

12¢

DERANGED TALES OF

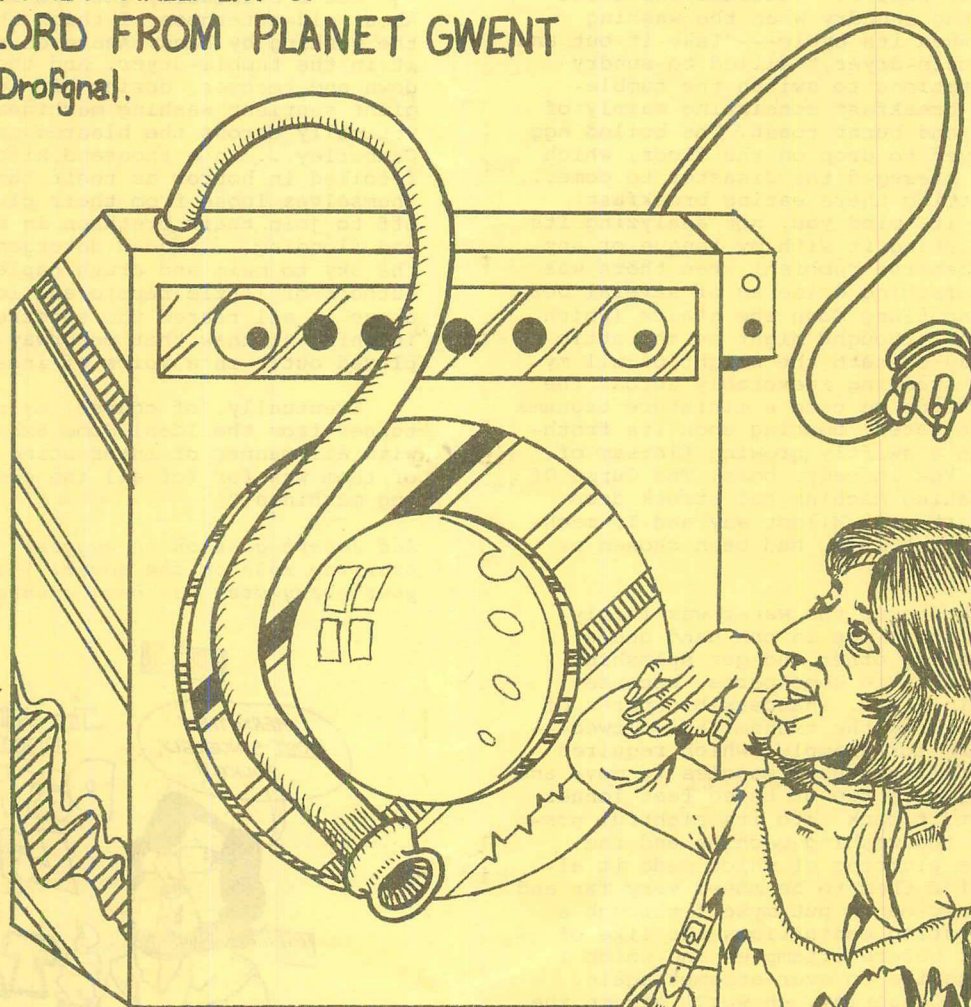
16

JAN/FEB 1929

# SUPER-SCIENCE

A THRILLING PRODUCTION.

THIS ISSUE THE FINAL INSTALLMENT OF:  
**THE FANGLORD FROM PLANET GWENT**  
by Robert.A.Drofgnal.



HANSEN '79

**INVASION OF THE GIANT INCONTINENT WASHING MACHINES**

a 'book-length feature novel' by  
**JOSEPH.M.NICHOLAS**

**TERROR OF TWLDDU SIXTEEN**

by Arthur.C.Frogland & Isaac Glandorf.

NOT FOR RE-SALE TO MINERS.











and indeed it now won't go at all. Here is ample material for yet another Langford Car Horror Story; but even as I assemble doom-laden phrases the ungrateful machine revives out of sheer malevolence. My gain is literature's loss.

#### THURSDAY APRIL 5

One Tun days often begin strangely: echoes of doom reverberating along wrecked time-lines from the titanic disruption ahead. (You can tell I've been reading Colin Kapp again.) This time it's *FF* with Keith Walker explaining how fandom is middle class and thus not representative of sf readers. I moan. Another letter: Peter Roberts is working on his Suncon report. "Provisional title was Miami Bitch, but emotion recollected in tranquillity has done away with that. I think."

Lurking at Paddington is Martin Hoare, gloating over all the women he's going out with while Liese is living with her solicitors. I suggest that he might like to ferry some books to Yorcon for me in one of his many cars. Sure, sure, only on Saturday he'll be jet-setting on a barge trip and proceeding straight to the con afterwards. If I want to load him with books I'll have to do it on Friday. How about Friday, I cunningly suggest. Martin ponders. No, he's tied up on Friday taking out this girl...

At the Tun Marcus Rowland tells me I cannot spell Astral League. Lord St Davids tells me I have taken his name in vain and hints at unrepealed mediaeval laws which permit him to do something pretty dreadful. James Manning---latest inheritor of the awe-inspiring tradition of *SFM* and *Vortex*---hands over his third *Ad Astra*, where I'm listed as a "Big Name" contributor to *Pulsar*: I come just after A.E.Vogt and Bobhaw, whoever these newcomers may be. Rob Holdstock is telling anyone who will listen about morally uplifting things he wrote into a recent book after drinking too much coffee (I think he said). Heroine plays I-Spy with hero, saying "I want to s--- you!" "See?" the idiot replies. "Not... stroke?" Rob breathes faster and faster as he comes to the punchline: "I wanna suck you, she says!!" Afterwards, says Rob, he woke up in the morning with that terrible headache known only to heavy users of caffeine, and flung the whole scene in the wastebasket. Andrew Stephenson insists that

writing of such quality shouldn't be squandered on a mere wastebasket: should be saved for the document shredder.

