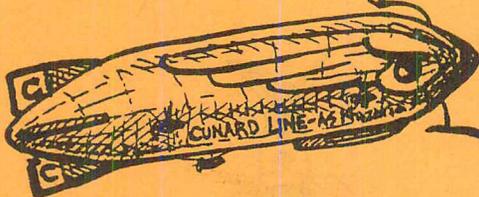
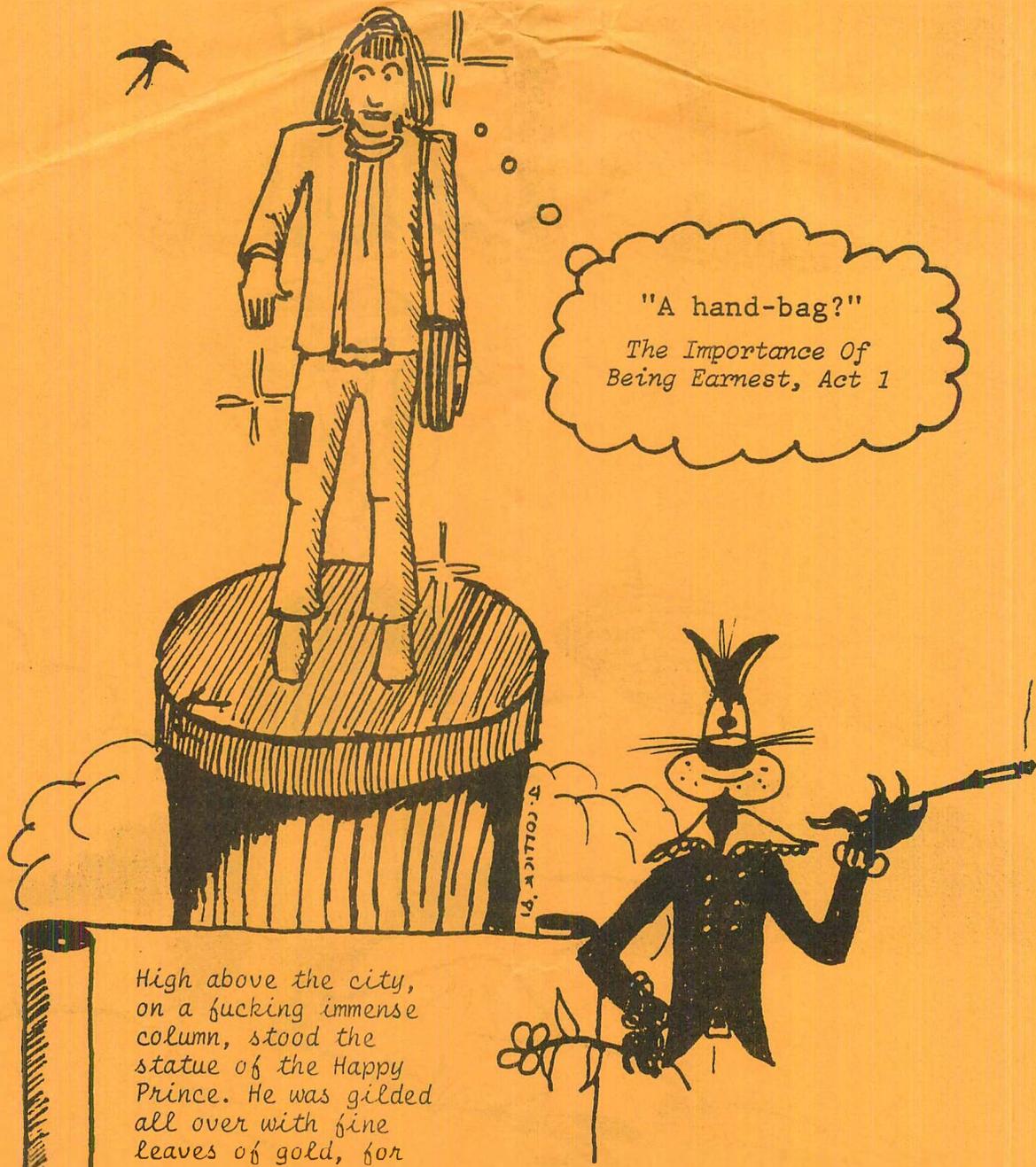


Tall-Dadu



SHEFFMAN ©80



High above the city,
 on a fucking immense
 column, stood the
 statue of the Happy
 Prince. He was gilded
 all over with fine
 leaves of gold, for
 eyes he had two bright
 sapphires, and he wore a crepe scarf. A crepe scarf!

not fucking chiffon or silk or any other ridiculous material that such reprobates as Smith or bloody Langford might in their seemingly insatiable desire to play upon every social or physical eccentricity one may care to adopt in a desperate attempt to distinguish oneself from the hordes of utterly mindless Hugo-voting cretins that seem to descend upon one's social circle at a moment's notice (though one may indeed wonder, and I for the life of me cannot comprehend why these witless mongs can't remain with their own crowd) invent. I mean is it so beyond the understanding of fans and their self-indulgent (and often puerile) capabilities to absorb the fact that it was BLOODY CREPE?!

THE HAPPY PRINCE by Oscar Wilde's immense randy ginger tomcat

source of power is required... WARNING: THE INFORMATION IN STOPPING POWER METERS IS SOLD FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY... We believe it is the right of every citizen to know how his power meter works, and how the utility monopolies compute his energy charges."

For a moment I found myself helplessly murmuring that yes, we all have a right to know in detail how nuclear weapons work and that each citizen should receive detailed blueprints, perhaps even in the very next issue of *Twill-Ddu*. The catalogue does approach this utopian ideal; there's *Exotic Weapons* ("Complete names and addresses of DEALERS provided for ALL weapons listed!"), *The Poor Man's James Bond* ("undisputed leader in the field of improvised weaponry... You might find it being used against you in the near future") and *How To Kill*, in four volumes ("These books make no moral judgements. Their purpose is to instruct you in the taking of another human life, up close").

For informational purposes only, of course.

I couldn't help wondering what Americans thought of all this; some who I knew at college were pathologically nervous about weapons because, as they approximately put it, one is so liable to get one's head blown off by mere sneak-thieves in that peculiarly enlightened country. On the other hand, SF conventions over there are for some reason infested with weapons enthusiasts who blithely wander round with swords or battle-axes—one gathering being graced by some clot with a home-made laser. It was a working model which from time to time he'd demonstrate by charring holes in bits of paper from across the width of the car park. "He was very careful, he wouldn't let anyone else touch it," people explained to me. This will come as a great consolation to those whose retinas get perforated when some even less sensible person steals the thing... but I digress from my beloved catalogue.

