gathering to be a convention. "A bit of officiality that gave them the uncontested title to the first convention in fan history," babbles Moskowitz. Nonsense, say I. A convention implies pre-organization and, I rather think, the use of public facilities. Out upon this heresy! (DRL)

Nothing else to hand, bar more from A.Akien, who suggests seeking sponsorship immediately from all directions, contacting the Arts Council, demanding a grant (even a token one) from Brighton to indicate their commitment to our cause, and so on and so forth.

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