

CLOUD CHAMBER 1 might with a little luck make the May 1981 mailing (no.175) of FAPA. The person irresponsible for it is Dave Langford of 22 Northumberland Avenue, Reading, Berks. RG2 7PW, UK. Attached is ANSIBLE 15... February 1981.

*Time Capsule:* These words come echoing from the forgotten past, an era so long ago that mailing 174 is yet to come and only mailing 173 is available for comment. The human mind can barely contemplate these awful gulfs of time during which relativistic envelopes crawl their slow way across the Atlantic abysses; the human mind cannot at all comprehend the slowness with which it dawned on me that I'd be restricted to commenting on the last mailing but one. Tomorrow I shall outdo this conceptual leap by inventing the wheel (I'd thought of inventing airmail, but decided I couldn't afford it). Before we plumb the profound shallows of my reactions to mailing 173, it seems a cunning notion to insert the historical note about *Cloud Chamber* which got squeezed out last time: the first issue (December 1976) and the second (March 1977) went out with the now-dead (I think) British apa OMPA; the third (August 1979) was for WOOFF at Seacon; the fourth and fifth (both March 1980) impinged upon a reluctant universe with the first and only mailing of FEAPA, an apa started by myself and Chris Priest to test the theory that British fandom cannot or will not support an apa. (After that one thin mailing, Chris and I had only to send each other telegrams saying *QED*.) And CC6 should have been (or for me as I write, should shortly be) in FAPA 174, i.e. the last/next mailing—gosh, it's like reading "By His Bootstraps" all over again. Onward...

*FAPA Mailing 173* *Hlavaty/Another Remarkable Fanzine:* About telephone answering machines... I always longed to have one and to tape hordes of appalling messages ("Hello. This is a wrong number. Please dial again more carefully—"); recently I actually did get one, and very shortly realized that even if I only taped a mildly silly message, the underlying organizing principle of the universe would ensure the first person to hear it would be a publisher ringing to check that I was serious and reliable enough to write an article/bestseller/bible... *Hansen/Damballa:* About vomitoria and places of defaecation: I do enjoy the complicated evasions some people still use over here (more and more rarely, I fear). "Would you like to *wash your hands?*"—something which sets sensitive folk looking for encrustations of filth; "I'll just show you the *geography of the house,*" which leads to a Grand Tour of exactly one room; the one which most amazes me is the rare and cryptic, "Well, ha ha, I'm just looking for the doughnut in Granny's greenhouse—" (British fans are largely coarse. British fans say things like, "Oh God, quick, where's the bog?")... *Tackett/Dynatron:* About TAFF... the feeling of vagueness about who these damned candidates *are* is not new to me. Why, I remember Mancon (the 1976 British East-ercon and one of the worst ever held), at which somebody I'd never heard of called Roy Tackett was pointed out to me as a TAFF winner whom I should revere. At the time I was too shy to make any advance; later I did send him a few fanzines (hi, Roy!), but don't know whether they failed to arrive or were simply just too trite, unoriginal, unhumorous, dumb and all-of-the-above to make any impression. Ah well: I know who you are now, Roy... *Ortlieb/Echo Beach Quarterly:* About Cabell... well, nothing much, except three cheers for good taste in liking him (and is there anyone out there who'd like to accept large sums for a copy of *Special Delivery* or *Townsend of Lichfield* or... enough of this). My favourite bit of Cabell memorabilia is a signed first of *The Silver Stallion* which used to be Jim Blish's and is 'signed' by him as well—I doubt the extra autograph does anything for the book's market value (nor can I see myself selling it), but

I liked Jim Blish and he loved Cabell and—well, being able to buy that book gave me a severe attack of the goshwows a couple of years back... *Glicksohn/Floccietcetera*: To see my name mentioned as *actually having attended Noreascon* helped shore up a memory that had been falling apart ever since: thanks, Mike! A little feedback of this nature does wonders for one's sense of reality. A few more independent witnesses and I'll be able to convince myself that I even got back home again afterwards... *Warner/Horizons*: "Frightening deterioration of printing standards" is something which rings a bell. Last week I was looking at a set of page proofs which had been computer-set and into which several *hundred* new errors had been introduced since the galleys. Something had gone wrong with the coding on the typesetting machine, which had carefully changed '=' to '%' and '/' to ')' and lots of similar things; dozens of lines of text had been lost, and many more stopped mysteriously halfway; some 'pages' were only a few lines long yet were *not* the last pages of a section or chapter. This was my introduction to modern printing techniques. Aaargh... *Tara/RedShift*: About cartoons... I pass on a vaguely drunken memory of a very drunken Harry Bell explaining to me that Stu Shiffman was out of step with modern cartooning because his technique harked back to the more detailed Victorian approach (cf. Tenniel): one day I'll find Harry sober and ask for more exposition. One blue moon... *Lillian/RebelYells*: the mention of WOOF reminds guilty me that I failed to bring a pile of stuff over to Noreascon for that very purpose. The excuse is that I'd packed one suitcase solidly full with fanzines for distribution, TAFF sale etc, and was out of room... *Walker/SfHorizons*: About 'Brian Stapleford'—thanks no doubt to the gigantic shadow of Olaf Stapledon, this way of spelling poor old Brian Stapleford's name is becoming sufficiently endemic to merit a line in the next *McGhan Sf & Fantasy Pseudonyms*... *Speer/Synapse*: to drop the word 'avenue' from an address as nonmeaningful may be fine in the US, but UK street planners (especially in London) often have whole clutches of confusibles; there are 17 Northumberland Somethings in London and a few in Reading, and I fear our GPO hasn't learnt to trust its postcodes fully yet. Certainly stuff sent to me at '22 Northumberland' will often arrive late and with several notes like *Try Nthmbd ST?* pencilled on it (that, Mr Glycer, is a Hint)... *THE FANTASY AMATEUR 173*: I have an occult foreboding to the effect that as soon as I've finished this stencil, *Fantasy Amateur 174* will arrive. Let me merely mention that I'm amenable to dues increases, will happily send said dues as soon as someone actually quotes me a figure, and agree that we overseas members don't need to be coddled financially. (Just coddle us in other ways, toss us the odd Worldcon, that kind of thing.)

*Running Down*: You might be interested to know that Hazel's been excavating her Kikuyu dictionary for more useful language lessons. Just as desert folk have about two hundred specialist terms for sand, so the Kikuyu culture seems to have a certain tendency... *rindithia* to have bananas wrapped up so that they may ripen; *kigoko* hard nutty crust on a roasted unripe banana; *karara irugũ* to make an incision in a raw banana skin before peeling it; *mukori* strip of green banana bark as left by cattle after they eat the trunk; *mundithi* mashed boiled bananas taken on a journey or to eat during the time of meat feasting; *ngimithi* soft fibre of banana bark used as a loofah or brush for rubbing the skin clean after a mud-bath; *thataniria mihuko* to spoil one another's bananas by uncovering them... Memorize all these useful terms before you next visit a banana republic.

I trust, incidentally, that these crammed 10x8 sides count as full pages for FAPA activity purposes. (Does the photoreduced bit of Ansible count double? Thought not.)