On a less bloodthirsty note we have the merry *Techniques of Harassment* whereby "one man can become an army, striking from the shadows, and reduce his target to a nervous wreck" (rather in the manner of a fanzine critic), and a clutch of

books on how to fake ID material and/or vanish from society—probably rather necessary after you've followed the instructions in previously mentioned titles. Here the justification is ideological, presumably because it sounds less convincing to say you need to know how to forge identification papers since someone might shortly do the same to you; instead a picture of a Nazi snap-search hammers home the message that the merest National Health number is an iron yoke laid on you by totalitarian swine—so be your own Resistance! And speaking of Nazis I must mention one very tasty (if not quite original) title offered: *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*, "the book to silence all but conscious liars", which though deprived of sales by "a conspiracy of silence" is supposed to be the final demolition of that silly old legend about Hitler's extermination camps. All wicked lies, it seems, invented by propagandists in New York and Washington.

It certainly is a wonderful thing that we have more or less free speech and a more or (for the most part) less free press. I want to do my bit by writing a book on how to persuade and influence people by such means as boring holes in their feet: the technique might be used on you one day, so you'll need to know about it. Being a good fan, I'm naturally all for total freedom of utterance like what Roz Kaveney and Abi Frost mumble about. Being a typical fan, ie. a somewhat cowardly and cringing person, I do rather hope that the next belligerent drunk I meet on the Underground is not fully briefed on *How To Kill* (in four volumes). Being—shock horror—a closet SF reader, I remember all those yarns about deadly doses of pure information which cause your brain to trickle from your ears, and wonder whether some varieties of information (the obvious example being our Joseph's book reviews) should really be squirted all over the place with the enthusiasm displayed by this Loompanics bunch...

And, being a typical British fan, I have no hesitation in walking away from the problem and towards the nearest pub. Lucky me.

"Myself, I have great respect for American fandom..."
(Greg Pickersgill, *Fouler* 4, Dec 1970)

A Song of the BSFA (Ltd.)

"What is the tannoy callin' for?" said 'e 'oo wears an aid.
"To lure you in, to lure you in," the Secretary said.
"What makes you look so limp, so limp?" said Joseph from the shade.
"I'm dreadin' what I've got to watch," the Secretary said.
For they're slangin' Alan Dorey, you can hear the members bray,
The AGM's in session an' they're slangin' 'im today;
They've taken of his proxies off an' took his chair away,
An' they're slangin' Alan Dorey in the mornin'.

"What makes the rear row yawn so 'ard?" said Ounsley where 'e laid.
"There's nowt to drink, there's nowt to drink," the Secretary said.
"What makes that front-row fan fall down?" said Pringle all dismayed.
"A drop o' beer, a drop o' beer," the Secretary said.
They are slangin' Alan Dorey, they are 'ecklin' of 'im round,
They 'ave lifted Alan Dorey from 'is stupor on the ground;
An' 'e'll swing in 'arf a minute as a Chairman 'oo's unsound—
O they're slangin' Alan Dorey in the mornin'!

"'Is bed was fairly close to mine," remarked a Yankee maid.
"'E's 'ardly goin' to sleep tonight," the Secretary said.
"I've drunk 'is beer a score o' times," said Harvey as 'e swayed.
"'E's drinkin' Watneys beer alone," the Secretary said.
They are slangin' Alan Dorey, you must mark 'im to 'is place,
For 'e chaired the bloody Bosfa—you must look 'im in the face;
Nine 'undred of 'is members an' the Company's disgrace,
While they're slangin' Alan Dorey in the mornin'.

"What's that so pissed upon the stage?" said Holdstock, lookin' frayed.
"It's Alan fightin' 'ard for votes," the Secretary said.
"What's that that whimpers in the bog?" said someone called Kincaid.
"It's Alan Dorey passin' now," the Secretary said.
For: "We've done with Alan Dorey," you can 'ear the Council say,
The AGM is closin' an' they're staggerin' away;
Ho! the neofans are shakin', an' they'll want their beer today,
After slangin' Alan Dorey in the mornin'!

by Odvard Fadling
(Kipling's deaf descendant)

NB the mere fact that the British Science Fiction Association (Ltd) plans to hold its Yorcon AGM in the evening does not in any way injure the cool beauty and sublime verity of this piece. Critics take note! (Ed.)

The Transatlantic Hearing Aid (1) Travelling Hopefully

Wednesday 27 August 1980

"I shall be sick," Hazel told me with a sort of satisfied determination. "I was sick in France and sick in Germany and sick in Austria and... well, every country in Europe except Liechtenstein."

"You need good aim to be sick in Liechtenstein," I agreed. We were fibrillating about the house in a highly organized panic; it was one day and 3000 miles to Noreascon; I was a little bit worried because I'd never actually travelled in a plane, and Hazel was very worried indeed because she had. This was scarcely the time to be suffering the pangs of post-convention depression (not to mention Weltschmerz, Angst and shrivelled wallet)... but attending Silicon a couple of days before had seemed a Good Idea on the theory that it would disrupt the biorhythms or some such nonsense, and thus partially prepare us for the appalling sensory impact of the TAFF trip. Thus it came about that, when we leapt gladly from bed on the morning of our long-awaited journey to America, we were thoroughly knackered.

On the table was the packet of peanuts we'd bought on the way to Silicon and subsequently carried all the way back. "Have a peanut," I said to the distraught Hazel. "Think of nice thoughts. Be cheerful. Gosh, I had an interesting dream last night, I dreamt I was hiding 110 film cartridges inside hollowed-out copies of *The Complete Poetry of Robert Browning* and William Law's *Serious Call To A Devout and Holy Life*, neither of which I have read. Think of that."

"I was dreaming we were off to the Sudan," she wailed. "Waaaaaah. If only we were."

We quivered our way through a breakfast less hearty than a condemned man's, Hazel carving obsessively at an orange while I sliced an apple into tiny tiny pieces. The doors and windows of 22 Northumberland Avenue were ritually sealed like the tomb of Tutankhamun. A last minute check disclosed that my case did indeed contain 300 fanzines and books and auction material and an Astral League cassette for Terry Hughes (which he was on no account to play to Jackie Lichtenberg) and a bottle of liqueur demanded by Joyce Scrivner and the dramamine recommended by Andrew the omniscient

Stephenson and the whisky I'd won as part of the Welshfandom quiz team at Silicon (I invariably ended up prescribing myself this instead of the dramamine, which was not cost-effective...). Also, in odd corners, we'd contrived to pack some clothes. One item of hand luggage was a John Le Carré omnibus in a protective plain-paper jacket, on which some idiot Langford had scrawled *Sex-Seeräuber aus den Blutig Asteroid* for the benefit of customs men. (While checking that this was properly misspelled, I found that the German for sex-appeal in women is *erotische Anziehungskraft*, while for men it's *Sex-Appeal*. Think of that.) Last of all we packed the ex-Silicon peanuts, and with simulated heartiness explained to each other that a brisk mile's walk to Reading station would make us vibrantly healthy and fit. As a foreseeable result, we were still grey-faced and breathless when at last we fell out of our train into the airport complex at Gatwick.

