

Twii-Ddu 10

SILICON PANEL
1977



DEAF AND DUMB



PARALYTIC

Our Ref: TD-10

Twll-Ddu Fictitious Facts Ltd
22 Northumberland Avenue
Reading
Berks.
RG2 7PW
U.K.

Advent Publishers Ltd
Chicago

Dear Sirs,

You may recall publishing Harry Warner's attempts to force a whole decade's fannish history into a single book. But James Joyce showed in his Ulysses (the choice of which for Ballantine Adult Fantasy as a forgotten work was instrumental in the removal from office of Lin Carter) that the events of one day require enormous space to record in full; I think my History of UK Fandom Since Twll-Ddu 9 will (if its subject is to be properly treated) run to five or six volumes at the least.

Before you pass on to a rapturous perusal of the attached synopsis, please consider the many selling points of the History. For example, the series to date has received the 1977 Nova Award for Imaginative Lies. Admittedly, envious and spiteful persons may mutter that I drafted the award rules, sat on the Nova Committee and bought drinks for all three voters. Ignore this. The award itself is very striking and would make a good jacket illustration: it is seventeen inches high, rising from a marble base, via a column of purple metal with little holes in it (through which silver starbursts may be seen), to a platform chequered in turquoise and orange glitter, which supports a chess-knight in the same turquoise, having in the side of its head an ingenious trapdoor which discloses strange cogwheels and watchsprings within, the whole of this top part of the trophy being enclosed in golden wire loops carrying little balls to represent the planets in their orbits, or possibly electrons caught in the act of defying the uncertainty principle.

Chris Foss and Eddie Jones could achieve nothing like this.

Moreover, if we use the Award on the front cover it will be sufficient excuse for featuring in letters (say) four inches high the name of its maker, Ray Bradbury. Fans who pay money for Tarzan, Perry Rhodan or Space 1999 are unlikely to consider the possibility of more than one Ray Bradbury.

I look forward to receiving your comments and a large cash advance.

Yours faithfully

Dave Langford
Dave Langford

PS: Dave Rowe (a BNF) says that I am vain. May I assure you that this is not so?

The Twll-Ddu 10 Synopsis---from the carbon copies of Dave Langford BA (3rd).

MILFORD 1977

Here I mingled (from a cautious distance) with the Greats, and listened in awe to the intimate chit-chat of literary society...

Of which great publishing house did Richard Cowper say "The contract was full of clauses like Ye Scribe shall be flogged"?

Whose was the young child whom Andrew Stephenson assaulted in the billiard-room?

Which lady writer and fan dealt death to all and sundry---or, at any rate, the shins of all and sundry---with her motorised wheelchair?

Whose contract with whom excited the following Priestly response? ---"It seems to me there are two glaring omissions from this contract. The first is the perfectly normal one, where the Author agrees to deliver his wife, suitably garbed in see-through chiffon gown, for a period of full Copyright. The other, of course, is the one about nail-parings and hair-clippings..."

Who was the Robert P Holdstock who hurled the Langford frisbee into forty acres of bramble? And why was guiltless Richard Cowper thrust in to retrieve it?

Which tall and languid dreamer of Wessex, when told that a one-time Cypher editor had gone to his room and failed to come out again, quipped "That sounds like Jim Goddard."?

Why did a certain Greek lady put characters called Starretrech and Takis into her literary offering?

Is it true that one editor bought USA and UK rights only from his authors, but sold full world rights to the publisher?

What happened to whose coccyx?

Who were the unlucky ones whom Chris Priest pinched Spock-fashion on the neck

---in order, he said, to demonstrate the bite of an Australian spider?

Which publisher told the meeting that the most important aspect of a book was storytelling? "The writing's awful, the characters are ludicrous and the plot's banal---but it's great storytelling and we're going to make it a best-seller..."

("Andrew is a fine storyteller," he said later; the writers drew aside in horror from a cringing Mr Stephenson.)

Who said "This is another Holdstock fucking-the-earth story."?

And who were the fourteen writers who threatened Twll-Ddu's editor with instant death should he answer these questions in print?

My lips are sealed.