Cathy Ball appears and I swiftly deduce that she has not returned to the USA, informing her of this reasoning. There is an odd look in her eyes as she cautiously admits the truth of my conclusion. Pat Charnock brandishes enough Hugo ballot forms to be recycled into the New Forest. I cringe, recalling embarrassment at fools plugging me for a nomination, and swiftly transfer the onus by murmuring into Dave Pringle's ear: "Fame! Power! Buy you a drink!" Suddenly Dave is Seacon's Hugo man: it's now his problem to keep quiet about authors who vote four times for their own book on dragons, etc. He tells me that the Foundation would like to support a con, since Dave and Malcolm will then be able to count all members as students, thus vastly increasing Foundation grants...

#### FRIDAY APRIL 6

As usual after the Tun, I adopt a posture of repose in my office and try not to emerge before lunchtime. Memories of last night float to the surface like distended and putrescent corpses... I've promised to write Ian Maule an article! Oh god! I commissioned a letter from Joe Nicholas on the subject of exploding washing machines! I said *the wrong thing* to... oh god, I can't remember who. Or what I said. And Chris Priest will hate the article I gave him and Joe *couldn't understand* parts of *TD15* and Mic Rogers has done another cover I don't want to use and I didn't talk to Simone thus doubtless offending her and I let Mike Dickinson sucker me into the living hell of a Call My Bluff game at Yorcon and and and...

I generally feel like this after the Tun, for some reason known to medical science. It begins to pass off towards mid-afternoon, and I am able to toy with the thought of doing a little work (but refrain for fear of over-exciting myself). At home another six copies of *Noddy in Toyland* have arrived, with a letter warning me of dire penalties should I sell them at less than full retail price. Also a mysterious note about how they're trying to set up an interview involving me, Chris Boyce and *Battlestar Galactica*. Whimper.

[Let us have no cruel suspense. The thing fell through for reasons unknown.]



SATURDAY APRIL 7

Awakened from lovely dreams of money by the milk-child ringing the doorbell (we don't merit a full-grown milkman for some reason), I leap from bed into the dressing gown hanging on the door, which turns out to be too small and also to be Hazel's: I fumble for mine to find it's slipped onto the floor, where I grope and find a cardigan into which I am halfway before realizing something is still wrong and at last getting the right dressing gown, inside out, or rather with just one arm inside out as I realize after turning the other arm to match it and so on... by the time I reach the door the milkchild is many pints distant, but returns to take money from me and I do not have enough and the dressing gown falls off: there's nothing for it but to recuperate with a crumpet, so I cook one in the grill, discovering that for some reason the grill is thick with fat oozing and bubbling and swilling round; being no fool, or so I think, I remove the crumpet before pouring this fat away into a nearby cup, whereupon the wire grid thing falls from the grill pan and hits the crumpet so that it vanishes down the side of the washing machine; when I've pulled it out and dusted it I see it appears to be buttered despite my all too distinct memories of not having buttered anything; dismissing Fortean theories of mysterious falls of butter I peer down the side of the washing machine and find to my joy and delight these age-old deposits of condensed fat, some of it doubtless from primordial mammoths, which have been melted by my crumpet's internal heat and sort of buttered it... thinking even faster, I throw the crumpet away and sit very still until Hazel comes down to tell me I am doomed.

In town I am cheered by a tasteful placard for *Noddy in Toyland*, which is lying round in W.H. Smiths. The lying round is the only dubious aspect: why is the ad for this excellent book placed flat on the floor? Before I can glue it across a rack of paperback *Silmarillions*, a store detective catches my eye and furtively I creep away.

MONDAY APRIL 9

Little popstar brother 'phones to say he has posted a map of how to find his Leeds flat, also a key. Kevin, Hazel and I hope to stay there on Thursday night, thus cunningly saving money and imbibing the

ethnic squalor of student life in Leeds as a preliminary to Yorcon.

TUESDAY APRIL 10

My birthday, no less: people send money and other, less carefully selected, gifts. Izaak Walton says in *The Compleat Angler* that "the tenth of April is a fatal day for Carps", but there is no opportunity to test this.

WEDNESDAY APRIL 11

Despite snide comments in *TD15* I am invited to a royal garden party. (So are the other 3000 Aldermaston hangers-on.) In the evening I tell Hazel, with a smile, and to my horror she begins to jump up and down singing "I'm going to see the Queen!" Help. Then comes Kevin, bringing me a birthday degree from Clement Freud's University of Downham (I like the college motto of *They shall not pass*): D.Phil in Morphological Eschatology.

"How can I possibly repay this kindness?" I ask.

"You can duplicate *Dot*."

THURSDAY APRIL 12

Kevin collates and Hazel indulges in a quiet panic while yr obt svt strides townwards on last-minute business, setting off with the verve of one who walks ten miles before each breakfast and returning with that glow of health so often seen in habitués of the iron lung. Abandoning all hope of Jon's key and all belief in the first-class post, we point Kevin's car northward, set the autopilot (Kevin) and go to sleep.

There are no exciting events until the end of the M1, where we are amazed to spy the Dragonara Hotel. It can't be this easy. Nor is it: brother Jon's flat is on the other side of Leeds, beyond the uncontrollable maelstrom of the one-way system. We enjoy many an enthralling circumnavigation before the System ejects us in the right direction. Next stop Jon's place, where (as we have no key) a friend of his will let us in. ("You'll recognize my room 'cos it's got MY ROOM chalked on the door.") The house is empty. Cursing fate, we sink back into Leeds---which, it seems, has a Maxwell's Demon lurking in the streets. From the south a passage is possible, from the north one meets incredible resistance. The country north of Leeds must be piled high with cars unable to get back through the valve. Eventually the Dragonara looms again, as does the



MI: "We're going to London!" Kevin gibbers. With reassuring words I steer him through a gruelling 180° and, in the end, to the hotel car park.

