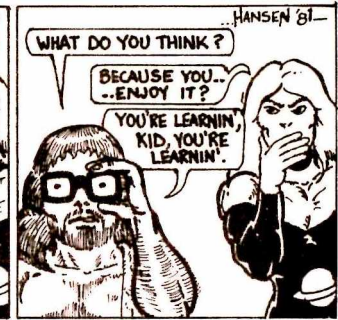
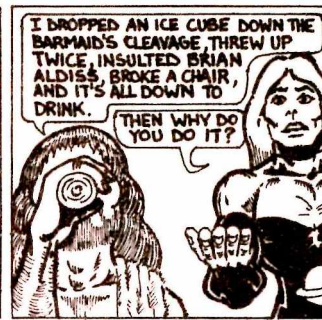


Dave Langford, 22 Northumberland Avenue, READING, Berks., RG2 7PW, UK. Subscriptions: 6/£1 UK, 5/£1 Europe, 4/£1 in funny places; no foreign cheques/currency, or subs over £2, please. See the wondrous Keith Freeman mailing label for your status (***** is Bad). ARTWORK: Rob Hansen.

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* SON OF CONVENTION MENTIONS

DENVENTION II (1981 Worldcon, Denver): Before my peevish last issue could have reached them, Denvention sent me (a) a belated note of acknowledgement/apology to all Euro members; (b) **The R*cky M*untain *yster**, a newsrelease saying such things as that membership reached 2112 attending and 608 supporting by 15th January: nice neat production at last. However, I'm not too pleased to learn that stocks of the first two progress reports have run out so that after waiting six months I won't be getting them: to add insult to injury, TRM* explains that membership figures are 'right on target', meaning presumably that Denvention planned all along to run out of PRs and deprive supporting members of part of what they're paying for. Rats!

FANTASYCON VII (Birmingham, 10-12 July) has been 'forced' to change its venue from the Grand to the Central Hotel (reason not given): Gohs are Peter Tremayne, Alan Hunter. **BEUM GROUP 10th ANNIVERSARY PARTY** (Royal Angus, 27 June) is definitely on: hotel rates as for Novacon 11 (£10.50/person sharing, £13 single, inc. breakfast, service, VAT), membership £2; 39 Hollybrow, Selly Oak, Birmingham B29 4LX. **DEEPSOUTHCON** (Birmingham, Alabama, next August): Bob Shaw shyly confesses that he'll be there as Goh.

THE EVER MORE COMPLEX EUROCON MUDDLE: John Brunner writes: "The muddle concerning Eurocon 1982 is infinitely more complicated than indicated in *Ansible 15* for which many thanks. It has turned out that the withdrawal of the Hungarian bid was done without consulting the country's more-than-forty SF fan clubs... who in the interim had not only held a special meeting to plan the convention, but enlisted the support of the Writers' Union and applied for an okay from the Ministry of Culture. Said okay is now to hand!

"We are left lumbered with the hideously embarrassing mix-up resulting from one person falling ill and withdrawing without telling everyone else in the intended host country! Pascal Ducommun (one very nice guy) was so eager to get a Swiss con rolling, he too had organized a preliminary meeting before the news arrived that Mr (Hungarian) Kuczka had neglected to persuade everyone else that without him it wouldn't work. (I am probably libelling the poor guy; I apologize if so, but he oughtn't to have written a letter saying he didn't like fans!) On current evidence, Hungary is the destination..."

PROJECT STARCAST (1982) sends its first PR, *Castoff 1*, which does indeed look like a fanzine not as professionally produced as the front page of *Ansible*: the idea of the con is that you pay a lot of money (currently £14 not including PRs), and get 'four simultaneous conventions' (book, comic, Trekkie and film)... the corollary being that with four main programmes, it's physically impossible for you to get more than a quarter of what you're paying for. Also mentioned are two committee members and no membership figures. Evil reporter Steven Green sends a few vile slurs about the organizers, in particular Brian Clarke and his *Soundzine*; as usual I await developments with vast interest...

ADVENTION 81 (13-15 June; Adelaide, Australia; Goh Frank Herbert) is the Australian national con and will be attended by GUFF winner Joe Nicholas (whose 47 votes defeated Malcolm Edwards's 24 and HOF's 2, not to mention three

write-ins—see attached flyer where weight permits) and DUFF winner Joyce Scrivner, who defeated Jon Singer for the US+Oz trip. Apparently DUFF is poverty-stricken just now, since Keith Curtis's trip to Norcacon seems to have consumed close on \$3000 (the basic airfare being \$1820). I see no reason not to answer queries about how much support TAFF gives to winners: I was authorized to spend £500 from the TAFF kitty on my trip, and Stu Shiffman will get the corresponding \$1200; prospective candidates should remember that there's a kind of moral obligation to raise at least this amount during your spell as Administrator...

