

THIS PAPER... 'FANTASY IS A CANCER ON SCI-FI'
IS OUTSTANDING, MS. JONES. YOU MIGHT BE
ABLE TO SELL IT TO
ANSIBLE!



ANSIBLE 31 is the cosmic adventure of the ultimate soldier on a desperate mission beyond death! (Blurb credit to Timescape Books.) Another dose of cognitive estrangement from DAVE LANGFORD, 94 LONDON ROAD, READING, BERKS, RG1 5AU, UK; phone (0734) 665804. Subscriptions £2 for 8 issues (airmailed abroad): sterling cheques/cash/POs or \$ bills to me, Girobank transfer to a/c 24 523 0408, \$US cheques to Mary & Bill Burns, 23 Kensington Ct, Hampstead, NY 11550, USA, Euromony to Roelof Goudriaan, Postbus 589, 8200 AN Lelystad, Netherlands. Consult your Keith Freeman Mailing Label for current sub status or thinly veiled threats. ARTWORK by Alexis Gilliland, who does a nice home-brew. Feb 1983.

TAFF: Not yet having the promised Full Revelations from ever more reclusive Kevin Smith, I can only reveal that the fabulous Avedon Carol is the appointed US delegate to Albacon this Easter, and also becomes FGoh. Voting went: Avedon 35 votes N America, 34 Europe, total 69; Larry Carmody 28/4/32; Grant Canfield 10/7/17; Taral 12/2/14; Hold Over Funds, No Preference and the late Gen. Franco 1 vote each. Stu Shiffman now retires as NA fund administrator, superseded by Avedon, who in an exclusive interview confided: "The only things I know how to do are be a dilettante and sing." Her address: 4409 Woodfield Rd, Kensington, MD 20895, USA. Euroadministrator still K. Smith (see COAs), who will publish a fascinating issue of *Taff Talk* covering the above and much more. Meanwhile, Avedon plans to infest Britain from 25 March to 7 April; no space here for usual character assassination, but read Albacon's PR3...

L. RON HUBBARD NOT DEAD, reports our expert on the esoteric, George Hay—his 'good source' for this being outside the Scientology organization. New readers begin here: Hubbard's son Ronald DeWolf is trying to have LRH declared dead or senile, presumably with a view to scooping the royalties on Hubbard's doorstop skiffy blockbuster *Battlefield Earth* (NEL July), to which a 2,500,000 word sequel in 12 volumes has already been announced. 'Position on Hubbard fiction rights in complete mystery,' clarifies George. Nobody has seen Hubbard at the numerous Scientology-sponsored publicity binges for *BE*, though letters allegedly from him have been read at them; only the vilest of fans (Malcolm Edwards) have had the temerity to suggest that the contents of *BE* are prima-facie evidence of its author's death. Charles Platt has reportedly sworn an affidavit to the effect that his recent postal interview with Hubbard seemed to be the real thing. What next?

HUGOS/NEBULAS: Hugo nomination forms have now reached the UK—anyone wishing to spend \$15 for the privilege of not influencing the mindless voting hordes is welcome to purchase a xerox of my copy. Ballots must be postmarked by 8 March. The preliminary Nebula ballot is also to hand, top novels being *Sword of the Lictor* (19 nominations), *Heliconia Spring* and *No Enemy But Time* (both 15)—but expect huge surges forward from *Friday* (15), *Foundation's Edge* & *2010* (both 5). Also of UK interest: *Roderick* (7), *Transmigration of Timothy Archer* (7), *Silver Metal Lover* (4). And in the novelettes: 'Myths of the Near Future'/Ballard (7), 'House on Hollow Mountain'/David Redd (3).

THE WOOSTER LETTER: "Hero Campbell Award winner Somtow Sucharitkul, instead of Christmas cards, is sending copies of his awesome short story 'The Fallen Country' (*Elsewhere II*), noting that 'if, by some quirk of fate, you happen to have a Hugo nomination ballot before you... well, you can't

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blame me for trying.'... Speaking of awesome fame, Harlan Ellison is the only SF superstar to grace the pages of *The American Bachelor's Register*, compiled by the learned editors of *Playgirl* as a guide to, er, 'hunks'. *Ansible* readers wishing to abandon their lives to the conquest of Mt. Ellison are advised that frontal assault is desirable: 'Don't play panther games with me,' Ellison warns. 'Don't circle round and round my fire.' (And hard-hitting new fanzine *DT* [M. Edwards] carries the glad news that *LAST DANGEROUS VISIONS* is Finished, nearly, and ready for delivery to Houghton Mifflin within the week, although—quoit HE—there was still just time for Chris Priest to send in a story...)

"Robert Asprin is trying to form a consulting firm to hustle money from corporations to subsidize cons. Beer companies like Michelob could subsidize film programmes, for example. Think: Isaac Asimov sponsored by Wonder Bread, Ted White courtesy of Dupont (Better Living Through Chemicals), Jerry Pournelle courtesy of Dow Chemical (Better Living Through Death)..." (MMW)

STRANGE COMPANIONS: "A US company, I understand, has decided to use fandom as a tax write-off. It has reportedly put \$600,000 into a corporation that purports to bring famous Sci-Fi pros to cons, free of charge. Called 'Synergy', it has a well-paid board of directors consisting of hustling fringe-fans who apparently talked the company into the idea. (A local member has sold a Star Trek bridge (*is that like a Brooklyn Bridge?*—DRL) belonging to him to Synergy for ~\$20,000.) Synergy is introducing whoring to fandom; they seem to expect this reaction, and have been appearing at cons with buttons asking fans to 'give them a chance' before making up their minds." (Taral)