In the bar it looks like Silicon, but smaller. Traditional stentorian murmurs of "Hi there Langford you deaf cretin" welcome me; fans are so tactful; I scatter a largesse of *Twill-Ddus* to their groveling forms. It is now that I meet Leonard Kirkup: BSFA supremo-to-be Alan Dorey has explained that the good Leonard isn't much into sf, nor fanzines, nor conventions, but he drinks a lot and is thus a good guy. This he shows by swiftly rummaging through my case and ripping out a *TD* while I stare in disbelief; he grunts his way through it and says it's a load of rubbish and how much do I want for it? "Ten pence," I mutter at random before remembering to be grasping for GUFF purposes: "But to you, twenty-five." He gives me ten. I make an excuse and leave before he tires of my case and starts going through my pockets. Our Leonard could be the British answer to Hans Loose.

(Later, Paul Begg complains that this Kirkup follows him wherever he goes. Perhaps Paul should have revealed his newly married condition.)

Simone, meanwhile, is introducing her daughter to various eligible chaps and passing round a half-bottle of whisky because, weirdly, she wants to get rid of it. Few fans are so ungallant as to withhold their aid. The bottle empty, I tactfully withdraw and do homage to Pat Charnock in her FGOH capacity. At this the Curse of the Langfords strikes and my trouser-zip explodes. With great surreptitiousness I run for a spare pair, and wish I'd brought two spare pairs.

#### GOOD FRIDAY APRIL 13

The doors of Ian Williams's wonderful Fan Room stand open and many people lurk within; but the traditional heaps of fanzines are absent, despite acres of inviting table-space. Almost at once I discover why: no sooner do I put down some fanzines of my own than Ian gathers them up again and locks them in the committee room to protect them from being bought. On the blackboard, some hidden hand has chalked a provisional Fan Room Programme---

- (1) IAN WILLIAMS: "ME"
- (2) IAN WILLIAMS: "MY NOVEL"
- (3) IAN WILLIAMS: "ME AND MY NOVEL" ...

Graphologists studying this enigmatic scrawl have deduced that the writer is bearded and addicted to quips, with a past record of FGOH (which is like GBH, but messier).

In '78, when I was a terrified Skycon committee member, Good Friday was a weird, unnatural experience. This year it's almost as strange: what am I doing, installing Hazel at a book room table with 50 copies of (well, you guess)? Why do my teeth chatter, why does my face grow paler as the morning wears on? Why am I sitting in the front row at Yorcon's official opening while the drunken committee introduces all the celebrities (ie. not me) and slowly the atmosphere builds up into a colossal crescendo of approaching doom...

"There will be a ten-minute break to break Dave Langford's nerve before he gives his talk 'Genocide for Fun and Profit'," says Mike Dickinson at last, and I crawl moaning to the bar. Only the irresistible lure of free beer can draw me back, and fiends Dorey and Dickinson lure me with a trail of baited pint glasses to the stage. Several people remind me that this is Friday the 13th and are answered with nonchalant screams. Suddenly I am before this sea of hostile faces, stumbling into a farrago of true facts lifted from *Noddy in Toyland*, old jokes swiped from Bob Shaw and interesting speech defects contributed by myself. 7,500 words later I grope for the next sheet, discover there isn't one and, with typical lack of imagination, stop. The sound of one hand clapping fills the air.

Brushing aside the fans who congratulate me with the air of relatives amazed that Great-Granny survived the operation, I struggle again towards beer in the belief that the worst must be over now. I have forgotten Leonard Kirkup, who now gives freely of his valuable time to explain how unoriginal, derivative, uninspiring and generally wet was every word of my discourse. "Mumble mumble," I cleverly riposte, lips fastened like lamprays upon a convenient glass.

#### SATURDAY APRIL 14

Saturday at Yorcon is bloody awful. With an energy and enthusiasm which astounds me I leap out of bed, eager to savour whatever fresh delights the fawning committee has prepared, and at once I sneeze.



It is no ordinary sneeze but the Krakatoa model which bursts upon me once or twice a year. Blood gushes from my nostril to produce an intriguing polka-dot pattern upon my pyjamas and the Dragonara's carpet. Hazel assembles all available boxes of tissues for mopping-up operations whilst I successively attempt will-power, standing up, sitting down, cold water, sticking fingers in unlikely places and saying loudly what a rotten convention this is to permit such incidents. Hazel duly rushes off to complain to the committee, or failing them a doctor, and I arrange myself in various pathetic death-bed positions until the 'phone rings. More gout of blood decorate the carpet and my no longer spare trousers as I lurch to answer it; the doctor is on the line and wishes to instruct me not to move. Also to present myself at a local hospital where he will be delighted to thrust a red-hot poker up my nose. (I think this is what is meant by cautery.) At this news the blood drains from my face by more conventional routes, and I decide that really I am cured. Ha ha, there is nothing to worry about, I tell myself as the tissues run out and the continuing output of red cells is diverted to a nearby toilet roll.

"Nothing to worry about at all!" I shriek at Hazel on her return. "Either that or I'm too ill to move. Forget all about that doctor..."

Eventually I totter downstairs, leaving the Dragonara staff to deduce that one of my hobbies must be chainsaw massacres.

