

Twill. Ddu 5

Yet another instalment of the memoirs of DAVE LANGFORD---of little fame and 22 Northumberland Ave, Reading, Berks RG2 7PW, UK. ---Previous episodes are now being filmed by Hammer, under the titles I WAS A TEENAGE UNDERGRADUATE! and I MARRIED A WOMAN! /November '76/

Take a sheet of graph paper. (Carefully: the store detective may be watching.) Place a dot in the middle to represent Mancon. Tear the graph up and throw it away.

The dots for Skycon (in ink) and Channelcon (faint pencil) go on another page. Keep the rubber handy.

On your third sheet, draw horizontal and vertical axes, and put in two dots: Seacon and Tynecon. Draw a line between them. Somewhere not actually on this line is the position of Novacon 6. This doesn't mean a lot, since we haven't labelled the axes---but you get the idea. Or perhaps not.

Novacon was like that.

Oh Astral Leauge, oh Astral Leauge,
Oh Leauge it is of thee
I sing this song of Astral Praise
And Cosmic Harmonee.

Driving up on Friday, I was lulled by the comforting sounds of the slipping clutch, the loose silencer and the death-throes of Martin's stomach as it writhed in the grip of post-Tun pre-Con depression.

I thought about writing a con report.

Interesting things had already happened at the Tun; Chris Priest coming out with deathless lines like "Harlan is the only person in the world who wears two pairs of elevator shoes--- one for his feet and one for his mouth", while Tom Perry tweaked my nose and Simone Walsh denied having just said "I almost hope Skycon wins the bid so I won't have to organise a con!". Moreover, I had just been chosen by D. West for the Astral Leauge; fumbling with the pin of my Leauge badge, I noticed a runic message on the back. It translated as Hope you stick it in yourself. Lots of interesting material, yes, but ahead lay the str-

uggle with the cruel forces of Channelcon.

"Are we now to see real bids for the next few years," suggested Joseph Nicholas, "with battles in the corridors between rival members of the committees, with poison-tipped flyers for the cons wafting into fans' bedrooms as per the darts in Frank Herbert's Dune? Will there be armed guards to protect the sanctity of committee-members' persons against the wanton assaults by crazed death commandos inveigled into their suicidal attacks by the promise of free drinks should the rival bids succeed? Will each member of each committee have a personal food-taster to protect him/her against sneak poison attacks...?"

"Heathrow versus Brighton!" he continued. "There will be bloodshed! Murder! Mayhem! Violence! Stupendous courage, foolhardy heroism! An epic to rival even Cecil B. DeMille's The Ten Bits Of Stone Hewed Out Of The Side Of A Mountain By Unnatural Forces From A UFO Parked On The Dark Side Of The Moon!!!

"And now we all know what to expect," he concluded, "we can all sod off to the con bar and leave them to get on with it."

This could be serious: the idea of a conrep was cast aside like a used copy of Fanzine Fanatique, as '78 politics displaced all else. This was the time of trial. This was the hour which would separate the smerp from the thoats!

Almost immediately, I woke up on Monday morning with a fistful of beer-stained scribblings. Don't blame me, blame the autopilot...

We arrived early.

/2/ Pillaging the Peyton stocks as fast as they were unpacked, I spied a familiar-looking labelled Jean Frost... not until I noted her Easthope-shaped consort did it occur to me that this was the former Mrs Staves, subject of Astounding Revelations in TWLL-DDU 4. Kev Easthope offered his comments upon said revelations: "You're a bloody liar!" he shouted monotonously, alternating this with "You've got a bloody eidetic memory!". I was hurt, since with immense tact I had merely hinted at the happenings within Kev's car, and entirely omitted the final tableau of the day, in which Dave Staves, holding open the car door, said with painful clarity "That's my wife you're doing that with."

A disconsolate Dave later gave me his new address; Jean gave me hers, but it was torn up by Hazel, who does not wish me to associate with such s... The subsequent Kev-Dave punch-up was futile in the extreme, being quelled almost at once by a horde of waiters; Rog Peyton then took firm hold of the situation and of Dave Staves, who was not seen again. Poor guy.

The Astral League shall overcome,
False Boaks and foes shall flee,
And Astral Peace shall rule us all,
And Cosmic Harmonee.

But where---you ask---does the Astral League come into all this? Only D. West knows for sure. I failed to recognise him on Friday, for he seemed taller, less glazed and possessed of more hair than the West of last Easter. With something very like affability D. told me what a twit I had seemed at Mancon. Soon, producing an empty glass, he uttered a League invocation: "Give! Give!". Hypnotised, everyone in range fumbled for shillings. Joseph, under suspicion of having donated tuppence only, was severely questioned by D... Presently the Master had enough for a drink, and the transformation began. In the course of an hour his eyes became glassy, his hairline receded and he began to lean.