"JOE NICHOLAS---MY MOST FORGETTABLE CHARACTER"

This bit is all in short words for Joe N. When I've had a beer or two, at cons or in the One Tun, I tend to use more long words---phrase on phrase with no pause for Joe to think---and so he gets mad, spills his drink and shrieks "God, long words... stop it, stop it!"

Then he sulks for a while and by and by says some long words of his own, just to prove that he can do it too. Or he whines "I know what it is: you read the Saint books when you were young---that's where you stole all those long words and learnt how to say them fast so they make you sound pseud and too damn bright."

Of course I point out that this is not true, and he snarls back "Ha! You could not use good short words to save your life." So then I try to write some of the small words which are so much to Joe's taste, but find the style strange and odd. In fact, it looks a lot as though I have tried---not all that well---to write the sort of thing Kev Smith put in Dot 2 (a good zine, I must add, which is quite lost on the dull hordes who have not read

such books as Guys and Dolls). Poot, as the Rats are wont to say. These short words are no fun.

(By the way, there is a book whose style is like this all the way through--- all small words. It is called Whales for the Welsh; it is a mite dull, like this bit; it is, I think and hope, now out of print. So much for Lit Crit.)

NOVACON 7

The events of this con have now fused into a single lurid, hallucinatory vision: there I am, struggling to say intelligent things to a sea of hostile faces ("It is amazing to consider the vast assembly of talent upon this platform; also present are these four members of the Writers' Panel...") with Pete Weston fulminating about the awful story "Visitors from Beyond" circulated for discussion but admitting "This is the sort of rubbish I get sent for ANDROMEDA" and Malcolm Edwards whispering "It's the sort of rubbish you print in ANDROMEDA" while the little-moving-blot machine (a Dave Bridges term which seems to have passed into the language) is saying "People-people-people-people----" in its high electronic voice, maddening Hazel who, fifty yards away at the Registration Desk, is knitting a seven foot scarf, causing Bob Shaw to scratch his head and murmur of tiny garments, while John Brunner calls the 2,400 quote-cards a "half-hearted effort" to recapture the glories of yesteryear (half-hearted and inept artists Barker, Bell, Hansen, Jeeves and (Jon) Langford take note) and all the time Greg Pickersgill is urging more publicity for the Nova Award ballot, with what embarrassing results we have already noted, as snarls of "Christ, he voted for Jackson...that's another name off the mailing list" are heard in the ultra-secret Counting Room while outside Mike Dickinson is fondling his Slime, a fearful green thixotropic substance fully comprehended only by Brian Parker, which (the Slime, not Brian) oozes from D.West's glasses and through his moustache in slow inexorably dripping globs onto Joe Nicholas, the repellent effect completed by D's horrendous and hoglike sniffs and grunts, the whole a psychic shock which leaves one's frontal lobes dangling loosely from the earholes, and one's face a mask of frozen horror, not unlike Rob Hansen's as looking up

from his frantic bopping he sees a tendril of Slime descending slowly towards him from the ceiling, a trap also set (unsuccessfully) for John Brunner, who has annoyed someone by saying what cretins the committee must be to invite him when just across the Channel are Huge Names like Gerard Klein and Herbert W Francke, whose presence would surely be an enormous publicity pull in this land where they are so widely read, not least by Mr Brunner, who is unimpressed by D.West's drawing of him with a point at the top of his head, exhibited next to D.West's drawing of Chris Priest with an extra quarter-inch of nose, ah, the sense of wonder, as seen at the Fancy Dress Thing where Star Wars makes its first squamous appearance at a British con while Joe Nicholas and Helen McCarthy display again their open, mutual hatred and the revelry goes wildly on (cf. "The Masque of the Red Death") until with a sound of thunder the roof of the Royal Angus cracks open to reveal a great darkness whereon is writ in letters of fire IF NOVACON COMES CAN SKYCON BE FAR BEHIND? and I wake up all sweaty and trembling...

THE WONDERS OF THE FANNISH WORLD

(1) The Margins of Maya

Tall, laboriously finished and exquisitely straight on either side, these monumental margins have survived the attrition of the centuries. It is said that their architect was greatly honoured for his efforts; among other rich rewards, he was elevated to ruling circles which left him no time to create new margins. Sic transit.