The master plan is for lunch in a remote pub; awaiting transport, we gaze at a seemingly endless procession of juvenile delinquents being shepherded past the hotel by mounted police. So this is how the Leeds group deals with Trekkies. The pub is barely open: brush-wielding barmen keep surging through our midst, leaving a wake of fag-ends, abandoned crisps and last night's drunks (among whom I am surprised not to see Milton Strain and D. West). The soothing influence of beer and sandwiches triggers another outbreak of the nose problem, which clears up in time for me to rush back for the amazing Call My bluff session, the opening of which stunning event is mildly marred by red substances dripping over the microphone and the instant conscription of Joe Micholas as a Langford surrogate for the

duration. In the bar, Peter Weston is chatting up a Metropole Hotel lady; I say hello and casually bleed on them, whereupon the lady offers several new remedies for my affliction. One of these works: I vow undying devotion until she escapes with insincere cries of "See you at Seacon, maybe, perhaps..."

#### SUNDAY APRIL 15

Weakened by Saturday's loss of alcohol, I blunder about to such an extent that people scan my chin for the hairy stigmata of a second Holdstock. At one party there is a bout of whisky-sipping with Bob Shaw (who claims to be soothed by the spectacle of my liver going to the dogs several m.p.h more rapidly than his); this halts at the appearance of a fluid no-one will touch. "It's *cooking whisky*," says Bob, trembling: "Take it away..."

It seems unsociable to take away the whole bottle; I transfer some of the contents to a personal flask, full of pride in my delicate manipulation of both bottles so that not a drop impinges on my trousers. Little plaintive cries come from Bob, who is less fortunately placed. I make an excuse and leave. For the rest of Yorcon I walk in terror of Shavian revenge; on each toilet visit I expect a maddened Shaw to spring from concealment and reduce my trousers to the dank status of Chris Priest's shoes.

In the auction I try to sell a heap of 1974 *Analogs* on the strength of their "brilliant John W. Campbell editorials". Peter Roberts looks on in languid pain, realizing there are exceptions to the rule of universal Celtic brilliance. I struggle to recoup by flogging 1975 *Analogs*---"guaranteed free of JWC editorials!"---but it's too late. The curse of Holdstock is upon me. In the bar I fail to pronounce *Twill-Ddu* with any confidence (and Dr Jackson tells me reassuringly that "Alyson Abramowitz can't even pronounce her own name"); in the book room I address Ron Bennett as George, which makes him laugh heartily as his pencil adds £6 to the price of the book I want. In the end I am lulled into stupor by the Charnocks' musical FGoH performance (lyrics protected by copyright, D. West and other things so dreadful that I wonder at my temerity in reproducing some):

*Astral's just another word for somewhere  
in the sky,*



And League means something like society.  
Feeling good is easy Lord, in fact it's  
guaranteed,  
Feeling good will cost you 50p.  
50p for Cosmic Harmoneeee....

MONDAY, TUESDAY

We convalesce in York, sampling the many excellent Yorkshire beers unavailable at the Dragonara and wandering about the bookshops. Post-con hysteria attends Kevin's discovery of a work titled *The Amazing Dick*. Subterranean giggles are heaving beneath his beard as he buys the book without regard for whatever the contents may be; Hazel and I are also moved, but this is one of those shops where persons in the grip of strong feelings can calm themselves by contemplating such devotional wares as placards inscribed: *In This House CHRIST is the SILENT GUEST at EVERY MEAL.* Urp.

SUNDAY MAY 27

Of course Greg's and Simone's Second First Annual Spring Bank Holiday Party is good stuff, so much so that long afterwards my diction becomes slurred and my motion uncoordinated when I merely try to remember details. I supply the entire serious sf programme by telling glazed Joe Nicholas and Mike Dickinson my opinion of Jack Chalker; at the other end of the house, Rob Holdstock dances manically with everyone in sight, with the empty air, and finally and intimately with the banisters, limbs jerking like frogs' legs connected to a van der Graaf generator. Later Rob and I engage in a trial of strength, butting stomachs together in a spirit of keen scientific enquiry to discover which overweight contender will develop the first rupture. In the end the furniture wins, though not without injuries of its own.

Greg has decided on an independent check of the fan Hugo categories, and special voting forms are provided:---

THE REAL FAN HUGO AWARD

As voted for by the cream of British Fandom and Those Who Know Best (Undiminished by the petty partisan actions of Foreign Hordes) Please rank in each category from 1 to 6. Vote as seriously as if your life depended on it. Obvious transgressors of this advice will be Punished.

FAN WRITERS

DAVID LANGFORD .....

LEROY KETTLE .....	
D. WEST .....	
BOB SHAW .....	
NO AWARD .....	
Richard E Geis .....	
<u>FANZINES</u>	
TWLL DDU .....	
MAYA .....	
MOTA .....	
NO AWARD .....	
sfr .....	
Janus .....	
<u>FAN ARTIST</u>	
HARRY BELL .....	
JIM BARKER .....	
NO AWARD .....	
Alexis Gilliland .....	
Stu Schiffman .....	
William Rotsler .....	

(The above is more or less [sic].)  
"Why is Janus at the bottom?" Simone asks. "Surely SFR should be last."

Greg looks at her coldly. "Janus is a feminist fanzine."

He sorts through the ballots. "Harvey! Come here, Harvey. You voted wrong." In the end John escapes with a reprimand; Greg tosses away the ballots and announces the real winners, who just happen to be the ones he favoured in the first place. Er... thanks, Greg.

TUESDAY MAY 29

It is the end of an era. No more will Langford Car Horror Stories fill the pages of TD with prose and its readers with exquisite thrills of déjà vu. The decision is made, the die cast, the Rubicon crossed and the road tax due in two days. The legendary heap must be sold at last.

A last cosmetic treatment seems in order before the crumbling vehicle faces a dealer's stern scrutiny. There's little to be done about the black bitumenous pox (the people who sealed our antique slate roof have scattered their gunge with vast enthusiasm; turns out that it was our responsibility to cover up nearby cars, windows etc.), or the bits of chrome trim which do not look their best since most of them are lying on the M4, or the dented bonnet which hit the road as recounted in TD12... but I feel I should make an effort. I bale out the lake on the floor; fed by the leaky windscreen, this body of water normally lurks in the back until one drives downhill, whereupon it's



instant tsunami and squelchy shoes for the rest of the day. It also seems a clever notion to remove the grass and moss which is growing from the floor, and the festering maps, cardboard boxes and abandoned Xmas presents from their immemorial heap in the rear. At least the battery is nearly new and the stiffness in the gears hardly noticeable...