* AMAZING OCCURRENCE AT THE ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL

On February 19th, as part of a programme of flute and tuba music, renowned American flutist Nancy Ruffer gave the first public performance of 'The Caught Breath of Time'. Written by 26-year-old Chris Dench, the ten minute long solo piece forms the second movement of his symphonetta 'Earthwind', which was inspired (his word) by Rob Holdstock's novel of the same name. From the programme notes: "the novel describes intuitively the sinusoidal space-time line of the planet Aeran... the temporal wave causes the human colonists to lose their short-term memories; likewise, my piece sheds its detailed melisma gradually, until all that remains is the oscillation..."

The music itself rose above such pretentious claptrap, fast, demanding and uneasily structured in 22-second phrases (slightly longer than short term memory), Nancy Ruffer ably communicated a sense of alienness and loss to your Witness in the audience. Thus something of value was taken from an evening of otherwise unbelievable awfulness. (Your Witness's companion had been undaunted by my warning that the music was likely to be obscure, impenetrable, convoluted and indulgent. It seemed to amuse him greatly to reflect on the appropriateness of selecting *Earthwind* as a source of inspiration. Wonder what he meant?)

To your Witness, music means 'melody', 'harmony', 'rhythm', something to whistle jauntily as you drive home later. Modern Music, as practised by young Modern Musicians, appears to discard melody and rhythm and concentrate on 'notes'. These notes are rigged together at random, and then played backwards. Each cough, sniff, gasp for breath and rattling expectation by the performer has been carefully built into the score. The resulting cacophony draws vigorous applause from the audience, who can be overheard making observations upon the 'subtlety of tonal decay' and the 'amazing control of the resonant quarter-tone glissandi'. 'The Caught Breath of Time' came perilously close to having a tune, and it is not surprising, then, that the flutist ('flautist' is frowned upon) "was not sure whether or not she liked it wholly".

There were two other performances of interest, and potential beauty. One, a tuba playing a duet with the taped sound of five or six whales, seemed content to exist for its novelty... nothing was done with the duet, and the performer communicated only a sense of forlorn foghorns trying to outdo each other for loudness. But the theme of nature was much more successfully demonstrated in the duet for flute and tuba playing the secret songs of British wild life. Transcribed from the slowed-down tape of these (on

the whole) ultra-sounds, there was something chilling about the angry cries of a lustful pygmy shrew, or the forlorn grunting of an ageing midwife toad; the birdsongs—played on the tuba—were complex, fascinating, almost moving.

Your Witness's final feeling was unchanged, however, namely that the compositions of these Modern Musicians make Stockhausen sound like the theme music from *Triangle*; but this cannot hide the fact that there is something curiously flattering about having music inspired by one's writing. An even greater strangeness (in this case) is that *Earthwind* was strongly influenced by Jon Anderson's segments of that seminal symphony 'Tales from Topographic Oceans'. And yet an even more strange thing is that the sight of Nancy Ruffer shedding her melisma in great 22-second puffs has inspired me with the idea for a story called 'The Caught Breath of Time'. One wonders where it will all end. (A.Witness) (EDITORIAL NOTE: the identity of A.Witness is shrouded in secrecy. He is, however, warned that that famed group The Mekons are even now under orders to base a new single on RAVEN, SWORDSMISTRESS OF CHAOS...)

* THE PLASTIC LEFTY COLUMN: ROZ KAVENEY

The new collection of [H.Beam] Piper stories—*Federation*—rebukes the Encyclopaedia of SF for inadequate scholarship in that it did not think the chronology of Piper's stories sufficiently clear; two pages later it refers to 'Foundation critic Briton John Clute'. Noted Canadian person Clute is actually quite pleased about this in that it would protect him from a Pournellian hit squad—if they think he's a brit all he has to do is open his mouth and they will be convinced that the real Clute is elsewhere.