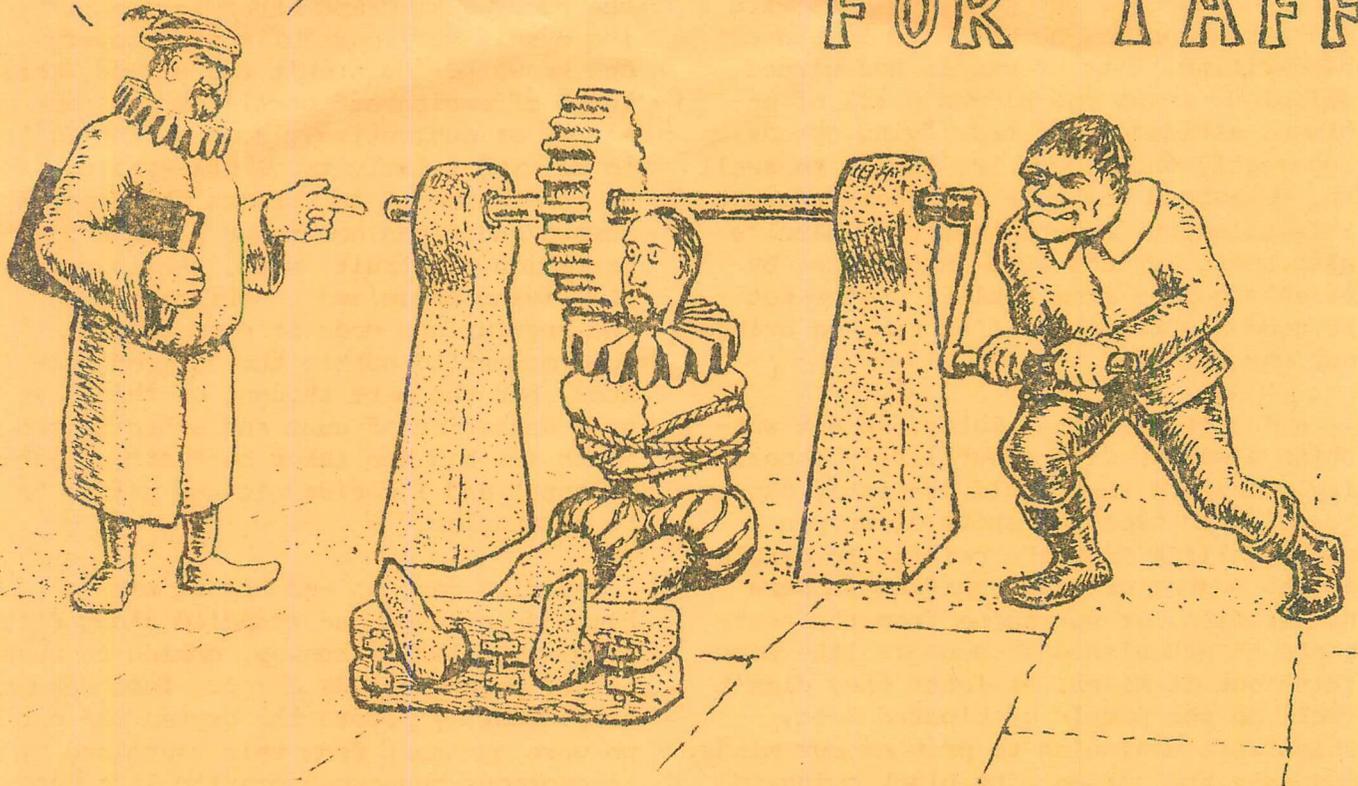
New readers should begin with this paragraph, and should on no account confuse themselves by prior study of the material above. We were visiting the USA to undergo Noreascon, the 1980 World SF Convention in Boston, our highly altruistic purpose being to test certain crackpot statements put about by a fellow called Columbus and to find whether it's possible to achieve the hallowed state of insobriety using only American beer. (It is, but there's a scientifically interesting time-reversal effect whereby said beer makes you ill before it makes you drunk, rather than after.) The expedition was sponsored by the good old Transatlantic Fan Fund, which has been defying US regulations about undesirable aliens ever since it started (informally) in 1952: realizing my opportunity, I very swiftly arranged to be born in 1953. In the olden days it took most of the gross national product of fandom merely to boost the victim beyond the three-mile limit; as for getting back, you could only hope that a kindly US government would note the unwholesomeness of this British person and come through with a deportation order. Thus it was that such former TAFF delegates as Ken Bulmer and Peter Weston were restored to our bosoms...

By 1980, however, British fans were so rich and capitalistic that enormous

FOR THE
LAST
TIME...

WHO DO YOU
VOTE FOR?

LANGFORD FOR TAFF



lemming-like hordes made the pilgrimage to Noreascon; innumerable thronging masses flowing westwards like some great race migration; groaning DC-10s so crammed with tight-packed British bodies that the incalculable pressure converted F. Laker's airline food into nodules of collapsed matter, not that it made much difference; colossal swarms of incoming British fans who blackened the sky over Boston in their numberless myriads. You may mock, but I counted at least thirty, enough to cause a marked plummet in this country's statistics for crimes of indecency during the period of Noreascon. And of course the most enormous of all these enormous hordes were Jim Barker and Harry Bell, who chose to fly over with the Langford entourage...

We greeted one another with rather sickly smiles, as though congregating at the guillotine rather than the Gatwick booking desk: only John Harvey, Jim's and Harry's tumbril-driver, seemed unconcerned. The atmosphere of brooding dread had made its effect even on John by the time our instinctive footsteps reached the airport bar, and presently a hideous, unnatural scene transpired. Imagine

Margaret Thatcher raping Michael Foot on the front bench of the Commons; imagine a hat-trick of Hugo awards going to Perry Rhodan novels; imagine, if you can, Rog Peyton giving away free books; perhaps then you can contemplate the thought of four case-hardened and cirr-hosed British fans sitting trembling and in cold blood drinking fruit-juice.

At Gate 20 I lurched through the metal-detector with an air of bravado, and the whole thing fell sideways and said *Thud* while red lights went on everywhere and a Customs man with large black bags under his eyes droned: "Oh dear, you've broken my nice detector, I'll have to charge you for that, sir." I had to perform an action replay, and this time omitted the air of bravado.

Jim, Harry, Hazel and I stood for a long time in a departure lounge which doubled as a sauna. "My father says being on a plane is just like travelling on a coach," Hazel said without conviction. "He says you can't tell the difference."

Jim wanted to change the subject, and mysteriously remarked that he'd dominated Joe Nicholas for GUFF. I wrote this

furtively, feeling not so much, well, nervous (perish the thought) as eager to concentrate on any old trivia... Harry offered a paltry sum for the use of my notes when we got back ("If we get back," Hazel muttered), but blew the deal with a crack about how he was used to bad handwriting. Lots of people had warned all of us about one hidden peril of enormous altitudes and terrifying speeds: apparently one's feet are liable to swell up. We agreed to be on our guard against this calamity. Around this time Hazel's ultrasonic screams were interrupted by crackly noises from a hi-fi system not as good as British Rail's: time to cringe our way aboard.