"A hundred pounds," I say ingratiatingly to the dealer. He drops to the ground in horror, and while he is down there takes the opportunity to pass a hand without apparent effort through various important-looking parts of the chassis. Mounds of rust collect on the road.

"Fifty," he quips. "But let's try it out first." Hazel is left all alone as this maniac savagely slams the car into gear and lurches into the traffic. At once he finds the tiny stiffness in the gears as he changes up to---"Oof!" He tries again. "Unng!"

"Pull harder," I suggest. Every muscle straining, he wrenches at the lever and amid the pop of exploding blood vessels achieves second gear. Obviously these car dealers are weedy types.

"Your synchromesh is gone," he snarls to cover his embarrassment. Traffic lights loom; he stops and begins to attack the gear lever as though it is an exercise machine, ten seconds a day and you too can have arms thicker than your thighs. A final, desperate attempt; the lights go green; the gears graunch mightily, and slide with baffling ease into reverse.

With some restraint I do not point out that this is a one-way street. We back gently into the car behind, crash the gears anew, shoot forward and complete the test journey in bottom gear, the man sweating enough to replenish the puddle I so carefully drained from the floor. Unidentifiable bits fall and tinkle on the road. The dealer, a haggard and broken man, pulls in at last and breathes heavily. Then he checks the ignition again and finds the new battery is now flat.

Hazel and I are quite surprised when he gives us thirty pounds.

#### MONDAY 18 JUNE

At Milford last year, Hazel picked many pounds of sloes, which at last have come into their own: a murky, fermented liquid which I've titled "Sloe Death" is ready for bottling. This goes without a hitch;

full of overconfidence, I decide to bottle some curiously awful cider---only to pay the penalty of hubris: as Mr Ineptitude 1979 does things with a siphon at floor level, the gallon bottle of cider creeps to the table's edge and incontinently falls upon his head. My moans of self-pity have no effect on Hazel (sunk in sloth upstairs): I massage the burgeoning lump with one hand and mop up smelly stickiness with the other until this ominous buzzing fills my ears. Panic strikes. Concussion? Gas escaping from beer bottles? Tiny cider-maddened flies beating their wings against my eardrums? Brain damage and approaching death? It turns out to be a defective strip-light (not even turned on); I hit it feebly with my last remaining strength and the buzzing stops, though it takes hours for my fear-driven spurts of adrenalin to die away.

I don't even like cider all that much.

#### TUESDAY JUNE 19

I don't like sloe wine either. Not that I've tasted it; this is pure prejudice connected with the explosion of a bottle by night and the dousing of our little larder with foaming purple froth. In the long and odorous hours which follow, Hazel and I learn many strange chemical facts, such as that sloe wine leaves an indelible black stain on yellow walls, an indelible brown stain on plastic-coated shelves and an indelible pink stain on everything else. Also the local air has an indelible pink smell.

(On Friday Kevin comes to dinner and Hazel resolves to give him lychees as his just desserts. I leave the table to fetch them. Says Hazel with her sweetest smile: "They're in the pink tin, dear.")

#### SATURDAY JUNE 23

Our "secret" party is the usual sordid affair, devoid of redeeming social value but enlivened by talk of the flyer for *Another Bloody Fanzine*, which incipient editors Dorey and Nicholas disclaim utterly. They suspect Kevin because the typing looks like his (only later it proves to be different). Ian Maule, the only fan with a copy of the flyer, carries out subtle detective work: "Was it you, then?" He asks Hazel the meanings of words supposedly written by Joe but which the lad has never heard of: "sisyphcan" and "tropism". Hazel knows what they mean. "Ah, it was you!" shrieks Ian. These transparent efforts to divert sus-



pcion will do him little good.

---

D.WEST: "Got a copy of ANOTHER BLOODY FANZINE O. Very convincing piece of work. Started writing letter to Nicholas, but finally came to conclusion he couldn't possibly be *that* daft... Now much exercised as to real author---Langford, Smith or Langford and Smith? Textual analysis seems to indicate last..."

D.LANGFORD: "I agree with your suspicions. It's just the sort of thing Ritchie Smith and my little brother would do."

---

Peter Nicholls has asked me to tell Linda Hutchinson that he loves her and has done so ever since she looked into his eyes at Yorcon and tenderly passed out. It seems much wittier to tell husband Mike that Peter fancies *him*, but I forget to do even this. Meanwhile D.West closes his eyes momentarily and is decorated with an elaborate devil-mask in red felt-tip, complete with *NOMAD* across the forehead. This is the obligatory sf reference so vital to each TD.

FRIDAY JUNE 29

By now you will have forgotten the famous Royal Visit to AWRE. I am not so lucky, since Hazel still wishes to stand on draughty fields until the Queen turns up half an hour late. ...But a spark of recognition enters the regal eyes as AWRE's Director introduces me ("One of our most promising young scientists"): "Not the David Langford, the author of *War in 2080*?" HRH asks breathlessly. "Charles and Philip loved it, and we've given copies to all our friends, except Mr Brezhnev of course." But Prince Philip is looming, and adds: "Not the Langford who wrote that disgusting piece on us in *TD15*? Guards! Guards!" At his gesture, liveried flunkies surround me with halberds at the ready..."