(2) Andrew Stephenson's VAT Accounting System

Modern minds cannot fully grasp the complexity of this vast numerological edifice; though von Däniken has not yet remarked upon it, the System is certain proof that the ancient denizens of Woburn Green possessed a crude form of Hewlett-Packard calculator.

(3) The Leaning D.West of Bingley

This remarkable image stands amid the giant stone phallos once worshipped by the Northern tribes. Nearby are huge,

monolithic stones bearing interminable inscriptions: the effect of desolation is most striking. Archaeologists have catalogued the Leaning D. West as a "ritual object---purpose unknown". *

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(4) The Stomach of the Blessed Hoare

Let us draw a veil over this marvel of convexity. After all, Martin usually does.

(5) The Colossus of South Ealing

Continuing research may shortly provide insight into the ancients' motives for building such a short and hairy colossus.

(6) The Tom Jones Pronunciation of "Fanzine"

This requires hours of practice and was one of the most difficult accomplishments of the ancients. A feeble echo of it may be attained by saying Fan-Zyne with equal stress upon each syllable (as in Auld Fan Syne).

(7) The Inability of Langford to Conceive of a Seventh Wonder

* Hazel reminds me that in one Egyptological museum, this inscription was attached to a rusty tin-opener.

IN THE ONE TUN

Frank Arnold was furiously arranging a special Christmas meeting for Dec 15th (the date, with luck, of this TD).

The lady from behind the bar came out and accosted famous Andrew Stephenson.

"Is this right about a meeting on the 15th?" she asked earnestly.

"Yes, that's right," he pontificated.

"The manager told me to ask you," she explained. "He said you were the one to ask."

A furtive blush peeped round the edge of Andrew's beard.

Earlier that evening, the Nightwatch fan-club surrounded Andrew.

He signed their copies with lofty condescension, mingled with bonhomie.

He signed photographs of himself.

Andrew has Made It.

---Move over, Trekkies.

DAVE ROWE, 8 Park Drive, Wickford,
Essex, SS12 9DH

"I didn't actually have time to read Twll-Ddu 8 & 9 but I have no doubt it was full to the brim with your usual wittisms and vagarities which always become crystal clear after a second read (if one has time) (too bad the editor never has time to re-read them himself and rephrase it more clearly). As I never hadtime to read it for even the first time it was all amazingly understandable (esp. for a D. Langford zine), and saved me yet again yawning my way thru' the latest endless Joseph Nicholas opusculc whilst chuckling merrily at your quite blatant manoeuvres to mention every fan you know and thus firmly retain your position in everyones' good books as a higly noticable fan."

** When I've no time to re-read a letter
** I merely type it out, strictly sic.
Expect it was a typical Dave Rowe Letter...

JIM LINWOOD, 125 Twickenham Road, Isleworth, Middlesex

"David Langford's first play, Fangame, depicted humanity as two characters: Faned, a legless, blind selfish materialist who lives in a dustbin and his servant, Contribore, upon whom he is totally dependent. Contribore sees a vision of a beautiful woman, Gafia, but when he tries to leave the stage to find her he becomes paralysed and the spotlight falls on a previously unseen vacant dustbin. Langford's first full-length play, Twll-Ddu 8, presents a group of wretched tramps in several sordid scenes of drunkenness waiting for the enigmatic Mr Prodon. As they wait, passing the time by insulting each other, comic relief is provided by the appearance of a turbulent priest and his tormented slave, Little Mal. In the final act a little boy, Weston, arrives with the message that Mr Prodon would not be coming. The tramps hang themselves. Although the dialogue seems to be nothing more than a series of trivial remarks and economic observations the poetic power of such lines as 'I told

you I wanted the lay of the land, not an introduction to Helen McCarthy' convey the utter helplessness of man in a mad, unsympathetic environment...

"A stunning existential tour-de-force into the surreal twilight world of these vindictive, cruel and downright disgusting people.' ---Vector

"Worth crawling over Dave Rowe to see.' ---Stop Breaking Down"

** There were many other strange comments and criticisms, some verbal and some written. A brief medley:

PETER NICHOLLS: "You've ruined my free-lance career."

MALCOLM EDWARDS: "You mangled my two best Jim Blish anecdotes. Judy isn't speak-

ing to me any more. I'm not going to tell you my Harlan Ellison anecdote."

