

*This is the special giant Seacon issue... hence no fancy heading, no moderation as to size and (in the true Roberts tradition) no punctuality. ANSIBLE still comes from Dave Langford, 22 Northumberland Avenue, Reading, Berks, RG2 7PW, UK. Available for news, articles, art, newszine trades, money (4/50p Europe, 3/\$1 NA, 5/£1 Aus). Next issue should be of 'normal' size... September/October 1979.*

SEACON: To reprint last issue's scoop, Seacon Has Happened! And here to tell you about it are the dregs of UK fandom. Your editor, as befits his position (sort of hunched up at the typewriter), will remain silent for now...

*Kevin Smith:* What's to get excited about? You seen one Worldcon, you seen 'em all.

That may or may not be true; it is highly irrelevant. Seacon '79 was my first Worldcon, so not for me the blasé, seen-it-all attitude of the experienced American Worldcon-goer. I've been to British cons, of course---since 1972--- and I've even chaired an Eastercon (Skycon in 1978), but the Worldcon was going to be different, wasn't it? And I was all excited about it. So was most of British fandom.

It was going to be BIG, for one thing, and so it turned out. It was seven times as big as the previous biggie, Skycon.

There were going to be foreigners there, too. We've had foreigners before, but only in small, easy-to-handle numbers. At Seacon, we Brits were outnumbered by foreigners---about three to one.

It was going to be expensive---despite Mr Weston's protestations a couple of years ago. Expensive rooms, expensive booze, expensive food, and for a couple of days longer than British cons usually last. But by saving up for months beforehand and staying in a little hotel near the Metropole rather than at it, the wallet managed to stand the strain, just. Me too.

And the feel of it was going to be different. This was a *Worldcon*, damn it, not just any old British con! And there the predictions, or expectations, fell apart. The feel of Seacon was not different; it was familiar. I felt at home.

So was the whole thing a waste of time and money, then? No, no, a thousand times no! The feel was fannish and familiar, but there were lots of new people who fitted in and contributed to it. Legendary American fans and unknown British neos---I was meeting both for the first time---added enough vitality to break up the established rounds of British fandom without ruining its fannish ambience. It was great, I tell you!

But don't ask me how life was outside the fanroom.

*Dave Bridges:* We found Brighton despite my efforts as co-pilot. Indeed we even found the hotel, though I'd left my map at home. First impressions of Brighton were unfavourable---the beach was too pebbly to support a tent. A minor detail. Impressions of the hotel were also unfavourable---it was faded and getting old. The furniture was shabby and the style outdated. We were pleased not to have booked a room. Now to the convention, for it's the convention we were here to enjoy, not the luxuries of a hotel. Impressions? It was faded and getting old. It was only Saturday evening but already everyone looked as though they'd been living it up for months and were just now feeling the error of their ways. I was at once lost in a sea of faces. Richard and Ian didn't even bother to swim for shore---they simply went out to find a pub.

We had arrived too late---already the gates were down, the convention closed.

Later we tried to watch a film, but it was like watching a home movie projected onto a dark wall for lack of a screen. Then, when at the end of each reel there was a pause while the projectionist got himself sorted out, we decided this wasn't good enough and went to find some sleep.

We'd found a room at the hotel---our own suite with private washroom and toilets. In fact we were cramped out in a deserted cloakroom in a disused lobby: the only thing in our price range.

The only parts of the convention I saw that came even close to my expectations of professionalism were the exhibition from *Dragon's Dream* and the book room, which of course were professional. The rest of the con was amateur and looked it. No better, and in some cases worse, than a normal convention. Even the fan room looked as though someone had forgotten to wind it up.

We went out onto the beach to play in the pebbles and entertain ourselves with games of 'Sink' and 'Fill-his-shirt-with-rocks'. This was fun. We left while it was still Sunday, there being little else to do.

If this was a Worldcon, the Americans are welcome to them.

*Bob (FOKT) Shaw:* Seacon was good. It began on time, and ended on time. It had a whole lot of things that you could do, and a lot of people to talk to. Or so I'm told, for I seemed mostly to see the same old faces as before, and only rarely attended the Programme in whatever form...

Everything about Seacon's organization smacked (at least to someone who was relatively outside the actual nitty-gritty of the organization) of care and good sense. The mammoth problems compared to most UK cons in the past were coped with in a way to make me, as a sometime Faircon chairman, quite envious. The Gophers, until the revolution, seemed to (a) have a hell of a time and (b) get on with it; the walkie-talkies, radio mikes etc. seemed to obviate so many of the awkward pauses that might have occurred while runners passed messages.

The things that did go wrong were almost traditional, despite the 'help' of paid outsiders---the film projection facilities (for the satanically-created 35mm projectors, at least) just were not up to scratch. Still, there comes a time when you've just got to accept what the contractor says. In this case, they blew it. But that was the only failure of the technology of Seacon.

The hotel was dear. Hellish expensive, but obviously at least trying. And, after one night of slightly strong-arm tactics, sensible about room parties. (Even then, compared to Skycon they were pussycats.) The geography of the place was awkward; but if there were so few conference centres available, you have to take what's going.