...Frost, Ryman and I are trying to organize a generalized fannish contribution to the movement for free presses in Poland. It appears that the local branches of Solidarity are crying out for their own duplicators and have been appealing—eg. at the London Book Fair—for even vaguely friendly Westerners to send them. We tedious plastic Lefties have decided that something ought to be done since the whole of fannishness rests on some sort of commitment to a Free Press. Also, support for the Poles is something that I can agree with say B.Aldiss on—which is too important to pass up a chance for. Could interested people contact me long before the First of May? (29 Ironside House, London, E.9; 01-533-2462) If the tanks roll in before we can get a duplicator out there I guess we'll send it to El Salvador instead. (Roz Kaveney) (NB: though basically apolitical, ANSIBLE is currying favour with mighty reviewer Kaveney. ANSIBLE also suggests we might send the lucky Poles a proven apparatus for making duplicators—namely the famous Alternative Technologist D.West.)

* STRANGE SKIFFY SNIPPETS

SAVOY BOOKS has gone bust, not apparently as a direct result of the police raid and confiscation last October, although this 'didn't help'. There is a rumour that they'll be bobbing up again quite soon as 'Savoy Editions' or some such subtle alias... A DOME OF MANY-COLOURED GLASS may be Bob Shaw's next big project, since: "I have taken up stained glass work recently as a hobby, and have just installed in my own home what is possibly the world's first SF stained glass window. It is a 4ft by 3ft job, designed and manufactured by myself, showing a sort of futuristic city with a giant moon rising behind it." (Stu Shiffman has a stained-glass panel depicting the great god Roscoe, but that's not quite SF, I suppose)... ROB HOLDSTOCK SELLS A STORY! Interviewed in his plush St Alban's home, Britain's most famous promising writer laughingly confirmed that 'those bastards at F&SF' had for the first time failed to return his submission as being too British. The story is called 'Mythago Wood' and is among the finest novelettes written by Rob Holdstock in 1980... CARL SAGAN GETS \$2,000,000 FOR HIS UNWRITTEN SF NOVEL 'CONTACT': with a headline like that, who needs a news item?... BOSKONE 18 (Boston, February): "the dullest con I'd ever seen," reports Pascal Thomas, who blames high room rates and too much local publicity

(ie. walk-ins). Pascal adds that he's now French agent for Scandinavia in '83, and invites me to "compare the fannish and SF-reading populations of Australia and (say) continental Western or 'Northern' (Scandinavia + Low Countries + Germany) Europe; do you think it appears logical that the Worldcon be held twice in the former against only once in the latter?" I could reply that in terms of accessibility, Eurofans have also had the run of three British Worldcons; only a few lucky Australians have been able to get to more than one Worldcon... SCIENCE FICTION DIGEST is the latest bright idea of Davis Publications (IASFM, Analog): believe it or not, the plan is to boil down three 60,000-word novels in *Readers' Digest* fashion for each 75,000 word issue. This sounds like one to avoid when it hits the stands in August. A chilling remark appears in *SF Chronicle* on this subject: "Where possible, author approvals of the condensations will be sought"... MARRIAGES & DEATHS: last issue I failed to mention that lovely Vernon Brown and Pat Baxter—that was are now married, while SF author Stephen Tall (whose real name was Compton Cook) died in January... WORLD SF is still struggling to find its feet, and secretary Gerald Bishop (fast wasting away since 90% of his whisky collection is in storage following a recent move) requests that people refrain from sending their £5 membership fee until further notice... REMAINDER HORROR: I was pleased when the NEL paperback of Chris Boyce's *Extraterrestrial Encounter* carried a quote from my *Vector* review; but since the paperback only appeared in January I was hardly pleased to see marked-down copies (£1.35 + 80p, mint condition) in our local remainder shop halfway through February. Further inspection disclosed mint, marked-down copies of books currently being pushed as best-sellers in other shops: are publishers genuinely crazed or am I just failing to see the point?... FAMOUS SF FOUNDATION RESIDENT WRITER COLIN GREENLAND is (a) now a doctor of English, his special period being *New Worlds*; (b) not a Foundation person at all, says finicky George Hay, but a mere resident writer at the North East London Poly. George adds that he's arranged something, I know not what, between the Foundation and the ILEA (whatever that may be)... CHRIS PRIEST is muttering about resigning from the Foundation because they've spent money on word-processing which could have paid for the junked Administrator post; Chris also wants to leave the evil Big City for the rustic joys of Okehampton (Devon)... GEORGE R.R. MARTIN plans to be in England around Oct/Nov this year; Lisa Tuttle is here already and plans to stay that long at least; Thomas Disch and Charles Naylor (who'll be sharing Disch's Goh suite at Yorcon) will be around for a couple of months after the con... SOUTH OF THE MOON: this apa index is now run by Denys Howard, 1013 N 36th, Seattle, WA 98103, USA, who "likes to tell everyone that he is a faggot" (Harry Andruschak)... PENGUIN AGAIN: Jack Chalker observes that "a lot of my stuff was bought by Penguin (for good sums) just before Peter Mayer took over and cancelled the SF line. Mayer, you might recall, is the former head of Pocket Books who got canned as a result of SFWA's campaign against his lousy contract. Well, maybe the contracts will expire, I'll keep the money, then sell to somebody else... Somehow I don't think Mayer would give much promotion to the books of the SFWA Treasurer even if he did bring them out. They love me in Germany, though, where I'm selling like mad..." Penguin insist their SF line is continuing, but I've still not heard of further scheduled books beyond mid-82 (ie. the same state of play as a year ago)... POCKET BOOKS are pushing Spinrad's *Songs From The Stars* for a Nebula, and SFWA members have received not only the pb (Jan) but a covering letter quoting *Amazing/Fantastic's* rave review... THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF FANTASY is not really a Peter Roberts project (last issue I was merely making mock of SFC's confusion of Roberts with Nicholls): Granada will publish it here if an American buyer can be found. Meanwhile, impoverished editor Nicholls is said to be working as a bus conductor... ATOMIC SECRETS REVEALED? See John Brosnan's novel of a giant nuclear zeppelin (Hamlyn, April), for which I provided certain misinformation... EXTRO & AD ASTRA have so far failed to publish 1981 issues... *