BESTSELLERS & THINGS: Huge hubbub in *Locus* and places about the latest Asimov sequel reaching #3 on the *NY Times* bestseller list, only to be overtopped by *2010: A Space Sequel* at #2. Chris Priest notes that all this praise for our boys tends to ignore the fact that James A Michener's 'impure sf' novel *Space* was at #1 around then, and adds: "Isn't it strange, silly and sad how important the bestseller list has suddenly become to SF writers? My, it seems like only yesterday that I used to read scornful remarks about writers of 'bestsellers'..." All this wouldn't be so bad if the Asimov weren't unreadably dull or the Clarke were more than a competent Clarke pastiche. M.M. Wooster reports that "ACC has been crashing papers left and right with his publicity tour for *2010*... He informed *USA Today* that the sequel to *2010* 'will be called *20,001*, and it's promised for New Year's Day, 2000.' ...The Joe Nicholas Memorial Award for best acerbic review of 1982 goes to Tom Disch, reviewing *Foundation's Itch* in *Inquiry*: "...proved after a few pages' testing to be unfit for human consumption... Asimov attempts so little and achieves so much less that a critic shrinks before the task of describing emptiness so vast... virtually no action save the movement of puppets' jaws, and the dramatic impact of the story falls far short of a Senate filibuster... [Whether it] will enjoy the success of its antecedent trilogy would seem to lie in the hands of the ten-to-twelve-year-old segment of the reading public." (TD)" (MMW yet again)

CHARLES PLATT REPUDIATES! (See M.M. Wooster's bits in *A30*.) "There I was at the world fantasy convention, doing my best to provide good copy for grubby voyeurs such as he—and he got it all wrong. The beer I squirted at Ellen Datlow was from a bottle, not a can. I was in Kirby McCauley's penthouse suite, not the more plebeian, overcrowded Ace party. I was not attired in black leather; indeed, do not own any, other than a jacket and a few lockable wrist and ankle restraints, none of which I normally wear at social gatherings. And I was not 'given the boot' by Susan Allison; in fact she seemed so impressed by the simple honesty of my critical statement re Ms Datlow and her editorial policies that she kindly led me from McCauley's suite to her own party, perhaps hoping to put my talents to further use.

Adding it up, I find Wooster made four errors in two sentences, from which I conclude he wrote the story from hearsay, no doubt unable to attend the events himself due to amateur status. Tut!" Mr Platt also sends a bizarre memo from Edelman Public Relations, explaining how Space Sells and how a programme of Screaming Yellow Zonkers activities (*what?*) is planned to increase US Ovaltine sales via skiffy tie-ins under the benign guidance of 'an expert in trends in science, computers and SF'—none other than Charles Platt. A later note applauds Philcon 1982, held 15 Jan 1983 "in an aridly modern, dully beige downtown hotel concurrently with a convention of gravestone builders, possibly a significant omen... The non-art programming was monumentally dull, encumbered with obscure members who seemed to have been added, or to have added themselves, at the last minute. The 'High-Tech SF' panel included not only eg. Hal Clement but also Susan Shwartz, whose credentials in science and/or fiction apparently consist of having edited one anthology. Still, Clement did get time to explain, rather endearingly, that dangers of nuclear power plants are trivial compared with dangers in the home such as gas mains and slippery bathtubs... A mood of rare torpor pervaded most of Saturday, as five people successively and separately left the SFWA suite to take afternoon naps in their rooms (and they meant it)... Generally the SF folk were easily distinguishable from the tombstone builders in that the latter, in addition to being respectably dressed and of average weight, were also more lively." (CP)

STARLIGHT SF: an *Ansible* spinoff now lurks in the pages of Prestel, British Telecom's fabulously unpopular viewdata system. Masterminded by D.Langford, G.Hay (consultant) and David Babsky (of the Micronet 800 user group—under brutal questioning he confesses to having been at school with Brian Stableford, and appalling revelations are expected any day), *Starlight* is already instructing countless dozens of profans to vote Hugos to *Space Eater* and *The Science in SF*. Famous pros are invited to send in snippets about their doings—no money in it, old chap (as the BBC used to say), but think of the publicity. Everyone else is invited to punch 6006207 on the nearest Prestel set, and boggle.

DOUGAL DIXON of *After Man* fame turned up unexpectedly at Cymrucon, complete with that model of his vile Night Stalker beastie (Hazel was embarrassed to have this horror left in her arms for some hours while Mr Dixon was otherwise occupied in the bar). Concerning his non-win of the Hugo—which Chicon have so far neglected to tell him about—he quipped, "Any system of judging that elects *Raiders of the Lost Ark* as the best dramatic presentation must be a little suspect."

COFF: Too late for *A30*, I received detailed Concrete Overcoat Fan Fund results from Kev Clarke. 305 votes for 56 nominees were recorded, raising £15.25 each for TAFF & GUFF. The fans you hate to love: Bob (fake) Shaw 62 votes, Steve Green 50, Pauline Morgan/Kevin Rattan 17, Kev Clarke 16, Sandy Brown/Howie Rosenblum 11, Paul Turner 7, Vernon 'Giggles' Brown/Rory McLean/Chris Baker/Chuck Connor/Dave Baber/D.Langford 6, Rog Peyton/Brian Smith 5, Jessica Watson/Eve Harvey/Malcolm Edwards/Alan Dorey/Chuck Partington 4, Jan Huxley/Jon Cowie/Hans Loose 3, Ian Watson/John Bronan/Albacon II Committee/Steve 'Haggis' Rae/Carlton Hill/Joe Nicholas/Steve Jones 2. Lots of people were =32nd with 1 vote, including COFF co-administrator Chris Suslowicz, Ken Eadie, Robert Heinlein and someone called Stephanie Green. "Thanks to all, and Novacon 12 for programme time," says furry and easily corrupted Mr Clarke. 6 lousy votes...