The 'usual' items---art show, dealers' room, fan room etc were all OK. I'm told *Omni* screwed up the plans for security with books, but that wasn't too bad a flaw.\* The Art Show I did not like. The crazy Heath Robinson arrangements that passed for display boards made the amateur/semi-pro side look foolish and awkward. Which is the way that many of the artists felt when trying to hang their works... And the Art Show was totally overwhelmed by the *Dragon's Dream* exhibition. Beautiful.

But how did I feel about the con? In the first place, it was like being back at my first con. The old new-boy-at-school feeling... There seemed to be

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\* The idea was fine: *Omni* provided standardized bags for book room purchases, which were to be sealed and rubber-stamped across the seal to achieve total security. Only the bags proved to be black plastic (except for the *Omni* logo) and the *Time of the Invisible Rubber Stamp* was at hand. [DRL]

thousands of (sometimes hugely fat) American fans, all of whom knew one another and would walk all over us poor, downtrodden UK types in the process of exchanging funny handshakes. The actual number of semi-alcoholic illiterates (such as the Albacon committee) did not seem much higher than at a normal con. I didn't meet all that many new people; the whole affair, for me, was like a 5 day Eastercon, with people. How many fans can you have a pint with?

Memories: 'Superman' making with the apologies for beating *Hitch-Hiker's Guide*; Bob Shaw almost dancing with glee over his Hugo; a certain US national, his Hugo and the queue of people not willing to take it back to the states for him; Arthur Clarke and his slightly small suit... Plus nasties: the guy who got clocnked on the head by a falling pint mug (the Yanks hated *that*) and the cretin from Yorkshire who blacked  $\frac{1}{2}$  Cruttenden's eye.

Overall, a Good Thing.

*Alun Harries*: What little I can remember... Being extremely rude to Cathy Ball and waiting 3 days to apologise. A party in the ladies' toilet on the sixth floor. A member of the Metropole staff asking me to leave at 4am. My first sensible, if curtailed, conversation with Alan Dorey without the threat of unsuppressed physical violence. Beer at 60p a pint. Telling John Harvey that he would make a good blockhead.

Enough incestuousness. I do not consider Seacon the best place for a first experience of conventions. I went to Novacon 8 because I did not want a Worldcon to be my first contact with fandom as a group. I did speak to a few 'virgin' attendees and they were having a great time... but it was an atypical event, both in size and atmosphere, and they may well be disappointed in future.

*Joseph Nicholas*: Seacon was huge by British standards, of course, but almost the only times I noticed the vastness of its attendance were at the opening and closing ceremonies; sitting in the gallery above the main hall, looking down at the crowds and thinking "Christ! Thousands of them!" like a Battle of Britain fighter pilot encountering his first Luftwaffe air raid. Otherwise it somehow contrived to seem not unlike a big Eastercon, only with a wider variety of accents: lots of people unknown to me milling around looking for things to do, the obligatory clumps of D&D players who never seemed to do anything else, people known to me huddled in the Fan Room drinking themselves slowly into a stupor, and I---having rashly said 'yes' to Roy's 15-month-previous request to run the book auctions---rushing around either making sure everything got where it was supposed to or filling out innumerable record sheets in a forlorn attempt to keep track of the proliferating mounds of auction material suddenly flowing in from every direction, much of it helpfully unaccompanied by the detailed lists so thoughtfully not prepared by its sellers many weeks beforehand. Which is the main reason why I didn't notice Seacon's hugeness: I was too bloody busy, and in consequence missed most of the programme items that I really wanted to see. (Ah, the selflessness of my dedication!) But I daresay most other committee members/helpers will claim as much for themselves, so why complain? The evenings, after all, were virtually trouble-free, and I've a fund of anecdotes about all kinds of trivial incidents, all begging to be expressed on paper---but not here. Contrary to what Kev Smith said in the fake flyer, *Another Bloody Fanzine* will publish occasional conreps, so you can read them all there. Like, for instance, what Cathy Ball said to me when---

[Editorial intrusion: Kev Smith denies having taken Joseph's style in vain in the ABF flyer (now a collector's item). Could you disbelieve an accountant? Of course you couldn't. More news about Joe later this issue... DRL]

*Lisanne Sutherland:* I was one of the Fancy Dress competitors. We gathered in Hall 2 at 7.30pm for the pre-judging and photographic session. After being allocated numbers, we were herded behind a curtain into a tiny triangular area. There were 60-70 people at least, in costumes ranging from scantily fragile to bulkily fragile, all trying to squeeze into the tiny space until their name was called. In fact we had to overflow into Hall 1---there was no way Katie and her 20ft wings could have fitted in there.