COA RICHARD BERGERON, Box 5989, Old San Juan, Puerto Rico 00905, USA // JEAN FROST, 49 Humber Tower, Francis St, Birmingham, B7 4JX // BRIAN SMITH, 28 Silverston Way, Stanmore, Middlesex // SIMON OUNSLLEY's postcode: LS6 3AE.

INFINITELY GUILTY UPDATE: of course it wasn't safe to say on p2 that *Ad Astra* IMPROBABLE wasn't out, since inevitably #14 hit the stands while p2 was at the printers' (well, they should send my free copy a bit quicker)...

DUFF VOTING FIGURES are revealed by Joyce Scrivner: Joyce 80, Jon Singer 40, 'Hold Over Funds' 2, 'Huge Wombat' and 'No Award' 1 each; apparently DUFF's financial problems are also well in hand... GERRY WEBB will not now be marrying Lady Diana Whatsit, our reporter was told... IAN WATSON'S JAPANESE LANGUAGE LESSON (why does the same word mean a one-night-stand hotel and an upside-down jellyfish?) was attempted by R.I. Barycz: "I believe jellyfish, fresh or dried, is used by the tired Japanese businessman as an aphrodisiac. It refreshes the parts that rhino horns cannot reach... Sayonara." Ian refutes this: "The connexion, of course, is that naughty post-1945 inns catering to occupying Yanks and their Japanese girlfriends all bore the hot springs sign on  their doors, whether they had hot springs or not..."... *SHORT STORIES MAGAZINE* was inundated with a flood of two letters from earnest young fans complaining about the mag's use of the tabu term 'sci-fi'. On page 10 of the current issue, the editor promises not to do it again. On page 109 we find: 'Aries 1 (Sci-Fi) ed. John Grant'... *VALLEY OF THE FOUR WINDS* (£6.95) is Games Workshop's latest fantasy game: it comes complete with a game-related story to put you in the mood, and *Ansible* is interested to find that this story's characters shout things like 'Twll d'un bob saes', not to mention swearing by the Oath of the Astral League [sic]... WELTSCHMERZ HITS BSFA EDITOR: Graham James is convinced that fans' work for the BSFA is responsible for Britain's lack of decent fanzines. "Are we all wasting our time in the BSFA? What is the point of churning out all this garbage?" etc, etc... TAFF WINNER STU SHIFFMAN will be arriving at Heathrow on April 11, and leaving on the 26th: phone me (0734-863453) for minute-by-minute data on his movements. Stu wishes to state that he did not vote for Reagan. Nominations for TAFF '82 (Eurofan → Chicago) will open at Yorcon and close at the end of June: prospective candidates should find 2 American and 3 European nominators and send written nominations, plus a platform of up to 100 words, plus £5 'bond', plus a promise to go to Chicon if elected, to TAFF's European administrator (oh all right, me)... GROUP GROPES: Jean Frost insists that the West Midlands SF Society is very boring and rude to newcomers; Steve Green plugs the Solihull Soc (Mason's Arms, High St, 2nd Friday); the Brum Group now has informal meetings in Willie's Wine Bar (next to Andromeda Bookshop; 1st Tuesday); YORCON will displace the April BSFA Rutland Arms meeting (3rd Friday) and the Reading Osborne Arms meet (3rd Thursday), moving each one week onward; if anyone wants to report on the Starcast one-day con at UMIST (April 4), I seem to have a ticket... NOT HAZEL'S LANGUAGE LESSONS (since she considers Italian a bit mundane): Paul Kincaid cites an 1873 dictionary giving 'natura ... 6. the female pudenda; 7. the male organ of generation; 8. God'... OTHER NEW MAGAZINES include *Rod Serling's The Twilight Zone Magazine* (first issue out late Feb but dated April: good grief), *Asimov's Isaac Science Fiction Magazine* and *Science Fiction Analog Science Fact* (well, that's what the new logos look like)... THE TOLKIEN SOCIETY would like a plug for "an evening with the production team of the forthcoming LOTR serialization on Radio 4". On 5 March. Oh dear... ARENA, Geoff Rippington's fanzine, has picked up an Arts Council grant for the second year running: maybe it's time *Ansible* combed its hair and went on the scrounge, since Geoff suspects he has fewer subscribers than I do... SFC reports that Italian neofascists love LOTR, "which is