Bloody hell. Even my fantasies aren't what they were. Back in reality, a light of ghastly resignation shines in the regal eyes as HRH realizes the horror in store. In front of her marquee, repellent juveniles lurch through an endless sequence of inept judo falls, staggering about the mat like fans unsure of why the bar keeps moving. Then follows a horde of shivering apprentices who leap rather uninventively over a wooden horse whilst the glazed expressions of the Royals cannot conceal a longing to be under that horse and burrowing to freedom. They escape before the MOD police display their amazing incont-

ent guard dogs, and Hazel and I follow in a bus.

Hazel says I don't have to do it again.

Later I hear a tale of the Queen's Australian visit, where it seems she chatted with someone who proved to be a photographer. "I have a brother-in-law who's a photographer," she told him brightly. "What a coincidence," he slurred. "I've got a brother-in-law who's a queen."

SATURDAY JULY 14

To town, to buy the bicycle on which I will not travel all the way to South Ealing (I don't have Dave Bridges' stamina, or whatever it is that he has). As we walk under a tree just up the road, there is a noise above as of some great bird realizing its mistake in ordering a vindaloo, and something not nice falls on us. We remove bits of it from Hazel's hair and various articles of clothing, marveling at this wonder of nature. "It was so... unexpected," I comment shortly afterwards, with sweeping gestures: a previously unnoticed bit of whatever chooses this moment to fall off Hazel and onto my outstretched hand. We are disconsolate. Nature has turned against us. However, the gay city life of exotic Reading does much to cheer us and we return with glad hearts, whereupon the noise is repeated more faintly from above and a similar, though lesser, deposit appears on Hazel once more. What manner of bird is this which can continue its campaign of unwellness for such a time? I am moved to an outbreak of literary speculation when Hazel insists it can only be an albatross: now in *The Ancient Mariner's* first draft, the celebrated albatross was fed on weevils from the sailors' biscuits. One is sure that these would have disagreed with its delicate antarctic tummy (especially if made into a vindaloo). Imagine now this unwell bird lurking high in the rigging for nine days, emitting offerings even one-tenth as foul as that showered freely upon Hazel, and the central riddle of just *why* the Ancient Mariner got out his crossbow is, I think, solved. This insight must be expanded into an essay for *Foundation*, though not just yet.

WEDNESDAY JULY 18

I finish typing page 10 of *Twll-Ddu* and wonder whether to insert thanks to Keith Freeman (paper) and Victoria Vayne (tiny electrostencil). But there's no room.



## That Justly Famous WAHF Column

Though superficially identical to that supplied by Ian Maule last issue, the above title is subtly different in a manner worthy of Borges: this time it comes from Paul Kincaid. Let the rollocall begin...

John Alderson, Harry Andruschak, Graham Ashley, William Bains, Richard Baker, Cathy Ball, Jim Barker, George Barnett, Paul Barnett,

HARRY BELL, 9 Lincoln St, Gateshead, Tyne  
& Wear NE8 4EE:

"Just a brief comment on the scurrilous attack on me embodied in the cover of Twll-Ddu 15 (or Twyll-Ddu 15).

"Trust you bloody celts to stick together. It should be obvious that Twyll-Ddu is the Anglicized form of the unpronounceable Twll-Ddu, just as Caernarvon doesn't have an f in it and Conway does have an a. Just as the artist of this infamous cover is a Scotchman, and a typically mean one at that. When I, out of the goodness of my heart, do you a cover, I give you hands with the full complement of fingers---Barker only gives you three per hand, plus two thumbs. Admittedly they're of the large Walls sausage variety and totally unlike my own sensitive artistic fingers, but I suspect they're what Barker himself would like to have so that when sent to the bar for five pints he'd only come back with four (Dave Cobblequid is working on something similar but has only got it down to four and a half at the moment)."

It seems that Harry wasn't even aware that twyll is Welsh for fraud or deception. Mind you, neither was I... I can't speak for Gerald Bishop, Pamela Boal, Allen and Liz Boyd-Newton, Andrew Brown, Brian Earl Brown: "John Brunner? He's the man who puts the typos in manuscripts, isn't he?", Sandy Brown, Wiktor Bukato, M.Caulton, Rich Coad, John Collick, Geoff Cox, Andy Darlington, Gary Deindorfer, Mike Dickinson,

ALAN DOREY, 20 Hermitage Woods Crescent,  
St John's, Woking, Surrey GU21 1UE:

"Talking of the Bingley Ripper ('well, we've all got to have a hobby'), I thought you might be interested to know just why D. was disgustingly ill at Yorcon. About six weeks previous, at the inaugural meeting of the "Northern Tun", he disappeared

from the multitude in the main bar to relieve his stomach of several gallons of beer that had been quietly fermenting there for a few days. Thinking that a bit of fresh air would do him the power of good (somehow the words power and D. don't go together, but you know what I mean), he staggered outside into the streets and began lurching round the main city-square, clutching his stomach, almost bent double and moaning with all the reality of one who has met Ian Garbutt. Unfortunately, City Square in Leeds is a favourite haunt of meths-toting drunks and bums, and on several occasions he had to dodge not only meths-thirsty unshaven human wrecks but also the long arm of the law, which sought to relieve the streets of these unfortunates and place them in a hostel where they could be dried out. D. was saved by a search party discovering him and leading him back to the West Riding for the conclusion of our meeting... I hear Armley Jail is quite nice really. You can see the Dragonara from the top floor, so it could be a fitting piece of irony to remind him that he should have turned up to the bidding session for another Leeds con. Anyway, D's illness continued from that day forward, and he shows few signs of recovery."