BRYN FORTEY has said (though not to me) that I have spoilt his beautiful relationship with Peter Weston.

PETER WESTON: "Who's this Allan Scott who calls me a silverfish? I mean, silverfish are little and slimy and nasty. I'm not like that..."

ALLAN SCOTT: "Out of context...dunno how I came to say it...just happened...can't imagine what came over me m'lud..."

GEORGE HAY: "I assume the next TWILL DHU will be set to music?"

JOSEPH NICHOLAS: "No redeeming social value."

CHRIS EVANS: "The consistent quality of the mag is amazing---how do you manage to keep it so low?" (By printing letters.)

oo

BULGING LOBES

(Jon Langford's Bit)

EDITORIAL:- THE PURPOSE BULGING LOBES LAYS UPON ITS EXQUISITE SELF IS BASICALLY TO INFORM.

NOT TO ENTERTAIN!

NO ENTERTAINMENT VALUE SHOULD BE GAINED FROM THESE OBVIOUSLY EDUCATIONALLY BASED PAGE. THERE IS NT ANYTHING IN HERE NON-BRAIN IF ANY IS THIS MAGAZINE HAS FAILED IN ITS TASK. Extending

ITS PURPOSE OF RELATING AND LAYING ON THE LINE FACTUAL AND INFORMATIVE FACTS AND INFORMATION IS ALL IMPORTANT!

NO SHIT ALRIGHT! NO CARTOONS OR HUMOUR OR EXCITEMENT!

NO BULLSHITTING BLOODY FICTION CRAP!

NO PARODIES !! (JUST NO BLOODY PARODIES!) OF SKITS.

SO DON'T BE ENTERTAINED OR ITS LAMPSHADES TIME !!

ELECTRIC SHOWS TO THE GENTALS !!

PIANO WIRE !!!!

JUST LEARN ALRIGHT!

READING THESE SHITTING WORDS WILL EXPAND YOUR LAUGHABLY INADEQUATE BRAIN! BLEEDIN' PRATT!

YOU FEEBLE DOLT BLOODY TAKE IN SOME OF MY STUNNING BLOODY KNOWLEDGE!

CORAL CLARKE, 6 Christchurch Road, Surbiton, Surrey, KT5 8JJ

"Dear Mr Langford,

"Once again, I feel moved to congratulate you on your exceptionally erudite zine. However, I am a little perturbed by the various rumours I have heard concerning the title. After many months of research, I have discovered that the supposed Welsh title was in fact originated by an English astronomer at a Welsh University who, on discovering what we now know as a 'black hole', exclaimed, with restrained excitement, 'T'll do.'

"His Welsh Nationalist colleagues mistook his words for twll ddu. This was translated back into English: 'black hole'.

"Thus the unfortunate astronomer was robbed of his chance of naming his discovery after himself: Albert's Artifact.

"However, I do not think that this would be a very suitable title for your zine, unless of course you change your name.

"Yours sincerely..."

** I see now the point of Brian Parker's contention that zines attract response in an apt style. How more truly fitting is this letter in the sombre setting of Twll-Ddu than would be the mere frivolities visited by Coral upon the editors of the ephemeral Maya and Dot. (And Guinness cake too!)

THE SHORT BITS

KEVIN SMITH: "...That Oxford University Press sf book: it is called 'History, Science, Vision', by Robert Scholes and Eric Rabkin. You remember Bob and Eric? Funny, neither do I."

PETE SWANSON: "...I am gradually beginning to understand some of the characters. Wanna test me? 'Who is Greg Pickersgill' Answer: a rather small, weedy wet who is sickly sweet to everyone---favourite expression is 'darling'. Do I pass?"

ERIC BENTCLIFFE: "...I was far away basking in Chianti on the shores of Lake Garda and wildly straining my telekinetic powers to sink the passing boats of rich German tourists whilst singing a peculiarly muted 'We Won The War'... Sad to say, my mind wasn't at its Cosmic best

and I only managed a couple of overweight water-skiers."

PAM BOAL: "Do you really wish to reduce the world around you to motionless silence?"

D.WEST: "Doubtless Frodo Fowler will take the TD9 cover as yet another personal insult, but that can't be helped. Ah, would he have denounced me in such crushing terms had he but known that our hamster had just died? A letter of pious reproof is even now on its way to him. And to SBD, in case the little jerk gets any ideas about quoting me out of context again." (D drew the TD10 cover too.)