On hearing your number, you emerged to walk past the battery of cameras, stopping briefly on each of the 3 marked areas. We had to do this twice. Then it was 9pm and we were lined up behind curtained screens in Hall 1 waiting for the real competition... at this point a friend had to be taken out of her robot maid costume suffering from heat prostration. None of us had expected to be on our feet so long, nor had we anticipated the cramped, overheated conditions. After that incident, kind souls came round with glasses of iced water and saved several lives! (Thank you from all of us, whoever you are.) The only really cool ones amongst us were those in body paint or (like our Katie) in wings!

The worst part was, as usual, waiting to go on. Once on the stage, it was too late to worry. Then there was the wait for the results. I don't know how long that took, since it isn't ethnic for Darkovans to wear wrist watches; it seemed to take hours. Only afterwards were we free to find liquid sustenance and to change. We had been in costume for at least 5 hours: a long time for those in robot, android, dragon, star-trooper, Darth Vader and green wookiee costumes.

It was an experience. I thought the couple of hours at Yorcon Fancy Dress were bad... those for whom this was their first Worldcon fancy-dress learned something---to wear as little as possible!

*[Note to future organizers: it was a minor mistake not to have roped off the part of the hall reserved for competitors after they'd paraded. Instead there was an irascible security guard who ordered people around more or less at random and irrespective of whether they were standing in the way of anything. Though my memory may be playing tricks, I seem to recall this chap walking round me to evict D.West, who was standing further away from the reserved area than I... By the way, Lisanne won something or other with her group, as she fails to mention partly through modesty and partly because she revealed all in a piece for Ken Slater's catalogue. Rumour had it that Katie Davies wanted to reveal all also, but settled for a G-string and wings which coyly hid her shoulder-blades.]*

*John Harvey:* I did more humping at Seacon than at any convention I've been to.

For the benefit of American readers, that means carrying boxes of books, fanzines, programme books, equipment, more books, displays and yet more books. I've not lost more sweat since I worked on the furnaces at a steelworks. Add the pleasure of driving a 35cwt van overlaid with the above items, and I started Seacon absolutely worn out.

Eve appeared to have the fan room mostly under control by Friday; the TV games machines were glowing red hot and bulging with 10p pieces. The man with the big sack had arrived to empty them when Eve remarked: "Didn't we have 8 machines?" "Of course," I replied. "Well there's only 7 now." "WHAT?"

I madly rushed around the room counting. Only 7 present. I spent the next hour with Martin Easterbrook going frantic looking for the machine. Nobody could have pinched it---could they? Hotel staff said they'd seen people struggling with one---through the doors to the street. Which master criminal, in broad daylight, under our very noses...? Visions of Seacon having to pay out £2000+ came to mind. We tracked the machine to a suite in the hotel and were less than polite to the miscreant---who, it turned out, had ordered machines

and found them delivered to the Fan Room. When he liberated one for his own use he forgot to tell anyone.

The Seacon newsheet proved a trial: Graham England announced that our duplicator had broken down at 4am---what d'you expect, I thought, it's not used to late nights. So jolly hours were spent up to my elbows in ink. Thanks to Dave Langford for helping change the inkpad I tore. Made me feel like a real faned with my inky black fingers.

The highlight of the con must have been the banquet---and the Hugos. All those authors venturing out of the SFWA suite like woodworm out of a bedhead. Perhaps the fanroom party with its powerful punch was even better; and then there was the gopher party with a mountain of booze and everybody getting very silly and the scene fading away to the haunting sound all too familiar at conventions... something that leaves little piles on the carpet!

*Alan Mattingly:* This being my very, very, very first con, I haven't much to compare it with---all the British fans I met said it was rather boring as cons go, while the US fans (Rich Coad, anyway---he's really British) said how bluddy good it was & made US cons look like feminist rallies.

As I'm a neo, more or less, perhaps I could give a brief account of how I met the big name fans & the barriers that were encountered...

On entering the fanroom (after many amazing adventures in the labyrinthine passages of the Metropole trying to avoid American fans who wobbled about like giant weebles) I felt sheepish, to say the least. I'd read about how hard it is for a neo to get 'in'. So I merely viewed the exhibits, eyeing the probable fans dubiously, trying to judge their sanity. The first I actually encountered was Greg Killerpigs. I was at that moment thumbing through a pile of *Seamonsters* 3; Mr K sauntered nonchalantly across to me & said in an affected voice, "That's 50p". "No it's not, I get mine free." A bemused expression crossed his (face?). He looked at my name badge, stared hard into my eyes. "So you're ~~Alan~~ Alan Mattingly?!" \* He screamed with laughter, folding up & rolling about the floor. "Here Simone," he called, "look, it's Alan Mattingly."

Simone, somewhat more polite than young Killerpigs, grimaced. "Oh yes, you write me those, er, illegible locs." She drifted away but not before Kev Smith had come to my defence: "He writes quite good letters to me." (I like Kev.) K, trying his hardest to lose me, palmed me off onto Steev Higgins, who gave me a guided tour of major UK fans present:- Dave Langford thrust a copy of *TD16* into my hands, mumbled something about skinheads and punks, then disappeared. John Collick cringed. D.West said: "I've never heard of you" and crawled away. John Harvey said: "I was on the toilet when I read that typo\*, I've been meaning to write a letter of apology but every time I sit down to write it I can't help curling up with laughter... it was one of Eve's best you know."