A few crowd scenes later, we sat watching a safety film about likely appalling disasters that would presently happen to us, with close-up shots of oxygen masks falling from the ceiling to dangle in the manner of giant spiders in some Hammer film, or springing from the seat-backs at astonished passengers like something out of *Alien*. At least they didn't dwell on the perils of bloated feet, which were beginning to prey on our minds. Suddenly the screen went blank owing to Laker Skytrain's version of the law of averages: we'd been put aboard 15 minutes before takeoff time, which was balanced by taking off 15 minutes *after* takeoff time. As we tilted up and away from England, a weak voice said from the depths of the seat next to mine: "Will you please tell my father, if we ever see him again, that one can tell we're not in a coach..."

The high point of airborne excitement came when I'd finally extricated myself from the safety belt, and instantly the interrupted *Your Guide To Parancia* film started where it had left off, with awful voices booming "Once again let me remind you to fasten your safety belts ready for takeoff!" Instant nervous collapse. After this came relative tedium: Hazel and I ended up sitting miles from Harry and Jim, and were spared even the mild excitement of watching Harry's feet swell up (which, he later told us, they did). I pretended to read a book while Hazel peered gloomily, and without benefit of headphones, at our in-flight film *The Black Stallion*. Whenever I looked up, the screen was full of this black stallion charging over land and sea, once underwater and once—I swear—upside down.

"This film is entirely an advertisement for Lloyd's Bank," said the dismal voice at my side.

I paid a few experimental visits to the bog, walking and otherwise comporting myself very carefully since everyone knows DC-10s aren't too strong. This level of excitement persisted for some hours, or subjectively some months (all to do with relativity, I believe) until we were showered in Customs forms asking shrewd questions about our planned importation of 'fruit, meat, snails and all living organisms'. Ambiguities in the regulations made it seem like a good moment to gobble the Silicon peanuts, but the mere thought of this gave us a sensation of dust and ashes in the mouth (as had the Laker beef strog. substitute) and I decided it was easier to be a smuggler.

America came up and hit us with a bump; we skidded and trundled along fifty or sixty miles of runway, coming to rest in the corner of JFK Airport furthest from help. Shortly before the oxygen ran out, we were rescued from this wasteland by an enormous bus-cum-hydraulic lift last seen as a walk-on gadget in *Thunderbirds*. The authorities, still not wishing to let America burst on us all at once and cause culture shock, next provided a sort of acclimatization chamber for us aliens. Here we stewed in 81°F and high humidity, watching each other flow to the floor and spread out into puddles. US citizens were mere blurs as they whizzed through Immigration, while humble Brits had their names checked against a vast list of undesirables by an official who seemed unable to read passport photos without moving his lips.

As the queue oozed forward I began to develop paranoid worries about what would happen to us in the enormous American wastes yonder, and speculated aloud: "Hey, do you think Stu Shiffman will meet us? Will we even recognize him? Does he look like those pictures he draws of himself? Is he not rather a hunchbacked Mexican dwarf with only one leg?" At this point Harry and Jim pointed out a chap two places down the queue from us, who by some chance happened to be a hunchbacked dwarf. Bloody hell. I hid behind a suitcase; Harry, greatly tickled by this, wrote down the incident in exhaustive detail (a week

later it was still the only entry in his notebook). Meanwhile Hazel announced: "There's a lady behind you with four hats on." None of us dared look round.

We bluffed our way through customs with the possibly illicit peanuts ("Medicinal, honest"), and surged through the barrier like surfers on the crest of the crowd, and there to meet us was a large delegation of none other than Ian Williams, who said, "Welcome to America in the name of the Fanoclasts!" —Wait a minute. Of course it wasn't Ian Williams but Stu Shiffman, who only looked very vaguely like him ("The bulk is spread more evenly," Hazel observed); this sort of false recognition was to happen to me several times, a disconcerting side effect of jetlag or con shock, culminating in the moment of dread when I temporarily perceived one poor, misunderstood chap as being D. West. Good grief.

Outside the temperature over JFK was 90°, and the air was shaking and wriggling just the way it does in the films, and there were millions of yellow taxis (I mean cabs) crawling for as far as the eye could see, and Hazel and Harry went into a fit of giggles at the sight of a four-door limousine (four, that is, on either side). The next hour was extremely hot, sweaty, blasphemous and confused owing to the Barker/Bell axis and its mad desire to fly on to Boston later that very day, with all the problems of checking baggage in again almost as soon as it had been checked out, only at a different terminal half a mile away... that sort of thing. Meanwhile I got out the sixty peculiar green tokens US fans had sent in exchange for fanzines, and found they were convertible at a ruinous rate of exchange into such drinks as an unlikely frothy pineapple juice. At last we piled damply into Stu's travelling oven, otherwise known as a Buick: culture shock hit Harry as he struggled to get in on the passenger side only to find this big wheel sort of thing in front of the seat. "Oh," he said intelligently.

The car was decorated with countless furry animals and dangling dolls. "This," said Stu, forestalling comment, "is my sister's car." As we drove mile after mile towards the edge of the airport, our steaming bodies sweated the interior atmosphere of the car into a thin fog. A passenger who shall be nameless passed

remarks about how he'd expected effete and decadent US cars to be air-conditioned. A driver who shall also be nameless explained that the car was indeed air-conditioned, only the air-conditioner was broken and please to remember it was his *sister's* car...

En route I began my collection of US roadsigns, like PED XING (surely a member of the Gang of Four) and YIELD (surely a signpost from Camelot). ENTER ONE VEHICLE AT A TIME ON GREEN sounded vaguely like musical chairs; NO STANDING ANY TIME might or might not have been aimed at pedestrians; there was a certain classic simplicity in WRONG WAY. As for STANDPIPE SIAMESE DIRECTLY BELOW, none of us Brits really dared to speculate... Our immediate destination was that famous bit of New York whose mere mention brought a thrill to our hearts: Flushing. Stu parked the car with immense panache and knocked over a dustbin; I thought I heard a last faint murmur of "...my sister's car..."

Entering the Shiffman parental home, we were instantly submerged in wave after wave of US hospitality, which we accepted in a happy yet glazed manner (it being about time, according to my internal clock, for me to stagger home from the pub and fall in the general direction of a bed). The house was cool and dim, and all Stu's achievements including his Seacon Hugo nomination were commemorated on the sitting-room walls, and out at the back Mrs Shiffman dispensed an unflinching stream of cold fruit-juice, and watermelon slices, and instructions to go upstairs and freshen up, and eggplant zucchini (sounds ever so much more exotic than aubergine and courgettes and things), and responses to our dazed British comments on the hugeness of US cars. You really know you're in an alien land when you learn that any increase in petrol prices above 50¢ a gallon is monstrous, and that Americans have huge cars because they are safer on account of there being more metal and plastic between you and all the people you run into, and that weedy little British vehicles are wholly suicidal. Actually it was all good fannish fun, the total informality of the Shiffman senior being most soothing to twitchy foreign nerves; I did boggle myself almost to the point of internal haemorrhage by attempting to imagine my father (Denis G. Langford,

FCA) receiving guests in the informal garb preferred by Stu's, consisting of shorts and a pendant.