RICHARD "SOFT" WHEATCROFT: "Next on the agenda is a cause that I feel will interest my lady. I feel most irate that whilst the Larousse Encyclopaedia of Mythology contains long accounts of both Hinduism and Buddhism there is a distinct lack of reference to the Christ myth. I think it should be pointed out to the publishers that there are quite a few people in this world to whom Ratri or Siddhartha is rather less of a myth than J.C."

CELIA PARSONS: "I am now installed in a cultural establishment... the fans here are different. They will persist in drinking green beer with peanuts in it." (That's Girton College, Cambridge.)

JON LANGFORD: "My enjoyment of such simple pleasures as picking my nose and spitting never ceases."

GRAHAM ENGLAND: "How come you know Pamela Haynes-Murano? She's the only Pamela that I know at the moment, and she doesn't speak to me, due to my well-recognised bad manners." (Who?)

WAHF: Terry Hughes, Billy Hall, Ian Garbutt, Dave Bridges, Terry Jeeves, George Barnett, Robert Day, Tom Jones, Steve McDonald, Dave Griffin, Chris Morgan, Boris Lawrence, Jan Howard FINDER, Edgar Belka, Rob Hansen, Harry Bell, Derek Harkness, Mike Damesick, Bryan Ansell, Ed Phipps, Paul Barnett, Dave Lewis and others...

Twll-Ddu remains available for trade most of the time, letters (of incredible wit and insight) invariably, whim sometimes, or SAE/IRC, which gets you one sample only. Money appreciated but ineffectual.

There will be page numbers in the next Twll-Ddu; the management apologises (not with any great sincerity) for the error which caused their omission in the present issue. Those who feel lost without a number to guide them are advised that this is the back page: thus, counting from this end, the front cover is in fact page 8. On the other hand---oh, forget it.

THE THING ON THE DOORSTEP

Last week, for just a while, I was one of the Chosen.

The little man at the door told me so, and displayed his card, whose design could only be the mystic sigil of the Bavarian Illuminati. These secret masters were for their devious purposes trading under the name of the Independent Order of Foresters.

Hazel had been Chosen too.

"Tell me more," I said fervently to the little man, who so far had revealed no more than his name and the high honour which had been bestowed on us.

"I can't tell you now," he confided. "I'm in a hurry. And it's far too complicated. But tomorrow night I'll come round and reveal all. You'll be fascinated!"

"But," I said almost with regret, "I have things to do tomorrow night, and a likewise on Friday night, and on Saturday night..." My powers of invention began to fail, and somehow I found myself left alone with an invitation to join the IOF and a card saying Monday 7pm.

"We have been Chosen," I told Hazel. "I don't know what for."

Brian Stableford rather thought we had been Chosen to buy encyclopaedias.

Next day I looked up the Independent Order of Foresters in the telephone directory (53337, if you fancy a little heavy breathing). They appeared to be a splinter group of the Ancient Order of Foresters. What jolly fun.

I rang them in search of knowledge, but apparently they spent the whole day out foresting. However, someone at work recalled that the IOF mysteries (based, Mr Glicksohn, in Canada) were in fact a very complicated way of selling life insurance.

When I arrived at work the next day, I telephoned the little man. 8.30am and he was still in bed, the sluggard. He was not pleased; he seemed most hurt by my mention of life insurance, as though it were immoral for me to have found this out; he pointed out many other Benefits and I pointed out my utter lack of spare income; reluctantly he agreed not to come.

On Tuesday evening the doorbell rang. Hazel opened the door and slammed it some milliseconds later with a cry of "Go away!"

"Was it a Forester with an axe?" I said.

"No," she spat. "Carol singers."

The Illuminati had passed out of our lives.

And now, at last, Twll-Ddu 10 is about to pass from your life. Make 7 copies and send them to dustmen: it's unlucky to break the chain...

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oooo The Tenth Twll-Ddu: oooo
oooo Dave Langford of 22 oooo
oooo Northumberland Ave, oooo
oooo READING, Berks, RG2 oooo
oooo 7PW, United Kingdom oooo
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