DANCON 82 "was rather odd," reports Colin Fine. "The Danish SF Circle is in a bad way—still smarting from Dancon 80, which was grandly planned and under-attended; their publishing business has suffered the depredations of their landlord, who sent the decorators in without warning them and had their stock destroyed as rubbish—they're going to law over that one—and there appears to be internal tension between factions from Sealand and Fyn. Thus this year's national con was a shoestring operation, comparable to Colnecon, except that of 50-60 attendees at least 25% were pro/semipro—authors, editors, translators. All zines in evidence were litho-produced, full of reviews, new fiction and translations of English-language stories; all were on

sale; no sign of the usual. (But when I revealed I could read Danish several editors pressed them on me.) The con was non-residential, held in a Community Centre in Valby, a suburb of Copenhagen. Four meeting rooms, one with continuous films, one with books (ie. the above zines and the four most recent books published by Tangent), the programme in the other two alternately. I sat in on some, trying to understand, but am now convinced that Danish is impossible as a spoken medium..." (CT)

CLARKE AGAIN: ACC Secretaryperson Paul Heskett sends more scraps from the great man's desk, revealing (eg.) that the Polish crisis is not preventing our old pal Wiktor Bukato from trying to organize a collection of Clarke shorts in Polish translation (as early as last September). The usual drawback of payment-only-within-Poland-in-zlotys is brilliantly met by Clarke's Countergambit, whereby with a dazzling smile he reveals that his agents have already negotiated the first-ever deal for Soviet royalties to be paid in real money outside the USSR...

LARRY NIVEN addresses this plea to readers of *USA Today*: "If you insist on bombing [America], I'd rather you used neutron bombs... because neutron bombs only kill people, not buildings. If I survive, I'll have something to build civilization with." *Ansible* suspects that Larry does not know a lot about n-bombs and should consult his pal Jerry.

MEDIA MAN R.I.BARYCZ sends appalling facts about ET ladies' underwear, declares that "Star Trek 3, *In Search of Spock*, will be directed by ol' pointed ears himself," and spreads rumours about the films *Dune* ("talk of Sting of The Police playing Paul... it'll happen in we-have-ways-of-devaluing-the-peso-gringo Mexico"), 2010 ("Having Kubrick direct has come to a halt over \$. With K I'm not surprised. Did he really take 35 takes to get Jack Nicholson out of a snowmobile in *Shining*?" and: "Harrison Ford's girlfriend who wrote *ET* is to write *ET2*, in which Ma Bell comes to collect a phone bill. 3000 lightyears etc..." (RIB)

D.G.COMPTON UNSALEABLE IN US MARKET! So proclaims a US editor who had better remain anonymous, thus dashing Langfordian hopes which had risen at the surprising information that a submission's style had "edged into the Comptonesque." In a world like this, who can be surprised that Jackie Lichtenberg's *House of Zeor* (autographed) is selling in the NY 'Fantasy Archives' shop for—better sit down—\$75.00?

STUFF THAT EVEN ANSIBLE WON'T PRINT: under this heading our Malcolm's *DT* reveals revelations, eg. about Ben Bova's nonfiction *The High Road*, 3000 copies of which were bought by *Omnif* (ed. Ben Bova, then), at terms grossly unfavourable to *Omnif* but not to BB, and expensively advertised in *Omnif* at a cost of x thousand dollars transferred to the ad division of Guccione's empire, achieving an ultimate reported sale of 38 copies. Gee whiz. *Ansible*, however, draws the line at revealing which editor of *DT* and *Interzone* has contrived to sell a story to *Interzone*: you all know that.

SUFF (Scandinavia-UK Fan Fund) is the eldritch brain-child of Ahrvid Engholm, who'd like to start a tradition by bringing a fabulous British fan to Swecon 83 (Stockholm 17-20 Aug). Required: fundraising to the tune of about £200, a UK rep to help with this and with publicity, and nifty candidates who'd like to become an official delegate and guest at Swecon. Ahrvid even suggests a special sub-fund to meet Sweden's high beer prices... Prospective reps or candidates should write to AE, Maskinistgatan 9 öb, S-117 47 Stockholm, Sweden. Also: *Panao*, the Swedish news-zine which began like *Ansible* (but in 1963) and grew to resemble *Locus*, folded with issue 118, December 1982. Founder and editor John-Henri Holmberg wants to concentrate on the filthy prozine *Nova SF*. Also: Sam Lundwall's new novel *Crash*—"about the wild life during SFWA meetings in New York"—is unlikely to be published outside Sweden.

"They'd lynch me," says Sam. Also: Who's Cherry Wilder? (AH)
MORE EUROMATTERS: The crazed Yugoslav fans, not content with bidding for Eurocon 1986 and Worldcon 1988, are now eager to have their 1983 con declared a Eurocon even though Eurocons are biennial in even-numbered years. Meanwhile the Italians have taken over World SF, issuing an immense booklet of Italian SF data which they call a Prontuary. Over to Malcolm: "Virtually every one of them sounds like a Mafia hitman, and that peculiar term 'Prontuary' certainly sounds like a place where corpses end up pretty damn quick." Um.