It was uncanny. No ordinary man can safely lean at such strange, un-Euclidean angles. ("I can," said Ian Williams. "I have a low centre of gravity.") One current theory is that West's spiral oesophagus sets his beer spinning as it slithers down; the whirling fluids within act as a sort of gyroscope. This makes him one with the gods and gives him the fab-

led ability to pee with circular polarisation.

(Dave "I was a Worldcon BNF" Rowe learnt without enthusiasm that according to Kev Smith, he is another messiah of the League*: the Revealer Of Wisdom Entire. D. says that this is fallacious.)

Turning to less cosmic matters, I discovered David Lewis---Suffolk's answer to Mike Glicksohn---the man whom Tom Jones refuses to admit is editing the next BSFA yearbook and thus leaving Alan and Elke Stewart free to devote all their time to postponing TTCCCH. With him and Ray Harrison (Daventry's answer to David Lewis) we sought out the Oxford room party, and found Real Scrumpy. I smelt; I tasted. The way it swirled in the glass somehow suggested circular polarisation. Your editor opted instead for some Chateau Pis-de-Chat wine, and talked himself into a stupor while staring blankly at the floorshow of Andrew Stephenson and Liese.

Saturday morning. Throughout Tom Shippey's talk, the lobes of his Gosseyn-like extra brain throbbed visibly as the tide of erudition poured forth. Then, attempting to regain his image as a secret master of authoritativeness, Peter Nicholls told the world that Dr Rhine of parapsychic fame is a doctor of botany. I crept away for a super-cheap meal (bread and cheese in my room) and ingeniously missed the GoH speech of which Tom Shippey later said, "Dave Kyle caused my testicles to retract in horror!". The horror was induced by a redbloodedallAmerican stand against New Waves and that sort of thing:

"The Beat Generation and Mainstream Fiction are evil! Moral SF is good and immoral SF is bad! Anyone who disagrees isn't a member of the human race! Adolf Hitler spoilt a good idea by taking it to extremes! Stamp it out! Tolerance and mercy are not virtues! This new SF seduces you into wallowing in mud!"

The rabble failed to be roused.

BBC men drenched the bar and con-hall in blinding light, in order to get the goods on John Brunner; the thread of his talk was broken as sunstroke cases thudded rhythmically to the ground. We drank more grossly overpriced beer (for cooling purposes alone) and asked Fred Hemmings why he wasn't the Channelcon bid treasurer any more. He didn't know. But throughout

* a misprint, of course.

the weekend the dread con-politics seemed remote: never a hint of massacre on Joseph's bloodthirsty scale---some mealy-mouthed canvassing was all. And John and Eve Harvey are nice people, it's not their fault that their bid isn't as good as Skycon or that all these riff-raff have fastened onto them---oops. Talk about something else quickly, Langford.

After a fine banquet, strange things continued to happen. D.West offered Hazel a snail. Tom Shippey refereed a game in which one has to name a book which everyone but you has read...

Kevin Smith: "The Hobbit."

Tom: "Good grief."

Others: "I've read that---" "So have I---" "We all have---"

Tom and Others to Kev, very loudly: "BOOOOOOOOOOO!"

Not a game for weak hearts. And then, of course...

THE CHARNOX ARE HAVING A ROOM PARTY... SEE PAT CHARNOCK BATTLE 100 FEROCIOUS SHREWS CLAD ONLY IN CAMI-KNICKERS! SEE PETER ROBERTS DO AMAZING THINGS WITH A GLASS OF GUINNESS WHILE OTHER RATS DIVE FROM A GREAT HEIGHT INTO SEVERAL GLASSES OF BACARDI AND COKE! HEAR THE WILD JUNGLE RHYTHMS OF VERA JOHNSON WAFING THROUGH THE VENTILATOR SHAFTS! CHEST-HAIR EXTRACTION UNDERTAKEN TO ORDER BY THE FABULOUS D.WEST! SEE THE RITUAL CASTRATION OF AN ENTIRE BBC CAMERA CREW!

The strangest thing was the pigeon. Graham said it had been sitting on the windowsill all day; it would not move. Greg opened the window viciously, hoping to knock it off, but it ducked and sat there ruffling its feathers, gazing into the night. I think the Charnox smeared glue on the ledge in order to trap them a conversation piece; either that, or they gave it one of those cigarettes.