At this point the jollity of the occasion got the better of Stu himself, and shyly he confessed that, personally, he didn't drink beer. Seeing the look on Harry's face and possibly feeling his TAFF chances beginning to plummet, he hastily promised to get into training. Harry sniffed, with that supercilious glint in the eye which betrays the true Gannetfan aristocrat. "Only masters can learn to drink Newcastle Brown in less than a year," he declared. Rather than argue about this, we wandered outside to study Stu's promised View of the Empire State Building from the vantage point just down the road. There was an amazing noise in the dusk out there, like massive electrical corona discharges on every side, and Jim wondered whether there were rattlesnakes up in the trees. (There are a lot of trees in Flushing.) It turned out to be an enormous chorus of synchronized crickets somewhere up there, presumably equipped with kilowatt amps and speakers... After a few minutes of peering towards where the Empire State should by rights have been, we gave up and contented ourselves with photographing Stu against the background of the non-view. He'd forgotten the intervening trees' habit of wearing leaves at that time of year.

I was too sleepy to take in much more, and indeed did become comatose on a convenient sofa while Hazel watched singing TV commercials (briefly interspersed with short flashes of programme) and discovered that US know-how can make 'fruit' rhyme with 'yogurt'*. Meanwhile Stu ferried an equally dazed Messrs Barker and Bell to the airport for their desperate Boston dash; by and by his mother drove us all to Stu's apartment in Washington Heights, with hot airblasts roaring through the windows like the exhaust of gigantic hairdryers, and a kaleidoscopic view of lights and famous places outside (it might have been less kaleidoscopic if I'd been less glazed). The East River, gosh, and Manhattan, gosh wow, and Broadway goshwow-boyoboy, and Washington Heights... the name Hazel couldn't forget was Throg's Neck Bridge. Nobody could tell her what a

throg was. Then we were stumbling through the vast fannish anthill of 19 Broadway Terrace, with rapid glimpses of famous D.Potter (whom I did not mistake for D. West---she's a tall thin advert for black-is-beautiful) and others, before falling into Stu's home. We'd been warned that this was a truly typical NY apartment with all the ethnic trimmings such as cockroaches: Hazel and I were quite disappointed not to hear the patter of little feet all over the floor and walls. In compensation for the lack of vermin Stu had such things as a stained-glass panel depicting the great fannish beaver-god Roscoe (founded in 1947) and an evangelical lightswitch left by former occupants. This paradigm of American culture had a switch housing shaped like Jesus embracing a couple of small brats, with the actual switch lever sticking from a theologically debatable portion of Jesus' body. Stu had practised his fanartistic skills by adding certain beaver-stigmata and propellor beanies, together with the motto *Ad Luminem Ex Fiawol*. Britain's cultural ambassadors gazed in wonder at the result.

We continued to be hot, sticky and tired. Perceiving this, Stu offered us a couple of square feet of his *air-conditioned* bedroom, thus becoming a True Hero of the People (Third Class) despite said air-conditioner's habit of doing 747 impersonations for exactly as long as it took for you to get used to the din, whereupon it would turn itself off so that the silence woke you up. Such was the report of an impassioned Hazel next morning: I, a veteran of slothfulness during thunderstorms, hysterical telephones and visitations of Concorde, didn't notice a thing. Deaf fandom rules.

Thursday 28 August

We took our breakfast in properly American fashion, at a nearby restaurant: here I contrived to order ham, pancakes and maple syrup with a certain airy nonchalance which slipped slightly when they all arrived on the same plate. We congratulated Stu on his wondrous abilities of clairvoyance and ESP, scientific proof having been furnished the day before when he recognized me (or so he claimed) from certain cartoons by Jim Barker. He responded with fannish factoids ("Taral's a great guy only he's got no chin") and an attack on a Popular Tourist Fallacy: "There's more to New

* *Tumty-tumty-tumty frurt*
Tumty-tumty-tum yogurt!

York than buildings... There's more than one park here!" Held by his glittering eye, we meekly followed towards nearby parks, rivers and things.

Just as London fans—even Gerry Webb—don't generally live in Buckingham Palace, so NY fandom tends not to be found in those bits of New York you see in the colour supplements. Stu's area, Washington Heights, is comfortably sleazy, at the 'uptown' end of Broadway which is miles and miles from the bright lights... instead there are interesting spectacles like a tall sixty-degree cliff of bare earth and rock, terrifyingly overhung by buildings balanced on quantities of naked scaffolding. Street litter included hordes of torn playing cards, a scattering of abandoned TV sets and enough dog turds to befoul (as it were) occasional US claims that their streets are spotless while ours are all knee-deep. We took a short cut through one station of the famous NY subway, which station was disguised behind a couple of tatty wooden doors set in a small cliff-face (there are numerous Heights in Washington Heights): such camouflage, plus a slight lack of signposting, may be why visitors are traditionally bewildered by the subway system. As we climbed higher the buildings did indeed give way to parks where Hazel smugly identified tulip trees and false acacias while I was charmed by the half-inch ants that crawled about still more listlessly than ourselves... the journey hadn't yet worn off and the world still seemed dreamlike, thus possibly proving that I lack even the stamina of a Peter Roberts.

The air remained warm and viscous: such impressive Sights as the Hudson River and the George Washington Bridge had a disconcerting tendency to wobble when viewed through a fug resembling that in a convention bar at 2am (though slightly less polluted). Stu proved the Hudson to be fannish by pointing out the invisible beach where, he said, famed fan Moshe Feder had held the great coming-out picnic at which he ceased to eat kosher. I was also impressed by the perils of frontier life in this raw, turbulent land, as manifested in the large and fearsome stripy insect which wouldn't let thirsty Stu come near a drinking fountain.

Rather too soon, it was time for yet

more travel. Our good host pointed us carefully at the 190th Street station and pushed; armed with much advice and an annotated map of the entire subway system furnished by kindly Andy Porter, we felt thoroughly unfitted for the venture. At least we couldn't get the fare wrong since it was 60¢ to everywhere; the train itself was a bit disorienting since what rolled up to the grimy platform was an enormous mass of graffiti and pavement art, with a train concealed somewhere inside it. It seems that not content with scribbling all over every square inch of the interiors, true graffiti masters spend their nights breaking into the yards and decorating each coach on the outside too... After a period of brutal sonic assault we reached Penn Station, whence the Amtrak trains leave for Boston and where Minneapolis fan M.K. Digre should be waiting to explain what such trains looked like; and there in the booking hall was none other than David Pringle, who— No, of course it wasn't, and Mark Digre is leaner and has bushier hair and things, and I've no idea at all why I kept making these mistakes.