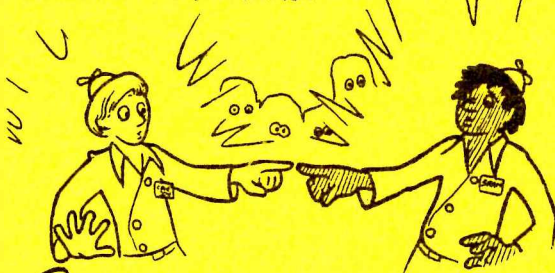
AND NOW ITS TIME FOR-

TAFF RACE 2000!

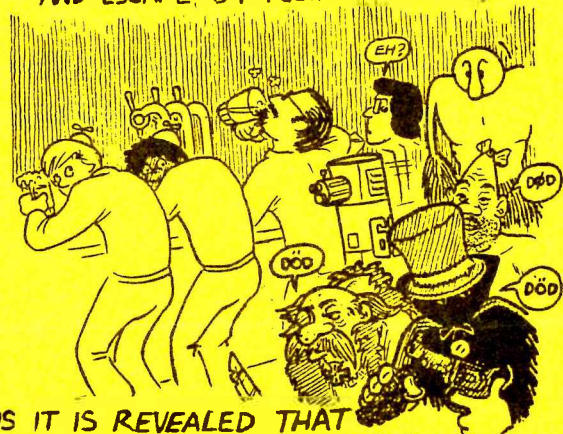
STORY & ART BY TARAL 124C41+

① THE SITUATION SO FAR...
 IT IS SUSPECTED THAT TERRORISTS FROM THE THrice-LoSING SCANDANAVIAN WORLDCON BID HAVE TAMPERED WITH THE TIME-STREAM BY STUFFING THE BALLOT BOX OF A TAFF RACE 19 YEARS BEFORE. THEY HAVE ALTERED THE OUTCOME, HOPING THAT BY CHANGING THE PAST THEIR FIRST BID COULD BE MADE SUCCESSFUL. HOWEVER, ALL THAT WAS DONE WAS TO SPLIT A NEW PRESENT OFF OF FAN-DOM'S TIME-LINE, AS ANY TRUFAN WOULD HAVE KNOWN WOULD HAPPEN...

② AN AGENT FROM THE NEWLY MADE PRESENT HAS BEEN SENT BACK TO THE DEPARTURE POINT TO FIND OUT HOW TO RE-UNITE THE ALTERNATE TIME-LINE WITH TIME-PRIME. THE AGENT, BRAN, MEETS HIS COUNTERPART FROM TIME-PRIME AND DISCOVERS, OF COURSE, THAT BOTH TIME-LINES THINK THE OTHER IS TIME-PRIME.



③ CARRDON AND BRAN ARE ATTACKED AT A CON BY SVERIFAN ASSASSINS AND ESCAPE BY POSING AS PROS.



④ JOINING FAPA OUR TWO HEROES DISCOVER THAT THE TERRORIST AGENTS HAVE BEEN USING THE MAILINGS AS A COVER FOR THEIR CONSPIRACY. BRAN HAS THE FAPA CYPHER BROKEN BY AN EXPERT IN DEAD FANSPEAK...



⑤ THUS IT IS REVEALED THAT TO ENSURE THE VICTORY OF THE SCANDANAVIAN'S CHOICE, THEY PLAN TO LIQUIDATE THE OTHER TAFF CANDIDATES! JUST TO COMPLICATE THE PLOT A BIT MORE, A PROMINENT BRITISH FAN HAS ANNOUNCED THAT IN HIS OPINION TAFF SHOULD BE ABOLISHED. IF TAFF IS ABOLISHED IN 1982, EVERY POSSIBLE FUTURE OF FANDOM IS IMPERILLED!

6 **OUR STORY:**

NOW MORE ESSENTIAL THAN EVER TO LEARN WHO REALLY WON TAFF, OUR HEROES INTERVIEW THE WINNERS FROM EACH POSSIBLE FUTURE. TO BRAN'S SURPRISE...



8 **MEANWHILE, IN ANOTHER CITY, TARAL ACCIDENTALLY TIPS HIS HAND TO CARRDON.**



10 **BERSERK ROBOTS TAKE OUT THE NEXT TAFF CANDIDATE BEFORE OUR HEROES ARRIVE.**



7 **THIS IS THE BIGGEST UPSET IN FANDOM SINCE LEE HOFFMAN...**



9 **ALRIGHT—YOU'VE DISCOVERED THAT IN REALITY I AM AN OBSERVER FROM ANOTHER PLANET... NOW, WHAT DO YOU WANT?**



11 **THAT DOES IT! THAT ELIMINATES THE LOT. WHO DOES THAT LEAVE AS THE REAL TAFF WINNER THEN?**



Cymrucon: 27-28 November 1982, Central Hotel, Cardiff Phil Palmer

Cymrucon in Caerdydd was special for me as it was the first time I'd been in strange parts for quite a long time, reflecting how after you've been to a few cons you find you've been to most parts of the country. Alison (a colleague) had recently been to Wales and had remarked that it took so long to read the bilingual road signs, and parse and pronounce the Welsh bits, that you'd gone past the turning before you knew it. "Pooh," I'd said, "you're just a girl. Bilingual road signs are something boys are good at." But it's true; you do go sailing past. Yet it's hard to get completely lost when all you have to do is drive down the M4, and I eventually found my way to the quite astonishing CENTRAL HOT L. (That's what the neon sign said; I'm very observant you know.)