Leroy sat in a corner, immobilised by a rush of wit to the forebrain. "Tell us some cocktails, Rog!" he said to Mr Peyton. (Applause.) "I don't care about bloody conventions," he said after a little. "John Steward supports Skycon?" he said; "Rubbish! I can put pressure on him." Pressure was promptly put on Leroy, by Greg, who sat on him while we explained to Eve Harvey that she couldn't be a trufan without a breath of scandal. She looked at Greg and decided the price was too high. "Someone," quipped Leroy, "is very annoyed about your quoting him on the Nova Award." "Who?" I said in baffle-

ment. "Can't tell you now." I was stricken, but Leroy's conversational powers did not fail him. "Hey," he cried, "John Wyndham died quite recently!" Then he argued awhile with Liese and announced "She's a woman who knows her own mind, just like me." He paused. "When she can find it." How long could he keep this up? We never found out; Peter Roberts pulled fannish rank and took Leroy's chair, and in burst the Astral League Male Voice Choir, and they sang---

When Dinosaurs did rule the earth
The League was yet to be,
And now we stretch from Pole to Pole
In Cosmic Humonee.

At 6am on Sunday morning, I decided against finishing my latest glass of rum, and went to bed. Hazel poured the drink away before I woke up, because she didn't like the smell. Thriftless woman.

The Authors' Panel effectively destroyed that hoary myth, the Sense of Wonder.

"A sense of wonder," said Chris Priest, "is the hobgoblin of little minds."

"Sense of wonder is the last refuge of the incompetent," agreed Andrew Stephenson.

Something beautiful had gone out of my life forever. I struck out at the cruel world and photographed Tom Perry, who immediately revenged himself by reviving OMPA. Following this, I pointedly did not photograph Jake Grigg; his vengeance was wreaked upon Rog Peyton, who found himself unable to auction Grigg SubPrimitive Art as fast as Jake could draw it.

In the course of flogging some arty T-shirts, Rog pulled one over his muscular gut: "It'll fit anyone now," he grunted, half-suffocated, as he peeled it off. A voice cried "Sell it to Tentcon!" Rog glowered, a thing he does rather well.

The N*O*V*A A*W*A*R*D was given to Maya amid tumultuous yawns of surprise. Rob tottered proudly away, secure in the knowledge that his fanzine had utterly defeated the Trekkiezine Alnitah, and the Cambridge group's newsletter, and TWLL-DDU. (All other nominees had, said hearsay, been withdrawn.) "It was very boring of Maya to win the Nova," said Kev Smith afterwards; true, but Rob did deserve it.

/4/ Then Malcolm Edwards came shaking a beermug of cash. No-one, he said, could fail to contribute to the BEST Award!

"The best what?" said Kev.

"The BEST!" Leroy told him. "It's for the BEST! You can't say fairer than that!"

They shambled away.

D. West appeared a few minutes later, jingling the money in his capacious pockets.

"Glad I only put in a penny," I said a little too audibly.

He leaned in several directions before internal gyroscope brought one pale eye to bear on me. From a range of two inches he gritted through clenched nostrils:

"You tight-fisted sod."

From Star to Star the Astral Leauge
Is there for all to see---
Galactic Empires live in peace
And Cosmic Harmonee!

Harry Bell summed it up. "D. West," he said, "is Different." In silent agreement I fled to Reading, which seemed a good place for a nervous breakdown...

end conrep: fade out & in: start credits:

A Good Novacon by Stan Eling and Others
Hymn of the Astral Leauge by (I suppose)
D. West

Joseph Nicholas on Con Rivalries by
Joseph Nicholas

Dave Kyle's Speech Paraphrase by Tom
Shippey

Charnox Room Party Invitation by with &
from the Charnox (thanks)

An Anthology of Witty Sayings by Leroy
Kettle

Apology for TD4 omitted by request of
Gray Boak (sorryallasame)

No Mention For Some Strange Reason of
David Bridges & many others

Picking-Up of Unconsidered Trifles by Me
Nasty Scandalous Bits by Not Me At All

Final Message from D. WEST (yet another
runic inscription, translation credit to
the ever-lovely HAZEL):

"May Langford's Camera Go Blind."

Oh. Well... If you were offended when I photographed you at Novacon, I apologise profusely: the negatives will be returned to you on the usual terms.

In the words of L. Ron Hubbard: SEND AN
ENGRAM---QUICKER THAN THE TELEPHONE!!!