At the Amtrak ticket office I flashed a Barclaycard to the tune of \$40, which through some special fare offer broke down to \$26.50 for the Head of the Family and \$13.50 for his Spouse. "I'm a second class citizen!" rejoiced the spouse. As for Mark, he gets short shrift in my notes because I could only hear about every fifth word he spoke, and what's more he was travelling in a lush reserved seat of peculiar distinction while I'd only achieved plain cheapo travel. Sorry... The Amtrak station procedure has been designed by fans of Kafka, so your uncertainty and dread mount ever higher as you gently simmer with hundreds of other victims of anomie in a largish hall, ignorant even of which platform your train will leave from. The only air conditioning—words I'd begun to look for hungrily, the way one might look for 'Real Ale' at home—the only air conditioning was behind the glassed-in Amtrak booking desks, and we seriously debated the possibility of buying numerous local-journey tickets just to stay at the window and lean into its draught of cool air. Then Amtrak, masters of chaos, played their ace: the train was ready at last, and a light came on showing the way to its underground platform, and about five hundred people pulped themselves

into a corridor and staircase designed for the use of anorexics walking in single file.

The train itself had the best air conditioning we'd yet encountered; we forgave Amtrak everything. There was also a bar, and they were forgiven still more. Possibly I shouldn't have been wearing a little badge in memory of backroom work at AWRE, which said TELL ME YOUR OFFICIAL SECRETS—

BARMAN: Hey, look, you got to tell him your secrets.

AMTRAK GUARD: No I ain't. I'm the Pope. Everyone's got to tell me all their secrets.

[Exit LANGFORD in confusion, spilling droplets of Ballantine beer, shortly to be reissued as 'Del Rey'.]

So we spent the afternoon travelling northward with incredible lack of speed. At three o'clock the train crept through Stamford, where the thermometer on the State National Bank said 91° and we travellers gloated over the poor sods outside. At four we passed Milford (Connecticut) and said Gosh to each other for scientific reasons. Around then your narrator remembered the much-travelled peanuts from Silicon, and opened the packet, nervously expecting some fearful scourge to fly out at any moment and devastate the crops of America. Fancy bringing peanuts to the USA, like coals to Jimmy Carter. Next came the Providence cemetery where good old H.P. Lovecraft rests uneasily, brooding beneath a gibbous moon over the frightful couplet *That is not dead which can eternal lie/And with strange aeons be completed by August Derleth or somebody and make a packet...* The most frenzied scrutiny failed to disclose any eldritch tentacles writhing from the graves, nor even a consolatory puddle of blasphemous ichor.

Then it was Boston, a cool evening and the smell of the sea; a surprisingly calm and pleasant-looking city, considering that it was already in the first convulsions of a peculiarly gigantic Worldcon.

"I haven't been sick yet," said an incredulous Hazel while we waited for the taxi. But could she keep it up? More in the next instalment, which will appear.

How To Write For Paperback Inferno

The art of writing for Joe Nicholas's little reviewzine involves a great deal more than denunciation of the vast Asimov/Heinlein/DelRey/Hugos/SFWA/Nebulas/L5/USA conspiracy, more than the lavish use of what Graham James in a fit of understatement likes to call parable, more than the scattering of subordinate clauses the way other people use vowels. The true *Inferno* hack learns to think long and hard about every word, just as Delany ponders for ten hours before each use of the word 'the' in case its meaning has altered in the science-fictional context. Let me give an example of the PI literary process from my own copious (though largely empty) notebooks.

Once upon a time I wanted to say of a book that the totally implausible ending came like a rabbit out of a hat: to make it more difficult for the reader I tossed off something about a *deus ex machina*. Actually the writer in question was so inept he had to pull three rabbits out of hats, and I altered my sentence to read 'about three *deus ex machinas*'. The creative process had begun, the subtle honing and refinement which would produce a perfect *Paperback Inferno* review. Mere hours later, returning from the pub with a few pints of Directors secreted about my person, I realized I'd been too rash, too hasty: I nipped upstairs and shakily scribbled *deuses ex machina*. In the morning it was the work of a moment to forget still more of my O-level Latin and alter this to *dei ex machina*, and in the evening it was the work of a moment for my Linguistics Expert to drop her knitting and (after a brief fit of hysterics) polish the phrase to its penultimate form: *di ex machina*.

My sentence now trembled on the brink of perfection, but only the *Paperback Inferno* editor could add that final touch of genius. Only the *Paperback Inferno* editor could reject my and Hazel's fumbblings for the empty, worthless stuff that they were, and with a stroke of his vermilion pencil achieve the ultimate: *deus ex machinae*.

It is not at all easy to write for *Paperback Inferno*. Beginning reviewers are advised to try their hand first on some less demanding journal, such as the *Times Literary Supplement*. † † †

That Justly Forgotten WAHF Column

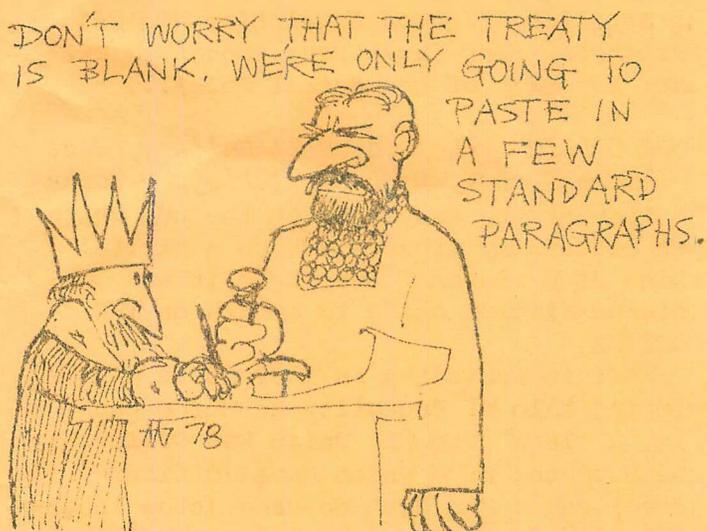
This, as chronic sufferers from TD will know, is where your editor conceals himself in discreet italics and a false beard in order to mingle with such desperate characters as:

ALYSON ABRAMOWITZ, 33 Sylvia Street, Lexington, MA 02173, USA

"From reading your mentions of Noreascon in *Ansible*, it seems like you have very little idea what Boston area fandom (and especially NESFA) is like. For example, it didn't really surprise me to see the Boston committee attempting to cover up some of the incidents at Noreascon or ban two reasonable Alexis Gilliland cartoons from the daily newsletter. The core group of 'locals' who brought you Noreascon are die-hard con organizers whose main purpose in fandom apparently is to enjoy doing all the looong hours of work necessary in putting on big cons. Most of them are incredibly serious about such things. Perhaps a typical example of NESFA-type mentality is the latest *Instant Message*... they go on for a page or more about how the Membership committee that has existed for some relatively long time is illegal because it wasn't voted in by a secret ballot. And that the Rules Committee is not legal as well as various appointments. I suppose you can run a club in that formal manner, but that's not the kind of thing I personally enjoy in fandom."