And so on...

*Pamela Boal:* ...I'm not exactly in a position to write a report but I do have a bill to prove I almost attended Seacon.

[This is the conclusion of Pamela's contribution, which ran to 2,500 words and Wouldn't Fit. Pamela had a rough time: the Bedford was impossible for her wheelchair and she had to move to the Metropole (which like the Bedford 'caters for the disabled'---i.e. has one toilet with the wheelchair symbol on the door, provided you can get up the steps to find it). At least, you'd think, someone staying in the hotel which includes the Seacon exhibition complex should have

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\* 'Anal Mattingly': famous Matrix typo, (c) Eve Harvey and the BSFA, 1979.

no trouble. You'd be wrong. The exhibition/conference bit is an afterthought to the main body of the Metropole, and each has its own lifts: however, they are linked only by two flights of stairs, neither with even a handrail. Pamela and one or two other people unable to climb stairs enjoyed a delightful quarter-mile walk round the side of the hotel (often in the rain) whenever they wished to go from hotel room to con hall or vice versa. This is not a trivial matter: those who like me can crawl drunkenly up stairs without a second thought are apt to underestimate problems of access. [Note how cretin Langford used the word 'walk' in the last sentence but one, for example---not quite the word for a tortuous progress by wheelchair over appallingly-maintained pavements.] The next con committee is advised to take note... Anyone wanting to see or publish Pamela's full exposition should drop me a line... DRL]

*John Collick:* I was thinking of doing a kind of stream of consciousness piece, something along the lines of WEDNESDAY: Euurgh, aargh, bleurgh, gasp, \*thud\*. THURSDAY: Yech, yeurgh... but as you quite rightly pointed out, it would have become a bit tiresome after the third paragraph. However, it certainly reflects how I felt during and after the Worldcon, it was certainly fast, gruelling and physically overwhelming and I seemed to come out rather worse off than most people. In the first three days I was brutally kneed in the groin by mild-mannered Dave Pringle and I sprained my ankle escaping from the clutches of D.West (as well as tripping and sliding three yards along the corridor on my knees). One thing that took me aback was the room-party situation. At British cons I'm used to wandering in and out of room parties unchallenged, whether invited or not. What struck me when drifting through the parties at Seacon was the unfriendliness of the participants. At the Australia in '83 party I was challenged by some irate little woman who insisted that I should have brought several bottles and a picnic hamper in order to gain admittance, and I soon lost count of the number of invitation-only affairs. Mind you, the Scandinavians had the right idea. All you had to do was wander into their party with an empty glass shouting "Schöndünaviahä ürhn '83" and it was instantly filled with whisky as several slim Panatellas were thrust into your top pocket. Because of the cliqueishness of most of the room parties (and the vast crowd in the Swedish one) most nights were spent on the stairs shouting Astral Hymns or standing outside the SFWA being crushed into the wallpaper pattern every time someone opened the door. The final ignominy came when I ended up having a conversation with Alun Harries on the floor of a women's toilet. Strange con, Seacon.

*Cyril Simsa:* ...I might yet someday soon produce a full report that tells in detail of the things that came to pass before my beadiest of eyes (you know the sort of bead I mean---the kind that's made of polished glass); at present, though, I feel struck dumb---as speechless as a corncrake going round a threshing mill (and round and round and round).

I could recount how dashing Alan Dorey entertains photographers; I could expound on Leroy Kettle's blitz of Sunday's stairwell parties ("I've been talking to hotel security; they say we must stop walking on their carpets"); I could even, if pressed, recall the trendy journalist who came looking for street-incredibility, but ended up by talking to a spiky Cambridge undergrad, interrogating him in anxious tones on where the punks had gone; I could... I could, but probably I won't, if only 'cause the so-called anecdotal style of fanwriting is killing off the fannish fanzine, right?

I don't know why I go to cons: at the beginning and the end I always feel deeply depressed. ---Ah, but the period in between: the part that slips away

so quickly when you try to write it down---the concentrated essence of a con which always drags you back for more...

Seacon was simply the most concentrated con I've ever been to.

*[But what was that about my style of fanwriting? ...DRL]*

*Mike Dickinson:* As grievously damaged braincells order themselves into some lumpish semblance of normality I must confess that I have just spent (Wednesday to Tuesday) the best week of my life. Some of the credit must go to the con committee, especially Peter Weston, whose new talent for pleasant silliness must be kept up, and the superbly organized Kevin Williams. The speakers also deserve credit, although I suspect that the only one I'll always remember is the saintlike Sturgeon, whose spoke more good sense about important things than I've ever heard in so short a time. However, programme events are not vital to the life of the con: the people are, and I met more new people who were open, friendly and interesting than I could expect in a year's mundane activity. In fact I believe I have made several friends and if anyone can suggest a better way of passing a week than that he is welcome to his suggestion.