LETTERS

GWILLYM AP GRIFFITH:

"I think it only fair that you should let your readers know about the next big date in the sf calendar, the Abercon, which takes place over the last weekend in December (other attractions notwithstanding) at the picturesque mining town of Aberflyanff. Guest of honour will be Rees ap Meredith, the famous Welsh sf author and part-time Druid. Rees will be talking about his latest novel Dragon Alive which describes a future Earth in which the Welsh have dominion over all the planet, not to mention the known universe. Rees tells me that the vision came to him when studying a sheep's entrails one evening in the gutter outside the Collier's Arms ten minutes after closing time. He reckons that it's an authentic portrayal of the future, and the Nobel people have already been in touch. He's keeping his fingers crossed about the Nebula.

"Also on the bill will be Ianto ap Llewellyn, celebrated for his Swiss-Welsh trilogy How Clean Was My Chalet. Ianto has embarked on a mammoth study of the origins of sf which he traces back to the ninth century when Welsh bards began recounting the activities of King Arthur and embellishing their accounts with dragons and magicians in true science fictional fashion. His speech will be reprinted in a forthcoming issue of Foundation, as I understand it, in ninth century Welsh, so that the flavour of the times is preserved. Required reading.

"Other activities include a trip down Cwnbach mine (the location, as all sf buffs will recall, of that classic horror film The Monster From The Pit), a visit to an undisclosed reservoir in Mid-Wales accompanied by several members of the Free Wales Army for a 'firework display', and, of course, the traditional supping of vast quantities of beer lovingly supplied by Welsh Brewers at amazingly reasonable prices..."

** This one worried me; I couldn't think who it could be. Having read too many thrillers as well as too much SF, I even tried comparing typefaces, from the Stewarts' New Elite to nice Greg's

Picasgill. In the end, Chris Evans broke down under my ruthless lack of questioning and admitted that Chris Evans was responsible. Us great detectives are sometimes forced to use stoolies, but we keep quiet about it--- unlike

BEN P INDICK:

"How come you didn't use my loc? The fact that I have never before been exposed to your arch work has nothing to do with it. I am, after all, in ALL fanzines. You should have constructed a loc from me. Really, it's easy. Too easy in fact. I do it all the time, friend.

"A typical Indick loc is any of the following:

"1. good-natured, gentlemanly. replete with constructive criticism (NEVER a harsh word!) perhaps a jest or a jape, and, of course, a reference to my famous redhead, which, thanks to a fixed court, failed to win its proper Hogu this year!

"OR: 2. It could be a smart-ass, wise-guy letter, replete with nasty put-downs, a disgusting performance of which the good Redhead is thoroughly ashamed, yet, just THIS side of plain ormeriness.

"OR: 3. a cartoon loc. Since you have no model, simply use a Terry Jeeves or a Grant Canfield. Indistinguishable, old chap, from mine..."

** But which sort was the one I just got?

** Inexorable Tides of Fate and Fandom, Number 5: Four other people, as well as Ben, started their loc with the subtle words "Twon't ddu". Shame on you all.

** There may be no addresses in this TD, for technical (i.e. I'm not saying why) reasons. So I'll just copy out the heading of this next letter...

MIKE SKELDING, The House of Horizontal Entertainment, Colombey-les-deux-Eglises:

"I'm not so sure about the wisdom of publishing my address! After all, Heath Lodge is a haven of rest and contemplation, where pious and scholarly men conduct research into the characteristics of strange, red string-bound cylinders, the chemistry of various heavily-nitrated organic compounds, &c. &c. One would not wish this atmosphere to be disturbed by the intrusion of friends and relatives of those unfortunates who have, in the cause of science, been made blind, deaf or insane, whose lives have been endangered or whose goolies have been blacked.

"On the other hand, we do need some more volunteers for the Wilson-Mellor Experiment..."

/5/

** No comment, as always. Hazel's episode with the Moth of Doom brought terrible memories to many, including the surely-no-longer-a-neo

RAY HARRISON:

"...We camped at a semi-permanent site which was little more than wooden shacks. It was in summer and the only toilets were outside. Unfortunately a swarm of bees had decided the toilets were ideally suited to its purpose and so made their home there, This was rather inconvenient for us but we battled on bravely 'cos 'when you've gotta go, you've gotta go'. One day when I'd just negotiated past the sentries who were guarding their nest I heard terrible screams, which ran up and down the scale (not an easy thing to do, I can tell you), coming from one of the cubicles. Suddenly, the door burst open and out rushed a boy with his trousers around his ankles and his hands tightly clasping his backside. Apparently, in his haste, he had sat down without looking first..."

** Ouch. I once read (Gerald Durrell, no doubt) of the foreign loos where it's advisable to peek under the seat and remove lurking tarantulas before proceeding. I went through a period of conducting similar checks, and this was in Newport, Mon... Stay off my neuroses, Harrison!