** Indeed not... The BSFA is just the same, of course, with committee meeting after committee meeting being declared null and void owing to the Matrix editor's failure to buy a round. I can also reveal that the BSFA itself has been deemed illegal by the Monopolies Commission and will shortly be fragmenting into two smaller organizations to be called 'the BSFA' and 'Paperback Inferno'.

More names. ARNOLD AKIEN wins a special commendation for his letter, which at first glance appeared to be the MS of WAR AND PEACE... HARRY ANDRUSCHAK; MICHAEL ASHLFY—"How are you and your delicious wife? Had any radiation poisoned, malformed, beast-like mutants that crawl from the womb, the sound of their crying blotted out by the frenzied clicking of the Geiger counter, yet?" (no prize at all for that one, Michael); WILLIAM BAINS;



JIM BARKER (the mention of whom reminds me that in the *One Tun* on 2 April, Dermot 'Mr Evil' Dobson loomed at me and advised me to ask Andrew Stephenson how it happened that Jim Barker's autograph had been scrawled across his (Andrew's) chest "from nipple to nipple". Dermot added that he and Rob Holdstock had held Andrew's arms, but essentially the whole thing was Kev Smith's fault); PAUL BARNETT; PAUL BEGG—"Writing does give you the excuse for visiting the pub every Friday to buy copies of the *War Cry* and *Young Soldier* as insurance against the day one may have to call upon the Salvation Army for a bowl of broth and a bed for the night."; RICHARD BERGERON; PAMELA BOAL—"The best [Israeli] tea is Wissotzky Gold Blend and is properly noted as being choicest *English* blend. Only an American could put such a gift of tea in a jar on the herb shelf and have her sister assume it was a secret ingredient for goulash. Honestly, that really happened." (Pause for breath...)

GEOGRE BONDAR (sic); ALAN BOSTICK; SIMON BOSTOCK; GEOFF BOSWELL—"Many fen don't like you, your too clever and stunningly witty for them." (*Gorbliney*. In deference to the wishes of this silent majority I shall make no more jokes before the next full stop.); DAVE BRIDGES; BRIAN EARL BROWN; JOHN BRUNNER; JACK CHALKER; RICH COAD; AVEDON CAROL—"It's nice to have discovered that you and I can get on so well in the same room despite the fact that I smoke, you drink, and neither of us can hear a thing the other is saying. Or perhaps that is why

we got on so well." (Avedon also supplies an appalling list of fatalities amongst Washington fans incautious enough to attempt the Rite of the Astral Pole)...

JOHN COLLICK, *The Goosewell Gallery, Westbourne Drive, Menston, Ilkley, W Yorks*

"Following the excursion to the pub where you reduced my great NOVEL to a pitiful thing of Derision I have cast it and Science Fiction aside to embark on THE MONITOR.

"Set in Louisiana in 1867 it is a ripping tale of Brutality as Three people, a Clerk from the Union War Office, the Daughter of a Union Naval Officer (dcsd) and a Man With No Name (stop laughing) set off to recover a lost Monitor (Double Turret, Onondaga Class) which failed to destroy a Rebel Fort during Banks' Red River Campaign. It's v. exciting, full of exploding Steamers and Mysterious Gothic Things and Sex and Poor White Trash and Carpet Baggers and Dead Bodies and Indians.

"Stop Laughing."

** This has been the Twll-Ddu Publishing Newsnotes section—you read it here first! Onward, with CHUCK CONNOR, KEITH CURTIS—"One piece of ultimate exotica was a copy of Jack Chalker's *And The Devil Will Drag You Under* that is inscribed to me by Harlan Ellison (some 63 words of commentary on Ellison's opinion of Chalker as a writer) and later by Chalker who commented on the soiling of the inside front cover by some has-been." ANDY DARLINGTON; BOB DAY;

GARY DEINDORFER, *447 Bellevue Ave (9E), Trenton, NJ 08618, USA*

"I am currently waiting for the results of my recent dig in Tierra del Fuego to come back from the computer. I am an amateur archaeologist of limited knowledge of the field. This did not hamper me on the Fuego dig, though, because the Tierra del Fuegians have left no artifacts since they never made any. They don't even wear clothes. The computer is processing the non-artifacted dirt dug up in order to carbon date it and see which day it dates back to. Tentative guess on my part on the basis of my intuitional acumen is: Tuesday. The dirt will probably play havoc with the innards of the computer but that's not my worry. Once I get the results I'll be long gone to another state. Let Malcolm X University figure out how to repair its computer for less than a

billion dollars...

"Did you ever encounter any difficulties at work because of your hobby? I mean, here you were, with access to delicate secrets, but your hobby involved sending great amounts of mail out of the country and receiving great amounts of mail from overseas too. I wonder if your superiors ever wondered "Is Dave Langford putting secrets into code and mailing them out those those amateur magazines he publishes?"

** No security men ever came round asking for copies of TD, either because they'd never heard of it (I kept quiet about the thing on the whole) or because their agents—perhaps CIA colleagues with names like Deindorfer—screened each copy and reported me as 'mostly harmless'. As for archaeology fandom, its British leader is or was famous Kate Jeary, who gave it up after a horrific experience when she turned over a large flat stone in Bingley and restored D. West to the fannish scene, doubtless to the horror of MIKE DICKINSON—"Japanese joke: 'As I walk along the road the light of the moon makes it seem like a twisting silver ribbon. As I walk by the wood there, on a branch, is an owl with a twig in its ear.' I'm told it slays 'em in Tokyo."; ALAN DOREY (pseudonymously); LEIGH EDMONDS (still TD's Oz agent, I hope)...

GRAHAM ENGLAND, *70 Woodfield Close, Ickenhams, Uxbridge, Middlesex (COA)*

"Two US fans visited Munich last autumn; one said to me that she wouldn't visit the UK because she didn't want to give her money to Socialism. As an Objectivist, this sort of behaviour is sinful. No, I do not know what Objectivism is, except that Arthur Blavaty regards *Atlas Shrugged* by Ayn Rand as being a form of scripture for the movement. They appear to hold that making money is one of the major good things one can do, or perhaps that was badly explained to me. The cultural differences on each side of the Atlantic seem to get bigger the more I look at them...

"Arthur Blavaty warns that a panel on Sex & Fandom in Britain would be difficult. I don't know: Roz Kaveney, Simone Walsh, Peter Roberts (who speaks for the carrots) & me to chair it ('Even Graham England...')."

** I'll leave Graham's proposed sexual experts to have a word with him about

their suitability for the panel. As for Objectivists, surely no-one of such lofty ideals could scorn a country whose lady Prime Minister recently preached in a London church and said: "The creation of wealth is a Christian obligation." (yuk yuk)... Who's next? KEITH FENSKE—"Your MOD police sound just as swift as the boys we have working on some of our large industrial projects. They worry about you stealing typewriters when the groups I work with regularly wander in and out with millions of dollars worth of computer equipment. I remember the story about a man who stole a boat from a large department store. He had no problems, you see, because he got the store clerks to help him carry it away."; JAN HOWARD FINDER; ARI FROST on Japanese Green tea—"Dust from the boots of Living National Treasures boiled in halibut oil"; DICK GEIS—"As two of the leading fan-writers we should have some contact..."

