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FROM

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ALBACON II  
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This will go down as one of the disastercons of all time. The committee seemed to be drunk throughout the whole proceedings and seemed to devote most of their energy to attacking each other with pork pies. The hotel had obvious distaste for the whole proceedings and had double booked the convention with a Salvation Army meeting.

The only redeeming features were the memory of all the fan room items being held on the station concourse because of lack of space in the hotel. Some general panic was set off amongst the mundane population occurred when Joe Nicholas used the station public address to get his fanzine reviews across above the background noise - "The general abysmal quality of MALFUNCTION and the late departure of the 12.28 to Preston are both indications of the total failure of the fascist Thatcherite junta !".

The last straw came at the banquet when two of Gerry Webb's Pekinese attacked Marion Zimmer Bradley, the American guest of Honour, because she had the only piece of chicken.

..... Of course it was nothing like that, except that the committee were probably drunk but still functioned very efficiently. I just thought that I'd have a short practice for writing up a special conrep for the fake Bob Shaw.

ALBACON II was for me one of my most enjoyable conventions and will be most noted in the fan history books for having the friendliest and most helpful hotel staff ever. The convention held one of the most boring business meetings yet seen ( itself a difficult record to beat ) simply because no one had any great complaints to make. Personally I would have liked more seating space for sitting and chatting but no hotel is ideal in this respect.

A large number of unfamiliar faces and even unfamiliar fan groups were in evidence. Most seemed to settle into the con very well but there was also a sizeable contingent from idiot fandom. The latter managed to overload a lift on the Sunday night damaging it and themselves when it dropped past a floor. Fortunately (?) none of the injuries were serious. In another incident someone stole a copy of INTERZONE from Richard & Marion Van Der Voort's stall ( and may God have mercy on his brain ) .

My favourite event of the Con was an unofficial 'filksing' with Ron Bounds, Gytha North and "Jethro" exchanging some fantastic traditional and fannish songs. A large number of passers by also produced strange and excellent contributions. Amongst the humorous songs the renditions of "The Eagle has landed" and "The band played waltzing matilda" were particularly poignant.

The SEACON 84 Eastercon/Eurocon bid won the 84 Eastercon against the opposition of the Blackpool bid. The rivalry and sniping between the two bids had previously reached completely stupid proportions and it is to Rob Holdstock's credit that he tried to calm things down in his bid presentation. Any hope of success for the Blackpool bid was

destroyed when Graham James rose to support them. I am convinced that Graham James is a hoax perpetrated on fandom by Star Trek's equivalent of the Militant tendency in order to prove that the definitive trekkie personality will not be recognised by SF fans if it confines its attention to topics other than Star Trek.

After winning the bid John Brunner announced the main SEACON 84 guest would be Isaac Asimov (health permitting).

Leaving a good convention is always a sad event but luckily the fan room fanzine table had been well stocked and I was able to keep the con atmosphere for some days afterwards by reading through the set of fanzines which I bought there. The zines ; TIGER TEA (with a welcome reappearance of Pat Charnock ), TWILL DDU, OUT OF THE BLUE, AD NAUSEAM and SHALLOW END are all recommended. The lean years of fanzine production seem to be ending. I suspect that we have just gone through a time when you didn't need to produce a fanzine because there were enough conventions where you could talk to people. Now the conventions are too crowded to talk to the people you want to meet so fanzines are coming back into fashion.

EMPATHICON REPORT - by Kate Davies  
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Empathicon - 5'th/6'th March. A "Fun - sized" Star Trek Con. Best described as "Beconish", Empathicon was about 300 strong, lightly programed & informal.

The Liverpool Crest must now be on the "Good Hotel Staff" guide - notable for the chambermaid who walked into a single room, looked at the 8 sleeping bags and folded them up in one corner! The costume contests were excellent - well up to "official" Con standards - other than that just a fun boozy con ( minus bitching, explosions & fire alarms!).

It looks like becoming a regular con, next year it is on 18'th/19'th February. Registration £8 until May. Contact Dot Owens.

FILK SONGS  
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Gytha North ( mentioned in the Albacon report above) wants to compile a tape of SF and Fannish related songs. If you have heard or written anything like this ( or even an unusual "normal folk song") please send the words & the name of the tune on to her. Please include a note of the source so she doesn't have to worry about copyright problems.

Her address is 11 Burlington St, Brighton BN2 1AU.

NEW VOYAGER  
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Has produced a fourth excellent issue ( including the pilot). Its main current problem is that W.H.Smith is not stocking it as "There is no market for new horror magazines". Apparently to them SF is just a subdivision of Horror. If you buy zines from Smiths please make a point of asking for NEW VOYAGER. Smiths has been a major problem for SF magazines since it banned NEW WORLDS many years ago. It is the largest retail outlet for magazines in this country and NEW VOYAGER deserves a crack at this market.

SMALL MAMMAL - Supports Rob Hansen for TAFF .

For obvious reasons SMALL MAMMAL doesn't usually criticise other peoples English but the following remark from a fan to a Hotel manager who was asking about the male/female ratio he should expect was unfortunate  
"We are an almost exclusively homosexual convention"