seen as a mythological preface to *Mein Kampf*." Also you'll have realized that Frazetta artwork depicts cleancut heroes fighting off lefty hordes... FILMCON 81 is an sf/fantasy/horror film con (20-22 Nov): SAE to BSFFS, 49 Humber Tower, Francis St, Birmingham, B7 4JX... GEORGE HAY as usual has vast plans, this time for limited editions of rare out-of-print books: what would you like reprinted?

SCOTBITS The ever-lovable Fake Bob Shaw has sent (a) *Rockcon Progress Report 1*, designed to spread paranoia and dread in Leeds by making Yorcon people think for one fateful page that "as a result of the unanimous decision by the participants in the Albacon Business Meeting, the Easter Sunday 1980 Bidding Session was declared null and void"... (b) the information that Brian Burgess took this codswallop seriously enough to ask to be FGoH, while famous author 'Drunken' Duncan Lunan was so incensed at parts of *RPRI* that hideous threats of litigation have been issued by his solicitors... (c) the Albacon Accounts for possible publication (not unless both the BSFA and Yorcon II fail to publish them, thanks: of course Bob claims they will)—these show a profit of £192 to be used in any way which won't benefit Yorcon: "To be applied firstly to production of the Albacon Report, thereafter any balance/income will be distributed as decided by the Albacon Committee. Albacon received NO income from any preceding Eastercon." (d) a badge to wear at Yorcon 81 saying SEE LEEDS AND DIE.

But let's return to this yummy potential lawsuit. Duncan is presumably annoyed by references to him and friends, here quoted without prejudice: "ASTRA... was seen to embrace one daft idea after another... Lunan had a protege in the form of an ignorant, grasping and mean little person, one Gavin Roberts... what might be kindly described as a shit! [Duncan] had fallen on hard times after his first book, which sold to Erich von Daniken's publisher's, had been largely debunked... From a membership of over 100, with good academic support, by 1975 [ASTRA] were down to half a dozen kids... a result of lies, damn lies and 'errors of fact'... Thanks Duncan." [*RPRI*] Whether or not this sort of stuff is actionable, one can only respond with a fit of giggles to the fantastic letter, purporting to come from Duncan's solicitors, which Bob received recently. I have an almost illegible xerox—apparently these particular solicitors haven't learnt to put ribbons in their typewriter, yet—and am fascinated by the spelling of 'defamatory' (sic, twice) and 'cession', which their finely trained legal minds use when they mean cessation, culminating in a sentence to make legal history:

"This letter should be read as an intimation of claim, and also as a formal request for a session of potentially defamatory communications." [sic]

I hope Bob and Duncan's solicitors have a really enjoyable session of defamation...

HAZEL'S LANGUAGE LESSONS
Number Seven: Nupe

gbàkòkò pìtìngì: a salutation for
the rank Ndàèjì [Prime Minister];
literally, a bat's stomach.

Try that one on Mrs Thatcher...
I'll be glad to print the response
in the very next issue of:

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