Of course I am referring to Americans. I came to the con with a slightly nervous curiosity, after all that had been stated in zines beforehand about how different from us they were. I knew there were some I wanted to meet, whom I wanted to be more than just names: all were charming, especially the amazing Joyce Scrivner and Terry Hughes---a one-man justification of TAFF. However it was the ordinary American fan-in-the-con which was the revelation. They treat the convention like a holiday in the Mardi Gras sense---normal rules do not apply. Liberated women in appreciable numbers, a cheap and plentiful supply of the finer things in life and a cultivation of silliness (I remember the disappointment expressed that Phil Foglio did not wear his moose antlers for the Hugo awards) help, but where was the paranoia and drunken belligerence? Surely it is not possible to run a con without them. Perhaps again those liberated women make a difference and even Kevin Smith will agree that men don't exactly suffer. A final myth to dispose of---American authors are no more stand-offish than British. For every Pournelle there are several fans who (like Rob Holdstock) also write professionally, such as the Haldemans and the Eisensteins.

Thanks to the organizers, thanks to the people I met, especially thanks to the good fans of Chicago and Minneapolis: I'll see you there sometime. Let's do it again in '84.

*[Or in '83, as Martin Hoare is reported to have been babbling... no thanks. The power-struggles for '83 and '84 already seem well-defined, and it would be (in my humble opinion) idiotic to enter a late bid for either year. A few fans, euphoric from Seacon, are murmuring of '86 or '87 and adding in low tones that Malcolm Edwards wouldn't make a bad chairman. Ah well, these mini-reports are of course all highly subjective: to take a couple of instances from Mike's, Sturgeon annoyed Chris Priest by being too'twee' while Peter Weston's patter was termed 'dire' by several people. What a good thing that I missed one and failed to hear most of the other, thus being spared the horror of possessing contentious opinions... DRL]*

*Alan Dorey:* Rich Coad knew where we were going. My drink supply was low. *The Real Seacon* My balance wasn't what it could have been, and we just had to find somewhere that resembled a room party.

"Gee, this place looks kinda neat." The door, already ajar, was breached like one running the four minute mile in ten seconds, and we fell on top of an untidy group of other people, each displaying a different stage of inebriation. Apart

from Brian Parker, attempting to talk to a captive audience of Heady Matters, it looked well appointed---a nice long bench along one wall, a deep pile carpet, and three doors at one end. Large cans and bottles of booze appeared, and soon disappeared in the approved manner. Joe Nicholas also materialized from somewhere, so he was allocated a space in one corner just in case he lapsed into unconsciousness again.

"Where's the bog?" I somehow managed to splutter, realizing that my bladder was exerting far more pressure on my brain's decision-making process than was my craving for alcohol. An American female lying sprawled across the floor flapped ineffectively towards the three doors. "Great, which fucking door is it?" With a stunning display of logic, spiced with a fear of great embarrassment, I tried the first... and success. Bladder relieved, I staggered out again, only to see Joe fall out of the adjoining door with a similarly soporific smile upon his face. "There's two bogs in this room?" I said, marvelling at my powers of deduction. "Right on there chief." I then saw Mike Dickinson stagger into the third door. "Another bog?" Mike grinned as only drunks can. Bloody Hell! What an absolutely superb hotel room... lots of carpet... lots of room... three bogs... and can't even see the beds! And Christ... what bloody huge ash trays they've got in here! Even down to the instructions on how to incinerate cigarettes. Must be to help the Americans.

Peter Weston forced his way in later... this was it. The usual bit... "Can't have long-haired British fans terrorizing sleeping residents. Back to your own hotels... take a thousand lines and see me in the morning." But no... Weston was drunk too! And demanded a pen so that he could inscribe rude words on Joe's face... legs, arms, knees and handbag. "I've always wanted to do this!" he screamed anarchically--and there are photographs to prove it.

Suddenly a woman burst into the room. "Bloody hell... this is a private room party! You can only come in if you've got gallons of drink and six sex-starved women outside." "Oh my god... who are all you nuts? Can't you read the bloody notice on the door? This is the Ladies' Powder Room!"

So now we knew.

*Linda Hutchinson:* The fan room... the strangest assortment of accents and tongues I'd heard outside Oxford. We found some friendly faces, and even friendlier wallets, and proceeded to swap scandal. I'm positive that there were some disgusting facts about Peter Weston, but unfortunately I can't remember which were about him and which about others. Not that it really matters---most people seem to get up to the same disgusting things.

The first day ended as usual with too much beer and a splitting headache; the other days blended into a homogeneous mass of beer and writhing bodies. People seemed to disappear whilst you were speaking to them, carried away on a tide of heaving drunken humanity' headed god knows where for Christ knows what. The only person who kept reappearing was Boris (perhaps cloned). Memories of the Denver bidding party, with bodies sprawled every which way, of Langford lying supine with Joyce Scrivner, of Joe Nicholas in impassioned embrace with a mass of hair attached to some woman, of Cas being pursued by a clean-cut young American (possibly a Mormon missionary), of trying to convince first-time American visitors of the merits of British beer (difficult when only Watneys was left), and of confessing to Boris that I'd been to some programmed events (only the films and play)---maybe because I was carried along by the forever heaving bodies, maybe because there were more events than usual, maybe because at times I gave up hope of finding someone who didn't want to talk about the significance of *Battlestar Galactica* to the human condition in a modern technological world

(this is true: a very intense young lady was engaged in just such a conversation). Or maybe just to stop tripping over TV crews and Boris.