This building may have started out quite sensibly, but has evidently been redesigned by Peake (the labyrinthine basement), Groucho Marx (the partitioning of the bedrooms: I never found the room where you had to bang on the wall so your neighbours could turn your lights out), Escher and Lovecraft (floors and walls inclined at eldritch and impossible angles, unbearable for the human mind to comprehend, so you lurched drunkenly around even when stone cold sober) and Torquemada (the eponymous central heating system). Some unsung genius had also situated the HOT L right by the railway line, so that periodically various unsecured objects could be seen to move through space for no apparent reason, accompanied by a deep rumbling noise such as Hollywood has led us to associate with manifestations of an invisible force. Were only the late great John W. Campbell still with us then that mighty intellect would have been at work, driving huge tonnages of freight through the future universe propelled only by the influences of huge space-born mega-railways... The Royal Angus it wasn't, but it lent a certain character to the weekend.

The other remarkable feature of this con was that your badge didn't have your name on it, so that conversations with strangers took on an added piquancy. Do I already know this person? Am I being incredibly rude? The arrangement had its compensations: I was able to enrol as Sandy Brown for Hugh Mascotti's Oxcon, promising to pay later. I still have the receipt. The Machete entertained us at length with talk of guns and rifles and shooting machines, all of which he's very fond of. It's similar to talking to someone about computers, really. He described a Gatling attachment for an automatic which seems to enable you to blaze off wildly and indiscriminately in all directions. "Ho ho," chortled Lionel Fanthorpe, "that would give the local skinheads something to think about."

I zoomed off on Saturday morning to winkle Caerdydd founder-fan and local skinhead out of his scratcher, spending the day being shown high and low spots of the Cambrian metropolis, in particular something wonderful called Brains' Dark. After that everything went dark quite satisfyingly: even the atrocious con disco didn't seem to matter too much. I remember saying goodbye to Brian Stableford, who'd only been over for one day, and apologizing for missing his talk which everyone said had been jolly good. I'd missed Ian Watson's and Lionel Fanthorpe's too, after all their hard work and all, so early next morning I did the only possible thing. I stayed in bed and missed Dave Langford's. (Well, it would have been crawling, wouldn't it?)

In case you're thinking that talking to SF fans isn't sufficient to justify conventioning, I did go to one talk on something interesting and new to me.

This was Dez Skinn's and Garry Leach's item on *Warrior* comic, of which they are the editor and an artist respectively. *Warrior* is excellent, with detailed, competent draughtsmanship and stylish, imaginative storylines: it was interesting to get an insight into two personalities behind it. Garry Leach had sampled the delights of carry-out curried chicken and chips from the local chippie the previous evening, and had declared it to be true nectar. He now withdrew this opinion. In the interests of research I tried some myself; apart from having my post-convention bowel movement a little earlier than customary, I can report no spectacular effects. Still, read *Warrior*, they have suffered for their art.

Two images from amid the après-con blues... One is of late Saturday night, and Nicholas the Nervous One (*Who he?—Ed*) is quizzing me on Welsh pronunciation. Some Radio 1 DJ clot has offended everyone by rhyming Pontypridd with twenty quid; though I've managed to say 'Troed-y-Rhiw' earlier in the day with at least the right noises, if the wrong accent, I am still English and suspect.

"Say 'Tonypandy'," commands the fluffy one.

"Tonypandy," I answer brightly, although it hasn't occurred to me that it's pronounced that way until just now: everyone is too pissed to spot the trick.

The other image is of passing a sofa on Sunday morning and one exhausted teenager is remarking to another, "You know, I just can't face the prospect of watching Barbarella *again* in a room full of people." Yes, it was that kind of convention. As I drove back into England the towers of the Severn Bridge diminished in the rear-view mirror like falling guillotines. (*Phil Palmer*)

'Dazed They Were, And Bleary Eyed': ace reporter Dick Downes saw the programme

Cymrucon 2 had the same venue as #1, but there was more of it; in the face of over 500 fans, the Sunday breakfasts were lacking in content until Ann Looker attacked the manager's wife with her Presence and the starving were fed at last. The same complaints about the hotel were made, the same workmen were deepening the Mohole outside, and a little bird tells me the venue will change for '83...

High spots for me were the Chris Morgan writers' workshops and the guests' speeches. Writers and readers alike cringed and thrilled in turn to the swingingly erudite Watson and Stableford, the delightfully earthy garden of Badger-hunting Fanthorpe, the consummate acting skills of the ever-mimeful Langford. Watson: "Criticism is like a weed—it imitates the plant of Literature while strangling it, unrecognized in its impostority." Stableford: "Ideas and themes in SF come in three categories—*Aha!* *Ho-ho!* and *Yeuk!*" Fanthorpe: "Come next Beet Plucking, me deary-o..." (*All cringed at RLF's born-again inspirational message at the end of his speech, poetically calling fans to true religion... DRL*) Langford: "Breaking this year's pattern of guest speeches, I shall not discuss the Wittgenstein Academy of Christian Gardening." Somehow the view one has of the Great Published changes when one sees them bared to hallucinogenic cacti, the russell of their kanted philosophy, the sheer exuberance of their stylistic development—or sees them in the Real World of negotiation with toxophilite publishers.

Scoop! Shock! Horror! Three fifths of the Fancy Dress judges were sexist, and the other two-fifths (*both called Watson—DRL*) walked out when they awarded a Mary Whitmouse Least Dressed award, much more refined than the Breast Dressed Award at Unicon 3. Oh, what a storm in a D-cup!