GARRY KILWORTH:

"Personalzines appear to be exciting soap operas---a peek into someone's private life. The skull story was fascinating. What we want now is a Policeman's personalzine to get the other viewpoint. 'There on the doorstep was this villain with wires running up to his head... ho, I thought, one of these new thug cults. First skinheads, now bombheads...Christ this arm hurts... last time I apply for school crossing duty.'

"I'm only writing this so you mention my name. I understand it's necessary to be well-known and well-liked in SF circles in order to receive strongly destructive adverse criticism."

** Even I didn't understand that letter until I looked up all the esoteric bits in TWLL-DDU 4. Fie on you, Garry. Letters like yours make reviewers call me an in-group.

/6/ BORIS 'GERALD' LAWRENCE:

"Hmm, On re-reading TD I've found Jhim's curse laid upon me. So that was why he cursed me. Doesn't mention that he'd never have even sniffed that scoop if yours truly hadn't given it to him. Some people have no gratitude. Ho hum...
oOo

"Is that a gun in your pocket, or are you just glad to see me? ---Mae West

oOo

"I wonder if you know why Jhim and Dave Rowe hate each other so much. The fact is, I don't know. However it could be that Jhim eats his jelly-babies head first, and Dave eats his feet first. As any psychologist or moron worth his salt will tell you, this indicates a basic and irreconcilable difference in their personalities. The ultimate end of this conflict must be one eating the other's head/feet before witnesses to prove his ascendancy..."

** Time for a cunning little linking bit. Let's think... Boris, poor lad, is in Owens Park for the duration. That's a long way away. So is Canada, and Mike Glicksohn, which brings me rather cleverly to

JOHN PIGGOTT:

"Mike posits that we cannot bear to be away from our home surroundings, but this is merely a reflection of the fact that he gets withdrawal symptoms every time he goes to the bathroom unless he remembers to take his bottle and glass with him. The real reason why British fans don't like travelling is the population density over here. In America, where Glicksohn lives, the nearest fan is probably half a thousand miles away; over here he's very likely in the next street. Why spend several hours travelling to meet fans when you can get the same result by just crossing the road?"

** Just by crossing the road... You're right! Last time but several, when I crossed the road, I woke up in hospital with this awful headache. And a few days ago I travelled to Birmingham to meet fans with practically the same result. (Without the hospital.)

** A few words from another sufferer:

JOSEPH NICHOLAS:

"I deny it all..."

"My last clear memory is of talking to Chris Morgan at about half past eleven; the next thing I knew, it was eight

o'clock the next morning... I nearly caught Ian about to do Something Naughty with Janice when I arose; I had lain there for some five minutes or so attempting in vain to regain the lost portion of my memory and wondering what the distorted grunting and muffled gasping noises that were coming from above really were. I think I might even have been more embarrassed than they were..."

** Christopher J K Morgan, you have been named as the last man to see the victim still standing. What can you tell us?

CHRIS MORGAN:

"Do you really want to buy one of my old plots for TD5? I've got this one here (waving it in the air, I type one-handed) about an atomic rooster that's going cheap. Yes, this is the real thing, not a budgie or a wild turkey but a rare bird with wings of quicksilver---a queen among byrds, in fact. It lays giant eggs (very gently, of course) which are heavier than led, deep purple with cream spots and can act as generators of sparks. Don't worry about this, Dave. Just print it---and may all your dreams be of small oranges."

** Good grief. This man, as our American cousins might say, has rocks in his head.

"The following bit is quoted from the Novacon booklet!" "The Novacon booklet?"
"It's... out of context!" "Ho. Ho."

Tom Perry: "The big Harlan Ellison nose tweaking affair will ring down the halls of fandom along with 7th fandom and the door Jim Harmon broke at the Midwescon in the 1950s".....Gra Poole: "Nothing happened in the toilets at Boakcon".....Mike Skelding: "After Mancon a strange odour composed partly of Cherry Blossom and partly of Timothy's pudenda hung about my hands for days".....Pamela Boal: "Just how many wives have you had David?"..... Steve Sneyd: "Broad slapstick has an honourable pedigree, it's over 1000 years since they hammered nails of True Cross into the Iron Crown of Lombardy".....Dave Cockfield: "I am cute Dave, just like a cuddly teddy".....Rob Holdstock: "Your pathetic jokes inserted at such inappropriate places in the text caused the occasional muscle spasm at the corner of my mouth".....Ian Garbutt: "It was great,

fantastic, terrific, really brilliant but ...er... what is it, exactly?"....Gra Poole again: "If I have the tendency to write existence with an 'a' then at least grant me the independence to do so".... David Wingrove: "Fandom sounds incestuous ...are all these people genuine?"....noPauline Palmer: "Snails, for one thing, seldom require shoes or a university education"....Dave Rowe: "We secondary modern morons have a slightly more sedate pace"....Derek Harkness: "The thing that I couldn't understand about it was that it said 'This, the fourth issue, is being distributed to all members of the BSFA'"....yes, but the Arts Council grant fell through....David Lewis: "Death to the Personalzine I will lead the racial will of Trufen to final victory over the zombie dominated filth of Berkshire"....Jim Linwood (twice): "DNQ!"