*Others:* JEAN SHEWARD: "Someone should have warned me about Keith Walker years ago. I spent the duration of Seacon dodging this self-confessed non-fan, and while the ladies' loo at the Metropole is luxuriously appointed it fails to reach the high level of cultural interface which is such a feature of the Tun cubby-hole." [Next time, try the powder room...] ... PETER NICHOLLS: "Herr, a week late, 2,600 words too long, and not nearly as funny as my previous attempt, is my promised con report." [This has been promoted from humble Ansible to the high-class and suitably prolix Drilkjis---next issue real soon now.] ... MIKE GLICKSOHN: "Already, the five and a half week trip is just a fuzzy memory. Come to think of it, though, it was a fuzzy memory while it was happening so perhaps it isn't too surprising that it seems part of the remote past already." ... STEVE McDONALD: "I was sorely disappointed in Jo Nicholas for standing and giving me that 'I'm pissed out of my mind and couldn't give a fuck WHAT you call me' look... I got to sit next to John Brunner and Ben Bova in a nearby pub. Very weird, that... The things I do to meet Langford and Smith." ... CHRIS PRIEST: "I was never one to know when a joke has gone on too long." ... BOB fukt SHAW: "My feelings are mixed---it was a great Eastercon, but..."

*Me:* I enjoyed Seacon. This says startlingly little about the real quality of the con, since we vile elitist (etc, etc) fannish fans have strange and unfair resources to fall back on, no matter how newcomers may be suffering; however, the consensus seems to be that Dave Bridges is all wet just this once and that Seacon was good stuff. Little or no part in this was played by my programme appearances: a repeat of my megagenocide talk from Yorcon (now reprinted in *Drilkjis*) and a fanwriting panel. The latter I almost missed---I was punished for lateness by being handed the microphone and left alone for several subjective hours until my babblings died away utterly---while the former was immensely egoboosting since there was standing room only and even Peter Weston couldn't (he said) get in, while (if Leroy Kettle can be believed) there were fewer people in the main con hall than my little one. All this set me pretending to be a pro---remorselessly pouncing on copies of my book and signing them despite the owners' cries of protest---until overweening hubris led me to the SFWA suite and an attempt to sign up. Oh, they said. Oh, we never thought anyone from Britain would want to join. So we didn't bring any application forms; so there. I spent the rest of the con in the fan room; it felt just like an Eastercon, though somehow I missed all the traditional clashes with heavily-armed security. The gap was filled when, as I left the Metropole one night, I was searched on suspicion of harbouring stolen cameras. This still rankles (as does the distressing fact that I was fuller of whisky than witty repartee, and accepted the outrage in blank silence); however, Seacon felt precisely like a traditional UK con after that. The American accents were one hint that something bigger was happening Out There; another was the feeling of a vast echo-chamber in which the con's rumours were reverberating. To pass on a rumour in the fan-room was like shouting in some immense cavern: after a disconcerting long interval the echo returns, weirdly distorted by its reflections along all the halls and corridors of the Metropole. Thus the great "American Riffraff" story: if Joyce Scrivner has got it right, the phrase was used *sotto voce* by a 'snooty British lady' as she informed US fan Jane Hawkins that this here party was by invitation only, and so on. By the time the rumour-mills had finished, the phrase was on the lips of Vonda McIntyre's publishers as they brutally hurled her from their

select gathering; a security man was said to have spat "American riffraff" at Karen Anderson whilst barring her from the party where hubby Poul and the SFWA were disporting themselves; "American Riffraff" badges sprouted like mushrooms; an international incident seemed imminent, but nothing much actually happened. Still wilder rumours were flying when the con was over: Charles Platt had denounced Chris Priest to SFWA as being responsible for mockery of their members via the Jacqueline Lichtenberg Appreciation Society! Jerry Pournelle had offered physical violence to Charles Platt! Marion Zimmer Bradley and others were working to have Chris Priest drummed out of SFWA! Ted White was to become editor of *Heavy Metal* at \$50,000 per annum! Greg Pickersgill and Simone Walsh had split up! Andrew Kaveney (*Foundation* reviewer) had changed sex!

It seemed that Seacon had distorted our sense of reality forever. All those post-con rumours proved to be true. Help.