My filmgoing was limited to *Santa Claus Conquers The Martians*, a film which (*If you'll just step this way, Dick, the injection won't hurt a bit—ah, he's calming down:*) I'm looking forward to next year's overcrowded programme and continuous bar, even at those prices: it was a good con. (*Dick Downes*)

CONS 1984: Still two strong bids, the controversially named Seacon 84 (Brighton), and 1984con (Blackpool), whose committee includes several organizers of Seacons 75 and 79—oops! The manager of the Metropole in Brighton assures Seacon 84 that the Metropole is the better of the two hotels; the manager of the Pembroke in Blackpool assures the 1984con committee that the Pembroke is infinitely superior; so it goes. 1984con has the advantage of cheap beer (currently 66p/pint) and a committee living close together; Seacon boasts function rooms offered free of charge and 'something extra' in the form of 1984's European convention, whose international committee (scattered through 15 countries) can presumably cope with any difficulties about being widely scattered. Either would run a good con.

Seacon 84 continues the hard sell in *PR Zero*: Heinlein promises to come ("He promised that to Seacon 79 too," said an embittered 79 spokesman), ditto Ellison if a box is provided for him to stand on; testimonials from Clarke, Bradbury, Verne, Wells expected imminently. Is this the future of Eastercon bids—huge lists of pro endorsements, with the holder of the biggest names winning? Plainly such names will attract thousands. As a minor committee member (without portfolio) I keep getting asked, "Why *must* this Eurocon be combined with Eastercon, when it'll succeed anyway, as Seacon 79 did? Why the insistence on 'Easter or nothing' after pledges at Channelcon (where the bid was formally announced) and Mönchengladbach (where the right to hold Eurocon was won) that if Seacon 84 failed to win Eastercon then they'd run Eurocon later in 1984?" The traditional wisdom is that Eurocons do better when combined with national cons—ie. that without the prop of the existing Eastercon, Seacon 84 might fail. It now seems failure-proof: and rude fans say, approximately, "How dare Seacon committee members accuse the rival bid's supporters of chauvinism and xenophobia, when Seacon 84 has itself created the situation whereby the vagaries of Eastercon voting can deprive us all of the priceless benefits of Eurocon?" (Teacup storm: Harry Bell complains that contrary to the orange Seacon 84 flyer, most Gannettfans support Blackpool; John Brunner's pious reply denounces this as a "wogs begin at Calais" attitude; Malcolm Edwards's Blackpool committee protests bitterly.)

OK. Unlike (apparently) some Seacon 84 zealots, I still agree that fans should be able to choose the Eastercon they want, and that a choice is a good thing... though I rather wish Seacon 84 *had* aimed to outdo '79 with a colossal August Bank Holiday con, thus avoiding the current dilemma. (Unfortunately the decision to go for Eastercon and only Eastercon was taken before a Seacon 84 steering committee was formed, and was never discussed in committee: reportedly it's now too late.) As it is, the Seacon 84 *Eastercon* bid must either face Edwardsian mutterings about 'moral blackmail', or weaken its case by promising after all to do an August (say) Eurocon should the voting go against it—in which case fans might vote for Blackpool on the theory that, this way, both committees get to do their stuff. If, most improbably, Seacon 84 does lose Eastercon, the committee (and/or the BSFA, which as our national SF organization is nominally Responsible despite a theoretical impartiality) *should* arguably try to organize Eurocon later in 84 as originally promised, rather than wetly let it default to Ghent.

Better, I think, to have some advance discussion of these matters than stay grimly silent until the bidding session at Albacon (I recall with loathing how most of the Metrocon bid's question time was occupied by an idiot who kept asking about car-parks and another who kept answering him—oops, that slipped out, sorry boss). Suppose those Scots who are fanatical about "no free rooms" learn only at the last instant that Eurocon statutes require all the expenses of four international committee bosses (as well as four CoHs) to be met from con funds? Alarming revelations about 1984con, and comments on the above, will be eagerly welcomed.

Current Presupporter Scores: 1984con (Blackpool) 75+, Seacon 84 (Brighton) 225+. Oh, the tension! RaCon, imminent as I type this, will doubtless change all.

CONVENTION CALENDAR: the notes below merely update and correct the version to be found in *A30* (supplement, back cover), and incorporate the post-Cymrucon flyer.

The Great London SF Convention (12-14 Aug 83, Grosvenor Hotel, London): media thing, Goh J. Doohan, £3.50 daily/£5 for 3 days. Bizarrely, this is run from the US (Syndicate Inc, Box 55007, Tulsa, OK 74155) and I've seen no UK publicity: all right, sauce for the goose etc, I shall shortly be organizing a bid for a British Worldcon to be held in (say) Flushing, NY.

Triple C Con (26-29 Aug, Grand Hotel, Brum): 16th UK Trekkiething. £6 supp £13 att to 39 Nelson St, Gloucester, GL1 4QX.

Silicon 7 (26-29 Aug, Grosvenor Hotel, Newcastle): the facts at last, after rude letters of correction from Harry Bell! £4 att to 2 Seaton Avenue, Newsham, Blyth, Northumberland. Damn these crackly phone lines...

Unicon 4 (2-4 Sept, U of Essex) confirms John Sladek as main Goh.

Mythcon (16-18 Sept, Grand Hotel, Brum): Gohs Joy Chant, Bryan Talbot, Mat Irvine; £2 supp £8 att; no conversions after 1 Sept; the awkward sods ask that you send not money but SAE for a proper bureaucratic Registration Form (to 158 West Way, Raynes Park, London, SW20 8LS). Still more encouragingly, "The Committee reserve the right to refuse admission." Even if they've taken your money?