SPECIAL PERSONALISED MESSAGE SECTION---

I also heard from / I received *****
 a great/lousy fanzine from / I * You *
 got sod-all response from: *****
 (delete as appropriate.)

Just a few addresses, then. Just a few. But not the boring old ones you know---

- JON LANGFORD, Saddler Hall, Church Lane, Adel, Leeds
- BORIS, Tower 6-13-6, Owens Park, 293 Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield, Manchester
- BRIAN PARKER, 28 Ascot Crescent, Pin Green, Stevenage
- GREG PICKERSGILL & SIMONE WALSH, 32 Woodhurst Road, Acton, London W.3
- DAVE STAVES, 13 Mowson Lane, Worrall, Sheffield S30 3AJ

Traveller's notes: The land of mead and eggs... Oct '76

Reading

You've heard of secret fanzines---too often, I expect. But this was a secret convention, no less, apotheosis of the writers' meetings: Pieria 14 and Helicon 1 simultaneously, and so exclusive, well, far away, that even Rob Holdstock and Andrew Stephenson couldn't make it. Which was a pity.

They laughed when Diana Reed and I made the suggestion. "Cornwall! For a whole week? It'll never work..." But within six months we had proved them right, nearly.

Polzeath

We looked warily at each other. Armed with stories: Chris Morgan, Kevin Smith, Diana, Allan Scott, Mike Rohan and even me. In attendance: Jenny (with Chris) Deb (with Mike) and Hazel. The dissection would have to start somewhere...

"Let's take it in alphabetical order," said Diana brightly. "Great idea," said everyone, including me; and then they were all looking at me. "Awk," I said. Damn you, Holdstock and Kilworth, you planned this!

My tale of sexperversion&telepathy set the mood. Chris was as decadent as he could be, which is quite a lot. A diversion was provided by the giant spider which ambled across the floor, to cries from Jenny of "Eeeeaugh! Throw it in the fire!" etc. (the gorgeous Jenny is a psychiatric nurse). The beast was trapped and ejected by Chris, and we started on Mike's story.

"This story," he said, "is called The House Spider."

"Eeeeaugh!"

It was all about voyeurism. "Let's hear your nice clean pure story," we begged Allan. He obliged. In the first paragraph, Thorgrim the Berserker earns his keep by smiting off someone's leg, with witty and cutting remarks like "No need to stare---the leg is off!". Mike sketched a Nordic gentleman hopping into the distance: caption "Get me Rent-a-ber-serker dammit!". Mike draws many strange things. Why draw at a writers' meeting? "Those," he explained, "are my notes."

In the evening: "Let's go to the Monsters." It sounded even more fun than going to the dogs. We drove after Chris in an eager convoy. "The Maltsters" is a very silly name for a pub.

As, next day, the numbers began to dwindle, Allan expressed an urge to walk. He had a train to catch, so we set off at speed. Kev, Allan and I shed clothing while Mike melted, as we moved at a fearful rate along this grotty cliff path. The intention was to take it easy on the way back---no time for this---we returned at a fast stagger and Mike, recently solidified, melted again.

Allan caught his train, after a swift 20-mile drive to Bodmin Station, which is cunningly located three miles outside Bodmin. It was suffering from a plague of flies at the time, and the porters thought we were a pop group. Such is life.

/8/ Wadebridge

We were sent off with a shopping list for Deb. Blue string for string pudding? Hard-boiled eggplant? Yoodle? Yoodle, said Deb, is a rare spice which, when added to a dish, expands its volume immensely at the expense of the other ingredients, which it eats. Dishes involving yoodle taste, mostly, of yoodle. Dazed by this imaginative load of cobbler's, we bought her an aubergine which filled her with dismay. The repellent fruit sat rotting in the kitchen all week; at any moment we expected the local police to burst in and confiscate it under the Obscene Foods Act.