THE GREAT ANTICLIMAX: ALBACON (31st Eastercon, 4-6 April 1980, Albany Hotel, Glasgow) has finally released some more data. Hotel rates are £11.70 per person per night, including VAT and service but not breakfast... I got away with £15.18 with cooked breakfast for a double room at Seacon, but then I avoided the posh hotels. Booking forms out in 'early September', but mine hasn't come yet. Bob Fokt Shaw says of the hotel: "At first sight it just looks like a slick money-stealer, but the facilities seem to get better the more we look. The main con hall is smaller than we'd like..." But who visits the main con hall, eh? £5 full membership (rises in 1980) or £2 supporting to Gerry Gillin, 9 Dunottar St, Glasgow G33. There's vague talk down south of arranging an excursion train from London to Glasgow, probably starting around mid-day on the Thursday or whenever the train times permit---those interested should ask Eve Harvey (I think).

EASTERCON 1981 could return to the Leeds Dragonara, site of the successful Yorcon; the exact composition of the bidding committee keeps changing. No opposition appears to have declared itself, though there's a faint rumour that the Edinburgh group would like to justify all Southern paranoia by keeping the Eastercon in Scotland. Shaping up for '82 is an all-woman committee with Eve Harvey (chair), Pat Charnock (registrations), Coral Jackson, Kath Mitchell, Simone Walsh, Chris Atkinson and Sue Williams. This may switch to '81 if Leeds founders. I hope to see some advance fliers at Novacon and thus have time to think...

FAANCON 5 (Feb 1-3 1980, Cambridge) has single rooms at £7.48, double at £14.95 inc. VAT and cooked breakfast---£9.78/£16.10 with shower. More of the hardcore fannish fans are taking an interest this time, it seems. £1.50 to Celia Parsons, House in the Field, May Hill, Longhope, Glos. GL17 ONP.

DENVENTION II is the '81 Worldcon (Sept 2-7 1981, Denver Hilton)---it beat the Los Angeles (130 votes) and Seattle (320) with a decisive 453 votes. (H'm: what is the missing word in that sentence? bids/wookies/omissions/delete as appropriate.) Rates: \$4/£2 if you voted and presupported, \$5/£2.50 if you merely voted, \$15/£7.50 otherwise---for attending membership, which will rise in 1980. Supporting membership is half this until 1980: it rises to \$15. Attending is \$25 1 Jan 80 to 1 Sept 80, thereafter still more. Addresses: Denvention II, PO Box 11545, Denver, CO 80211, USA or (Europe) Graham England, 1 Fleetway, Didcot, Oxon OX11 8BZ, UK. Pro GoH: C.L.Moore and Clifford Simak. Fan: Rusty Hevelin.

WORLDCON 83 could be in Australia (\$3A supporting to PO Box J175, Brickfield Hill, 2000 NSW, Australia), or Baltimore (?), or Scandinavia (£1 supporting to 191 The Heights, Northolt, Middlesex). That's Sydney, Baltimore or Copenhagen. Rumoured flaws are said to be (respectively) Melbourne rivalry, lack of information and lack of experience. I incline to Australia: but more when it happens.

PUBLICATIONS: Lots of things for sale again. Even *Speculation* was on sale at Seacon, Peter Weston having dumped the remaining copies of the 33rd issue as free gifts in the fan room---whereupon D.West sold 23 of them at 30p each to unsuspecting passers-by... OFFICIAL SEACON PUBLICATIONS are available from Eve & John Harvey, 55 Blanchland Rd, Morden, Surrey SM4 5NE: these are *The Enchanted Duplicator* (43pp, 70p), *Mood 70* (fanthology ed. Kev Smith, with Charnock, Edwards, Holdstock, Kettle, Langford, Nicholls, Pickersgill; 64pp, fl.20), *Fanartist Scrapbook* (Bell, Barker, Clark, Gregory, Hansen, Higgins, Hunter, McKie, Parker, Stephenson, Wellbank, West; fl.20): postage 30p each, 40p for 2 or 3... COLLECTED BOB SHAW vols 1 and 2 available from Rob Jackson, 8 Lavender Rd, West Ewell, Surrey KT19 9EB, or Joyce Scrivner, 2528 15th Ave S, Minneapolis, MN 55404, USA: *Best of the Bushel* (64pp, A5, 32 illos, fl.10/\$2.20) and *The Eastercon Speeches* (52pp, A5, 35 illos, fl/\$2), both post free... OTHER FANTHOLOGY is *By British* ed. Maule and Nicholas (Kettle, Smith, Piggott, Charnock, Langford, Shaw, Brosnan, Priest, Stephenson, Hansen, Holdstock; 81pp, fl.50/\$3 post free)---from Ian Maule, 5 Beaconsfield Rd, New Malden, Surrey, KT3 3HY or Terry Hughes, 606 N Jefferson St, Arlington, VA 22205, USA... FRITZ LEIBER: A BIBLIOGRAPHY compiled by Chris Morgan (36pp, 2pp photos, fl.50/\$3) has been approved by Leiber ("Nice job"): available from me, post free.