Novacon 13 (4-6 Nov, Brum, rumoured venue change devolves as usual to Royal Angus Hotel): Goh Lisa Tuttle. £7 att. In my innocence I thought money should be sent to Paul Oldroyd & Chris Donaldson (46 Colwyn Rd, Beeston, Leeds LS11 6PY), but the infallible Brum SF Group Newsletter corrects this to Phill Probert & Eunice Pearson, Apt 2, 1 Broughton Rd, Handsworth, Birmingham B20.

Oxcon 84 (late Aug/early Sept, in some Oxford college—probably not Brasenose, famous for producing Martin Hoare, Dave Langford and Jack Profumo): £1 pre-supp to 28 Asquith Rd, Rose Hill, Oxford, OX4 4RH. This is a bid for the peripatetic Unicon—there's another, data not to hand. Evil Hugh Mascetti's Oxcon cohorts little know that even now, the ancient sages of Unicon (C. Hughes, J. Fairey, J. Huxley) are plotting a Unicon Charter laying down rules too irksome to list... thus achieving the longed-for guidelines several decades quicker than Eastercon.

Santacon (14-16 Dec, Leeds Dragonara) is, as predicted in *A30*, a 1984 event.

Worldcon Yugoslavia (1988) is, of course, merely a bid so far. Info: Sfera, Ivanicgradaka 41A, 41000 Zagreb. Or c/o the eligible bachelor whose Slavic good looks are the talk of Hanwell: Gerry Webb, 67 Shakespeare Rd, Hanwell, W.7.

European Cons In General are well covered in Roelof G's *Shards of Babel* (see masthead for address): vile, insular, chauvinist *Ansible* shiftily claims a lack of space for coverage of more than events of obvious UK fannish interest.

CLUB SPOT (idiosyncratic choices only; scene much better covered by BSFA, etc):

Glomerule: The Reading SF (Reading) Group: meets on 3rd Thursday of each month to debate on the role of SF in beer, 7.30-8pm onward. The former pub has installed a disco and driven even deaf Langford to the RAILWAY TAVERN almost next door: it's still *right* out of BR station, *left* after bus station, and just up the hill. Hic.

New Southend Group: "held an open night mid-Jan; fiasco from start to finish, ending in tears and tantrums. Admittedly they're keen; but asking the public to a talk on SF, when half the *members* think it begins and ends with *ET*, was asking for trouble. At least one guy walked out while we were there, muttering 'Sod this crap, I read books.' Trouble is that this sort of thing actively discourages the people they should be trying to attract; and they're labouring under the delusion that a group needs at least 50 members to succeed. Undaunted, they're now prattling happily about running a con next year, none having yet been to one..." (*Alex Stewart*)

COA CHRIS BAILEY and *Focus*, 23 Clevedon Rd, London, SE20 7QQ :: PAUL & JUDY BEGG, 37 Vesper Gate Dr, Kirkstall, Leeds, LS5 3RD :: PETER COHEN, 68 Chatworth Ave, Cosham, Portsmouth, Hants :: PHILIP COLLINS, 7 Colchester Rd, Leyton, London, E10 6HA :: LIONEL & PATRICIA FANTHORPE, 'Rivendell', 48 Claude Rd, Cardiff, CF2 3QA :: CHRIS & PAULINE MORGAN, 321 Sarahole Rd, Hall Green, Birmingham B28 0AL :: CYRIL SIMSA, 15 Holland St, Cambridge, CB4 :: KEVIN SMITH, 53 Altrincham Rd, Gatley, Cheshire, SK8 4EL :: PHIL & LIZ STEPHENSEN-PAYNE, 'Imladris', 25a Copgrove Rd, Leeds, LS8 2SP :: JON WAITE, 1st Floor Flat, 47 Cintra Park, London, SE.19 :: JON WALLACE [a non-COA—some of his mail's been bouncing with *Not Known At This Address* markings, but he's still at:] 21 Charleston St, Dundee, DD2 4RG :: ASHLEY WATKINS, Flat 3, 2a The Leas, Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex, SS0 7ST