Tintagel

Threading our cautious way past King Arthur's Tea Shoppe, and the Hall of Chivalry (with pillars in seventy different kinds of stone and stained glass in fourteen colours), and King Arthur's Garage and Hotel, we came to rest in---no kidding---King Arthur's Car Park. Mike recalled that in French, Camelot (in the English pronunciation) means trash. They had to change the title of the musical when it crossed the Channel...

The castle by the sea is fortunately in the hands of those rotten old spoilsports the National Trust, so outside the village our eyes were not gladdened by a single Gifte Kioske. Pause for serious bit: the temptation is to be cynical about Tintagel, as above, but in the autumn it's worth a visit. For a start, there aren't enough clicking cameras to drown out the sea and the wind. The water was iridescent under a low sun; Mike muttered that if Allan were here we'd be getting nothing but this setting in his stories for the next year... Looking across the bay and trying not to notice a hunk of near-Georgian awfulness on the clifftop (some hotel?), I noted that any attempts to describe the scene resulted in my coming up with a sheaf of hack metaphors: which tells me something about my supposed writing ability.

Near the castle was a dismal well. "A dank and lurid tarn," said Deb brightly. I pointed to the dire Georgian thing. "Usher One-and-a-half."

But Mike shook his head. "Even Poe had better taste," he said with finality.

Gorran Haven

I got there early and discovered, with Hazel, that there are no visible pubs in this village. The search used up half an

hour, though, and it was time for our Appointment. (Hear it, the groan and creak of a ponderous name about to be dropped?) Colin Wilson fills people up with wine before talking business; the male Langford having relapsed into a beatific smile, Hazel was interrogated concerning the possibility of faking a relation between Chinese and Arabic alchemy. Her academic integrity was unshakable. The meeting adjourned to watch the Goodies, while Colin W's wife (or secretary---we weren't quite sure which, as he calls them both "darling") showed me the mysteries of their loo, which is along 500 yards of corridors and (like everywhere else in the house) filled with books.

Clutching a sheaf of illegible notes and a copy of The Space Vampires, we fled into the night...

Polzeath

Then came the day of the sandcastle. Deb is a connoisseur of such things---has a book on the subject---so it was not in disarray that we went to the beach, oh no, but armed with many cups (for moulding things), knives (cutting crenellations), spoons (excavating doorways) and as a last resort, bare hands. Working from an old envelope with the design of her five-towered fortification on the back, Deb began to dig. Kev and I were to bring water for the moat; we paced out the distance to the stream flowing down the beach. Forty yards. Sighing, I marked out trenches...

In the middle of a sandy waste, Hazel modelled the Lost Pyramid of Sekhemkhet. This is very simple: you pile up some sand and pour a great deal of water over it to simulate erosion. The lost pyramid of Sekhemkhet remained lost until the 1950's because it is nearly flat. Nobody realised that it was a pyramid.

Polzeath beach is deceptively flat. As we admired the nearly-finished castle, a wave rushed up from infinity and scattered us in all directions. Deb, kneeling in one courtyard of her edifice, looked up to find herself entirely surrounded by water. Her work resisted the sea until it retreated a trifle: she jumped for safety, only to be urged back by Mike, who forced her to pose for posterity on the crumbling castle. These photographers! Kev and I watched glumly as our gigantic excavations fed water efficiently into the sea. (Hi, Ozymandias.)

The next day the performance was repeated: this time an Italian-style monastery rose from the sand. Some locals, combing the beach with a metal detector in search of useful tin cans and unexploded bombs, sneered distantly. We sneered back.

At lunchtime, disaster struck. All manner of strange things were being mingled with a can of soup, in the vain hope of making it do for five; this was successful until I added some appalling red wine. Instantly a dark and sinister odour drifted from the turbid fluid. Nameless things gibbered in the shadows. I drew a quick pentacle around the stove and poured the soup out.

They looked at it for a long time, savouring the bouquet.

"Interesting," said Mike. Deb: "Did you put Worcester sauce in it?" Mike: "Or old cigar-ends?" Kev drank in grim silence. "Perhaps it's a little burnt?" Mike suggested.

Hazel spoke for the meeting: "It's awful!" "But better than anything they served at college," said Deb with swift tact, as she pushed away her bowl. (I was halfway through Hazel's.) "A trifle rich" said Mike, sweating.

I quite liked that soup, but after three bowls I felt it was time to stop. Score: Dave 3, Kev 1, Mike $\frac{1}{2}$, Deb and Hazel 0, the Drain $\frac{1}{2}$.

It was time to go. Everything in sight was frantically cleaned. Mike, the bravest of us, took the near-liquescient aubergine in two fastidious fingers and went away to dispose of it. We murmured in awe.