SERCONDOM: Paul Barnett, late of David & Charles and pseudonymous editor of *Aries 1*, reveals more: "Oho, so *Aries 1* hasn't been on the bestseller charts? Perhaps it's to do with the fact that D&C very carefully made sure that they got absolutely no trade publicity for it whatsoever during the build-up to Seacon. All three trade journals had special sf issues, plus additional features in other issues, covered with reviews of and ads for sf books published by absolutely everybody apart from D&C. It got quite suspenseful in the weeks before Seacon, wondering if D&C could manage yet again not to get the book mentioned." Well, well. *Not Aries 2* is paying £75/1000 words, but only huge name authors need apply (said editor Paul Begg, toying with a slushpile containing 3 Lafferty manuscripts)... Dave Pringle is ('99% certain') becoming assistant editor at Maxim Jakubowski's 'Virgin Books', which starts up in October---he expects to move to London in the near future... Steve McDonald reports on Orson Scott Card's dragon anthology: "Ace refuse to issue contracts and pay for *Dragontales*, so 26 very pissed off authors and one raging Mormon editor are all firing little lumps of shit in Jim's direction." (I.e. Jim Baen's direction. Ah, Jim's OK really. Bought two of mine, didn't he?)... KEVIN SMITH SELLS AT LAST!!! An event fit to compare with G.Peyton Wertenbaker's first sale rocked the sf world as *Ad Astra* editor James Manning offered Kevin a lucrative £35 contract for his story of devil-worship in Croydon. Already this rising young star in the sf galaxy is planning a tale of aliens in Croydon... Meanwhile in Japan, pros and fans voted separately on all-time best translated sf. Owing to a temporary anomaly (Kevin's story not yet having been translated), Clarke's *Childhood's End* topped both polls... WARRSF: We also received rejection slips from Ed Ferman and Stanley Schmidt. Rats.

FAANS: *Checkpoint* covered the Hugos and left me the dregs (by the way, the infinitely more important *Checkpoint* poll will continue in *Ansible*). FAAN winners were Jeanne Gomoll & Janice Bogstad (joint best editor), Bob Shaw (fan writer), Alexis Gilliland (humorous art), Joan Hanke-Woods (who? serious art), Harry Warner (LOC writer) and *Mythologies 14* ed. Don D'Amassa (single issue). 99 votes were cast, so the awards aren't as neglected as Victoria Vayne feared: but UK participation was virtually zero. Thrifty Brits won't pay to vote...

FAN FUNDS: GUFF raised £25.43 at Seacon, more than half from auction of stuff donated by Chris Priest (to whom praise). But Mike Glicksohn would like a word: "That Priest fellow reveals the typical chauvinism of Big Name Pros who are only interested in seeing their names WRIT LARGE in the fan press. (When we fail to kowtow, some even print their own fanzines just to practise the writing large of their own names; disgraceful example of egomania, isn't it?) He mentions all these stfnal hegiras to Australia and *deliberately mentions only the pros!* What about John Berry, Jan Finder, Don Thompson, Denny Lien, Susan Wood, even Mike Glicksohn?..." I confikanted Chris with this letter and he said "Well, I didn't know about them..." GUFF will run from here to Australia in 1981 ---interested fans should start thinking about getting nominated.

TAFFman Terry Hughes turned out to be a great guy, no argument. Next year's nominations will close soon---write to Terry or Peter Roberts swiftly if you'd like to try the UK-US race---hell, you've only me and Barker to beat. (Joe Nicholas's momentary enthusiasm seems to have waned.)

COA: Simone Walsh, 13 FERME Park Rd, Finsbury Park, London N.4  
 Dai Price, Flat 4, 14 Plastwtton Gdns, Canton, Cardiff, CF1 9HF

MISC: Ian Maule has gone into a frenzy of fanpublishing since Seacon---a flood of *Paranoids*, each better than the next. These are released at Surrey Limp-wrist meetings (2nd & 4th Wed each month at the Southampton, Surbiton station). Chris Priest has looked in on said gatherings as part of his continuing fannish renaissance: next comes the secret apa FEAPA (the invitations to which say 20 Oct when they should really read 22 March 1980). A spate of Jackie Lichtenberg Appreciation Society fliers has also been appearing, most recently giving the address 70 Ledbury Rd, London W.11... USELESS FACTS DEPT: 19,000 pints were drunk at Seacon by the time of the closing ceremony... Simone Walsh's car was nicked from near the Tun just before Seacon (it later turned up near the Elephant & Castle; since then she's been parking it as close as possible and unobtrusively leaning on it all evening... Andrew Kaveney (Ms) now wishes to be known as ROS (pronounced and for all I know spelt 'Roz') Kaveney she was looking forward to silicone injections in September. Such is the fate of those who write negative reviews of Jack Chalker... Following its consecration as an official Dr Who gathering place in some dreadful prozine, the Tun is more packed than ever and there are hints of a growing fannish urge to move elsewhere... Alan Dorey and Joe Nicholas will shortly be sharing a flat near Victoria station... watch for COA here...

**AIR MAIL PRINTED MATTER**

*"Fandom is a damn sight better life than pushing peanuts up the Pennines with your penis." (G.Pickersgill)*

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