INFINITELY Engagements & Things: Spring approaches, the year's first fanzines
IMPROBABLE peep shyly through the soil, and the young fan's fancy turns to wedding bells and rotten clichés. Steve Green and Ann Thomas; Kev Smith and (after eleven years of cautious hesitation) Diana Reed; Peter Nicholls and Clare Coney (who aim to marry in July): all have attained that state which is the opposite of 'vacant'. Peter, alas, has been suffering from broken ribs sustained in a ski mishap: although he's still in semi-amicable dispute with Brian Stableford and D.Langford over *Sci in Skiffy* royalties, it is not true that his first Get Well card was a telegram from Brian saying "That was the first warning"... **D.West's Bane:** tell it not in Bingley, but another famous old fanzine reprint has emerged—4 issues of Lee Hoffman's *Quandry* in facsimile, \$5 from Joe Siclari, 4599 NW 5th Ave, Boca Raton, FL 33431, USA. Also of peripheral interest: Ethel Lindsay has privately published a bibliography of detective-genre reference books, £2 plus postage (26p): her subsidiary aim of including *all* nonfiction by mystery authors may be overambitious, eg. she cites 9 out of about 90 G.K.Chesterton titles. 69 Barry Rd, Carnoustie, Angus, DD7 7QQ... **Without Comment:** "6.5pm: *Riverside*. GLC leader Ken Livingstone is a science fiction buff and reviews *ET*." (*Express* TV guide 6 Dec)... **RIP:** Joan Hunter Holly of *The Flying Eyes* fame (19 Oct)... **Help Wanted:** Joy Hibbert plans to run a minibus from (presumably) Stoke-on-Trent or thereabouts to Albacon 11, cost approx £11/head—phone (0782) 271070, and while you're at it, advise her on how to run her WEA course in SF after Easter. Also: your Editor needs urgently to know the price asked in remainder shops recently (or even better, that at which it was offered to them) for the Langford/Morgan *Facts & Fallacies*—remaindered in breach of contract by Webb & Bower, who are now asking a nonsensical price for the few remaining copies... **Kurt Vonnegut** is flashing through England this month to promote his latest, *Deadeye Dick* (sequel titled *Mexican Pete* is not expected)... **Oh, I Can't Resist It:** Andromeda Bookshop's top authors for 82 were (1) Wolfe; (=2) May, Adams, Dicks; (5) Harrison; (6) Pournelle; (7) Langford; (=8) Herbert, McIntyre, Niven, ho ho. Perhaps more interesting are the top publishers—(1) Futura; (2) Arrow; (3) Star/Target (presumably on the strength of Dr Who books); (4) Pan; (5) NEL; (6) Sphere; (7) Granada; (8) Corgi; (9) Fontana; (10) Hamlyn; (11) Penguin/Puffin; (12) Magnum/Methuen; (13) Unwin; (14) Coronet (with no points at all—scores being calculated on books in the shop's monthly Top Ten only)... **Sidney Jordan** of *Jeff Hawke* lives, and has lately been the great & good friend of Marise Morland-Chapman (High Wycombe), who threatens to bring him to Reading meetings as GoH... **Naughty Parts:** French publishers J'ai Lu and JC Lattès are operating an interesting anti-censorship, translating 'lowbrow adventure SF novels' with added spicy sex scenes. "I can picture a profitable smuggling trade of the 'complete, unabridged' French editions towards the prude-but-frustrated countries (UK, USA) where only the mere original text was published..." (*Pascal Thomas in SoB*)... **A Modest Proposal:** "With regard to the fanzine

Become a D.WEST GROUPIE! ARE YOU blindingly handsome, possessed of immense muscular strength, an invariable winner at dominoes, the proud owner of an IQ in excess of, say, 95? IF SO, forget it. ARE YOU small, weedy, of one or several sexes, impressionable, easily overawed by cold sneers during the Cutting of the Cards? DOES YOUR soft flesh have an unhealthy, luminescent pallor? DO YOU habitually carry more than £10 in used oncers? THEN D.WEST WANTS YOU! Yes, Dave (for it is he) West needs eager young fans to help him massage the bits he's too old, tired, devious and manipulative to reach.

LEARN TO PERFORM... MAKE AN IMPRESSION... RID yourself of awkward 50p pieces via D's unique Laying-On of Hands... FETCH drinks in the staggering West Fitness Programme—combines Interbar Jogging with Loss of Unsightly Wallet Fat... FALL over in approved fashion as demonstrated by the Master *in person* (Advanced Groupies Only)... READ the sense-defying Sacred Texts, of which it has been said, by Ted White, frequently! (Soon available in 1000-page facsimile edition from Bergeron & Nielsen Hayden Reprints [1939] Inc)...

WRITE NOW to *The Master, 48 Norman St, Bingley, W Yorks, BD16 4JT*, enclosing only the first of many 50p pieces and saying, in 20,000 words or more, "Yes! I want to be a D.WEST GROUPIE!" HURRY—or the CHAIN will be BROKEN!!!

Hugo problem, my suggestion is to divide the number of votes cast by the circulation of the zine—with, say, a minimum print run of about 100 to qualify." (*Benedict Cullum*) Fun, but implausible (tips the balance too far *against* giant-circulation mags whose readers greatly outnumber Hugo voters)... Ian Watson Reveals the secrets of his first appearance in print—a piece on growing cacti in a gardening mag, published when he was 13. Later, infused with Aldous Huxley, he wrote on 'Growing the Sacred Cactus' (peyote), and even tried some, but ate the wrong bit: all that came through the doors of perception was vague nausea... Peter Roberts wants to sell off 1000s of fanzines and is preparing a List: send wants and SAE to Gafiate's Retreat, 36 Western Rd, Torquay, TQ1 4RL... Jim Barker is now so famous and successful an artist (cartoons for Mike Rohan's book on micros, greetings card designs, Real Ale ad artwork, comics, you name it) that he's thinking of leasing an office/studio rather than work at home. His second Great Pork Pie Race, at Albacon II, invites entries—criterion this year is 'the most *fannish* means' of transporting the pie from A to B... California Book Auction (24 Feb) features all the goodies you hoped you'd never find, eg. rare copies of *Fahrenheit 451* and even *Firestarter* bound in asbestos. Am eagerly searching for that rare edition of Lovecraft bound in gorgonzola... Lancs SF: P.Pinto protests that I failed to give an address for his IMT book traders (45 Blades St, Lancaster, LA1 1TS) or to mention the wonderful meetings on 1st Wed each month there and at the Crown pub. Well, I won't, so there... The Fangs of Bostock: Simon B. is doing a lewd *Dracula* send-up on video (he's director), and nude virgins are eagerly solicited for sex unspecified... CREDITS: C.Priest (Pedantry), Hazel (Hand-Lettering), JH/JM/KJS/DRL (Groupie Ad)

HAZEL'S LANGUAGE LESSONS: Italian? That word *prontuary* (directory? see end of p.2) baffles all our references except one 1878 Italian dictionary... *Prontuaria: Vizio che nasce dall'ira, sfacciataggine*. A vice born out of wrath? Impudence/facetiousness?

So, no doubt, is ANSIBLE 31, from: 94 London Rd, Reading, Berks, RG1 5AU

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