The next TD should contain thrilling revelations of how Mr Dorey researched this letter for three months, on the top floor of Armley Jail. Let this be a warning to Leigh Edmonds, Malcolm Edwards, Stan Eling, Graham England, Jan Howard Finder, George Flynn, John Foyster, Mike Glicksohn: "There are seductive English fans of the female persuasion, aren't there? I'd hate to think that we have to bring our own since that would play hell with my 22 kilo baggage allowance. And surely Malcolm Edwards can't be the only sexy-looking English fan?", Seth Goldberg, Mark Greener: "You can see through people as if they were glass." [Urgh!], Rob Hansen, Alun Harries, George Hay: "What do you mean, you are now insufferable?", Julian Headlong, Joy Hibbert: "Speaking of boring & tedious things, is Roy Kettle so short of female company that he has no-one else but me to invite to 15 orgies on Saturday night at Yorcon?" [Speak for yourself. He invited me, too.], Steev Higgins, Arthur Hlavaty, Linda Hutchinson: "I think you are only able to recognize me from the back of my head!" [well, Peter Nicholls keeps obscuring my view of the front], Philip James: "Wahf's column is



'justly famous' and I think it's a shame he only gets to do a guest column. He deserves his own fanzine.", Terry Jeeves, Douglas A. Kaufman,

*LEROY KETTLE, 56 Falkland Road, London N8:*  
 "Having just returned from two weeks in Greece and upon finding your cheque awaiting me (and a very handsome amount too) I thought about that little matter we discussed that time when you were on your knees just after you bought me that eighteen course meal with the champagne. After careful consideration and adding two quite small noughts to your cheque (I thought I'd better mention it in case you need to sell your house or something) I have decided that you might after all be almost worth nominating for TAFF in 1992. You can certainly put me down right at the top of your list (I'll probably be the only person on it---ho ho) and I wish you every luck in improving your image over the next thirteen years."

*You added two noughts, Leroy? You must have problems. I hope the extra 9,900 prunes make you very happy; none left now, though, for Garry Kilworth, Paul Kincaid: "Aye aye", Paul Lamprill, Jon Langford, David V. Lewis,*

*DAVE LOCKE, 3650 Newton St #15, Torrance, CA 90505, USA:*

"Virginity tests? Are they tests to destruction? Not interested. I'm not much into virgins."

"While I'm amused at Victoria Wayne when she expends generous wordage about the lack of 'funny writing', we're all thankful over here that she hasn't tried more than once or twice to help rectify the situation. From my own view, which spans a multivalent eighteen years of reading fanzines without mental health benefits in my group health insurance, I'd say that fan humour ebbs and flows with the years but isn't at any particular low point right now. Maybe it only seems that way in view of the fact that so many fans seem to have discovered their navel and the enthusiasm hasn't worn off yet. One of these days they might rediscover science fiction, and feel unduly pressed to tell us about it. I'm not sure that this would be an improvement."

"Your reply to Victoria ('Plenty of agony lying round in real life without dragging it into fanzines') leads me to

believe that you classify fanwriting somewhere in the spectrum of being an amusing diversion without giving thought to questioning the usefulness of what you're doing. I don't know why I should think this of you, when everyone knows that all hobbies, be they pinball, playing solitaire or staring at aerial photographs of Margaret Thatcher, must be able to withstand the scrutiny of a test for usefulness. My only excuse for an absence of critical faculties in this area is that I become confused as to the relative merits of picking my nose when judged on the same scale."

*Yes indeed. Though some jolly folk go further---insisting that as a mere amusing diversion, fanwriting isn't worth doing well. Such persons are doubtless blithely unconcerned when on the hundredth or thousandth nose-picking attempt their finger still misses its mark and skids into an eyeball. Meanwhile, back on the heap... AnneLaurie Logan, Eric Lindsay, Mary Long, Selina Lovett, Alan Mattingly, Jean Maudsley, Ian Maule, Eric Mayer: "I picked up the Mekons' new single... Rather good but all about some drunken, whining silliness in a bar---kind of the musical equivalent of a British fanzine.", Barry Meikle [who defined twyll], Chris Morgan, Joseph Nicholas [see elsewhere], John Owen, Jonathan Palfrey, Celia Parsons, Kevin Pender, Dave Piper, Dai Price and now, the man who resold an Astral leauge piece to Omni---and in whom I confided on selling, of all things, a Mac Malsenn story...*

*CHRIS PRIEST, 1 Ortygia House, 6 Lower Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA2 0DA:*

"Yes, I appreciated your sale to Penthouse. What knaves we are! What idiots they are! Sometimes I think the only way to sell to these places is to be as silly and preposterous as possible. Chris Evans just rang with the news that there's a serious, complaining letter in the latest *Omni*, about my silly story. I myself had a number of letters forwarded from *Omni*, every single one of which took the thing seriously. I replied to each one, telling them that everything they needed to know was at the Smithsonian, because I had inspected it myself so I knew it was there, and if the Smithsonian denies it, well... it just confirms the cover-up, doesn't it?"

*Also covered up in this TD are David*



Redd, Andy Richards, Peter Roberts, Doreen Rogers, Mic Rogers, Paul Ryan, Ron Salomon, Andy Sawyer, Joyce Scrivner, Bob Shaw: "Don't worry about the whisky you poured over my trousers. They get doused quite regularly with strong drink, so my big worry is not getting another damping, but being set alight by a careless cigar. Here is a little promotional couplet which you are welcome to use as a competition for your readers. The idea is that they have to complete the last line: A good stout copy of TWYLL DDU / Gives as much fun as a ..... (The correct answer, of course, is 'as a pill do'.)", Bob Shaw [the other one], Jean Sheward, John Shire, Ritchie Smith, Steve Sneyd, Phil Stephensen-Payne, Andrew Stephenson, John Stewart, Lisanne Sutherland, Taral: "Other people's egoboo bores me... I share your displeasure that Twll-Ddu didn't cop the Nova, kitschy though it may be (the Nova that is). Surely to hell no conceivable weird British idea of fan-nishness could have led to *Gross Encounters* as the victor. Are you sure the BSFA hasn't had a hand in this somewhere?" [In an exclusive interview with Twll-Ddu, the editor of *Gross Encounters* recently declared, "Le BSFA, c'est moi!"]].