Zero hour: I backed the car out of the drive, leaning through the window to watch the tight squeeze by one gatepost—and I was confronted. There, impaled at eye level on the branch of a tree, was the disgusting aubergine. It was all too much. My nerves were shattered---

Reading

250 miles later, they were more shattered. Every time I closed my eyes I saw an endless column of headlights rushing towards me. Every time I sat down I moaned and promptly stood up again. It was a good holiday (but a business holiday of course), or writers' meeting (but we didn't do much of that after the first few days), or secret convention (but---well, just but). We'll do it again.

* A look at the slushpile *

THE SOUTHERN VOL 2 Liese Hoare

In which Liese struggles to establish herself as the most opinionated writer in UK fanzines. For readers baffled by her emphatic assertion that (a) she has nothing to do with Oxford University and never will have; (b) she is a member of the Oxford U SF Group---I'd better explain how You Too can achieve this status of special non-paying membership. Simply knit yourself an OUSFG sweater in imitation of the "official" (made by Hazel's mother) ones, and wear it. Knit one for your husband too, if (like Martin) he stayed away from OUSFG for his entire time at Oxford despite the continued entreaties of one Langford... End of peeve.

Forgetful of her own super-conventional wedding, Leise (not spelt like that) then uses such words as "charade" of Hazel's and mine. Well, I know it's pretty unimaginative to get married in a college chapel under special licence and leave in a punt for the honeymoon... I'll try to do better next time. Dear me, this is developing into a peeve. I shall cease.

DOT 1 Kevin Smith, 26666666666666666666
((Good grief, something's happened to the typewriter. The 6 key does that every time I press it now. Help!))
Twenty-Six Hawks Road, Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey, KT1 3EG

This sort of thing will get you nowhere, Smith. You think to deprive me of the keen thrill of telling you on the phone, at your expense, how great were all the exchange fanzines for DRILKJIS? You think to rise above your position of lackey? You think you can produce a fanzine as thoroughly silly as mine? You fink, you've done it. All I can do is to tell the world that really ((pause while I use a lot of corflu: the underline wouldn't stop either)) DOT was written by me in response to your pathetic pleas for more fanzines... Now be quiet, or Jon will draw you again.

THE ASTRAL LEAUGE---A STATEMENT D.West,
48 Norman St, Bingley, West Yorkshire

At first---I admit, I admit it freely---I scoffed at the teachings of the Leauge: but then I met D.West. Creeping up on me at Novacon, he suddenly and totally enlightened me (I can still feel it);

/10/ it was indeed a high privilege to be permitted to contribute to the solace and meditation of the Master, however small the actual amount may have been. One recalls widow's mites, so often found on the cheese sandwiches in con hotels.

It appears that the ASTRAL LEAUGE AWARD FOR COSMIC PEACE AND HARMANY mentioned herein may be identical with the BEST award presented at Novacon. They could have chosen no more unexpected recipient.

And the Astral Leauge and TAFF realise alike the basic human drives, and have adopted an ethical system to accommodate them. "Reproduction," they both say, "is encouraged".

TWLL-DDU supports---

Peter Roberts for TAFF!

Britain in '79!

Skycon in '78!

New readers look here: the SKYCON bid for the 1978 Easter convention is a proposal to hold the con in the Heathrow Hotel at Heathrow Airport. An info-sheet, as distributed at Novacon, will be sent to all TWLL-DDU recipients who haven't yet seen one. It may even be enclosed.

Kitchen Sink Dramas Etcetera

There is not space to tell of all the strange things which happen in the Langford household: of the Purple Thing in the Washtub (This one ran and ran); of the exciting discovery of Sour and Sour Sauce, a culinary delight denied to the Chinese for millenia owing to their boring habit of remembering to put in the sugar; of the fearsome furry fox...

"I want to buy a fox," said Hazel.

"Why not?"

"I can't afford it."

"Don't buy it, then."

"But I want it," she pointed out.

"Then buy it. I order you to buy it."

One has to be firm.

"I shall take it to bed."

"Ugh!" I cried. "It might claw me."

"It's dead, and boneless, and very nice."

"It might put its boneless little appendages up my nostrils!"

So she bought it. I tied it into a knot yesterday and erected a sign saying YOGA EXPERT AT WORK. Hours of fun with a fox. When the Hoares come it'll drop on them.

LOOK!
---NO
STAMP

The Victim :

This is TWLL-DDU 5. It has been sent to you at the tyrannical whim of----

Dave Langford
22 Northumberland Avenue
Reading
Berks
RG2 7PW
United Kingdom.

Printed Matter Only---Reduced Rate.