Whimsy dictates a new paragraph for: Suzle Tompkins, Kevin Tyler, Victoria Vayne, Roger Waddington, Keith Walker: "I'm not a fan even a fake one",

D.WEST, 48 Norman Street, Bingley, West Yorks BD16 4JT:

"Whatever it was that was wrong with me at Yorcon I think had been picked up at the Trekkie con a couple of weeks before. Tribble allergy or something. Didn't drink anything at all after Friday, and just felt worse and worse. Took me a week to recover. On the Sunday, during one of the intervals of lying down, took a look at your book. Realized that I had a particularly bad case of radiation sickness. If I'd felt fitter I would have made my will. Left my body to Science Fiction. The Radioactive West Award. To be presented each year to fan most deserving of being blighted.

"...I must be one of the least known persons ever to be nominated for a Hugo. Still, there's always the Best Award. When I win it for the third time, I'm allowed to keep it."

D. traditionally occupies the end spot

in the TD letter column. I mean, who wants to challenge Bingley's warlock-in-residence when with the merest twitch of his occult powers he might come and die all over the offender? Well... all I want to say is good luck to you, Martin Morse Wooster, and don't lose any hair or fingernails in Bingley.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT FOR SIMONE: 100 people sent letters since TD15 (also Terry Hughes, whom I have temporarily mislaid). There were a lot more than 100 letters. This isn't Maya, you know (even Maya isn't any more): shorter and wittier stuff is wanted from most persons not quoted above. Andrew Brown, Phil James, Eric Mayer and Joyce Scrivner are commended for sending long enjoyable letters; there were some pretty good bits in Victoria Vayne's 17th and 23rd letters too, but Victoria automatically writes DNQ against all the good bits... Anyway, be warned. I can't afford a huger print run than the present 300. By way of discouragement, the cost of a sample issue has just soared to 50p/\$1: as before, proceeds go to GUFF (or TAFF, depending). Reviewers please note...

### Literary Corner

OR: NICHOLMASS AND THE PIT

Recently the *Drilkjis* editorial staff tried to agree a title for Joseph's column in number 4. Our initial suggestion of "Another Bloody Review" was scorned, as was the Langford offering "B is for Haemoglobin". Joe fancied "Bloody Hell", which sounded too much like Greg's "Burning Hell"; or "Catacomb Dreams", perhaps not far enough from Dave Wingrove's "The Androgyne's Dreams"; or "The Mortician's Slab", not a million parsecs from a Dorey column title (speaking of which, I wonder whether Alan knows his "Up Against The Wall, Punks!" [GE5] was used by the great Pickersgill in *Ritblat 2*, five years ago?). A passing Mike Rohan suggested "Fungi from Yuggoth" and the *Drilkjis* editors instantly approved; Joe did not, and said "Bloody hell" many times. He satirically offered "Invasion of the Giant Incontinent Washing Machines"; recalling the article's subject (the Thomas Covenant books) I riposted with "Lord Hotpoint's Bane" and we all went for a drink. The toils of the literary life.



Name Droppings

KEVIN SMITH won Yorcon's "Impromptu" competition (talk brilliantly for two minutes without preparation) by his clever ploy of longer rehearsal and a thicker wad of notes than other contestants. His discourse on "How to Lose the Nova Award" climaxed with shriekings of "One lousy, rotten point!" and the tearing-up of his notes (not as thick as a telephone directory). He had shredded them in rehearsal also, and was forced to write them all out again... DAVE LANGFORD, despite a sense-shattering improvization on the subject of nosebleeds which had the front rows cringing from his fatal nostril's line of fire, lost the "Impromptu" by two points. Two wretched, stinking points... Judges JIM BARKER and MIKE MEARA condemned EVE HARVEY and ROB JACKSON as (repectively) "Not nude enough" and "Not tweedy enough"... Among the TWLL-DDU FAN POLL ballots there later appeared a vote for GROSS ENCOUNTERS as Worst UK Fanzine, with the annotation: "One foul, loathesome point" ... VECTOR 91 was nominated in the Worst Cover section, this special BOB SHAW issue being adorned with a large photograph of IAN WATSON. Take a bow, Mr WINGROVE... WAR IN 2080 HITS BESTSELLER LISTS is a heading I hope to use one day. Meanwhile ROB HOLDSTOCK is sulking because he is not mentioned and TONY BERRY, arrogant swine, reports an error on page 57 (for 3½, read 0.3)... STEVE McDONALD asks why he wasn't nominated for the John W. Campbell award this year. Answers on a plain envelope, please, to him c/o Alcan Jamaica Co, Kirkvine Works PO, Manchester, Jamaica, West Indies... Regular avoiders of ISAAC ASIMOV'S SF ADVENTURE MAGAZINE will be glad to learn that STEVE has switched from abuse to a policy of active ingrati-ation with Messrs SCITHERS and SCHWEITZER: soon, no doubt, will come the opportunity to miss a spate of McDONALD stories in the ASIMOV mags... LITTLE BROTHER JON, whose inmost soul is exposed in DRILKJIS 4, is leaving college and his collection of nude models for a year to become a household word with THE MEKONS, rising melody-destroyers who could soon become the BURLINGTONS of music... Someone from that little-known fanzine THE OBSERVER just rang TWLL-DDU's editor to ask him about SEACON: "It's in August," our man was not afraid to say... TWLL-DDU remains available for trade (no all-foreign-language fanzines, please), LOC, 50p/\$1 or fluctuations of the Langford whimsy. {Ω}



Richard Bergeron  
 1 West 72nd St  
 New York  
 NY 10023  
 USA

PRINTED MATTER

Twll-Ddu: the Journal of  
 Eschatological Morphology  
 Editor: Dave Langford  
 22 Northumberland Avenue  
 Reading, Berks. RG2 7PW  
 United Kingdom

PRINTED MATTER