And more: ALEXIS & DOLLY GILLILAND; MIKE GLICKSOHN—"I certainly look forward to your trip report and I'm sure it'll be the best thing since Pete Weston or maybe even Mario Bosnyak... By the way, us aficionados say 'worldcon', not 'the worldcon'. Thought I'd let you into this little Inner Circle secret so you wouldn't sound like a dumb neo in your TAFF report."; SETH GOLDBERG; WILLIAM T GOODALL; ROELOF GOUDRIAAN; PHILIPPA GROVE-STEPHENSEN; JOAN HANKE-WOODS (*These hyphenated folks like to stick together*); ROB HANSEN (*another one!*); KAJ HARJU; GEORGE HAY; ARTHUR HLAVATY; NIC HOWARD;

CHRIS HUGHES, Dept of Psychology, University of Keele, Keele, Staffs.

"We used to have a large black cat at home when I was a kid. A more patient animal you could never meet. Used to let me throw it about the room like an aeroplane (Biggles period), drop it from enormous heights (Scientific period), pick lumps of mud, and fur, from between its claws (de Sade period) and stroke it until the front end was nearly bald (Love & Affection period), and it never once reprimanded me... It got me back in the end. Had bowel trouble later on in life. Crapped all over the carpet, wallpaper and piano all in one magnificent elimination. Guess who cleaned that lot up. We bought a litter-tray after that. It wasn't a wise move. The next day it crapped all over the carpet, wallpaper, piano and litter-tray.

"Then there was Alex's cat. That too had awesome powers of rectal evacuation. One day it deposited the remains of its dinner under my bed here at Keele. After a week the smell got so bad that I rang up the local warden and demanded that he complain to the farmer across the road. I won't tell you how I discovered the source of the pungent aroma—it might put you off your Earl Grey tea."

** At his age, Mr Hughes should not go
** hiding under beds without looking first... I note that large areas of this letter column are still contaminated not only with aromatic end-products but with fallout from the cosmic discussion of Earl Grey mice in #17: this must stop before it gets altogether out of hand, with fans inventing stories about pet snakes and goodness knows what else. And now a word from Denvention's ever-lovely British agent:

LINDA HUTCHINSON, 14 Bowmonts Road, Tadley, Basingstoke, Hants, RG26 6SA

"Here is a membership receipt so that you can claim lots of tax rebate that we poor PAYE types have to pay and I don't see why you should because such self-employed people are parasites on the working people of this country who have all their money taken from them (especially civil servants) so that other low-down snivelling tax avoiders like you can live it up in the lap of luxury whilst sending their poor wives out to support their wastrel ways."

** Always service with a smile from Denvention! I'm typing this bit very fast in the hope that readers won't notice the alphabetical misplacing of TERRY HUGHES and PAUL HURTFLEY, normal service being resumed with GRAHAM JAMES—"I don't suppose it would really matter if we sent stuffed penguins through to BSFA members—most of them would probably leave the package rotting on a heap, much as they must do with the bimonthly mailings now..."; PHIL JAMES BSc—"Bloody Slave to a Computer"; NAVEED KHAN; PAUL LAMPRIILL; JON LANGFORD—"I just finished *Eye Among The Blind* by Rolf Harris this morning → truly wonderful with notable references to Malsenn → so I bought *Earthwind* this afternoon to complete the set (is that the set?) ↓ When are you going to write a real long fictional Novel of the Scientific kind, I would be so thrilled" [End of Part 1]

The Book of War
Chapter 2080

1. In that year it came to pass that the writings of the humble scribe who was called David the Unhearing were to be sold in all the land; as it was foretold by the prophet David and the prophet Charles.

2. Now the Editor said unto the scribe, Lo, only by great burnt offerings on the altar of Publicity canst such a miserable one as thou earn the love of all the people, and prosper.

3. And verily I say unto thee, more easy is it for Joyce Scrivner to pass through the eye of a needle than for the prophet David and the prophet Charles to part with a decent publicity budget.

4. And the scribe who is called David the Unhearing said unto the Editor, Pardon?

5. And after a time the scribe said unto the Editor, Bloody hell, is it verily so?

6. And the Editor said unto the scribe, More blessed is it to give than to receive, unless thou art content with but a small ad in the back of the *Gamekeepers' and Poachers' Gazette*.

7. And the scribe brought forth flagons of old wine, and the Editor saw that they were good; and he mentioned a publicity budget of two thousand shekels.

8. For the prophet David and the prophet Charles did prophesy a new star that would rise in the west; yea, even over Newton Abbot would it rise, and on it would they put their shirts.

9. And they called this star 'Bridge Books' which was also called 'the new David and Charles imprint', and published its name abroad, and loud hosannas were heard in the editorial department, and the sacred name of Bestseller was freely bandied.

10. And there were signs and portents, and four-colour ads in *The Bookseller*, and they who sat in Newton Abbot looked on their Bridge Books imprint and said, This one will run and run.

11. And the scribe's first book of prophecies, of wars and rumours of wars, this his first book was set amid the ranks of cherubim and seraphim as a Bridge Book; and he thought of the two thousand shekels publicity budget, and he burned faintly, and knew that it was

good.

12. But in that time it came to pass that word of these mighty prophecies was borne unto a far Northern tribe, which was unclean and dealt in remainders.

13. And they of the far Northern tribe were wont to call themselves Bridge Books; and their elders waxed wroth against those who took their name in vain, and did sorely clamour for the vengeance of the Lord on David & Charles.

14. And the prophet David and the prophet Charles did rend their garments; and in Newton Abbot the name of Bridge Books was a byword and a hissing.

15. And Bridge Books begat Westbridge Books.

16. Now those who sat in Newton Abbot said, Let more shekels be offered up as a sacrifice to be a pleasant smell in the nostrils of the public, that the name of Westbridge Books (which is also called the even newer David & Charles imprint) be exalted in all the land.

17. And an accountant stood before them, and he said unto them, Not bloody likely.

18. And he said, Thy publicity budget is as a green field smitten with ten thousand and thousand locusts; thy silver coins are loosed, thy golden ones are broken, thy credit is broken at the bank and thy name is mud in the City.

19. Vanity of vanities, said the accountant, vanity of vanities, all is vanity.

20. And he said, I think we could run to a small ad in the back of the *Gamekeepers' and Poachers' Gazette*.

21. So be it, said the prophet David and the prophet Charles.

22. And it came to pass that the book of the scribe was sold in considerably less than all the land.

23. And when in after years the scribe came to look upon the David & Charles Catalogue which is the holy book of Newton Abbot, he saw that the name of Westbridge Books was without form, and void, and had utterly passed away from the face of the earth.

24. And the Editor said, Well, that's showbiz.

* * * * *
* here ends the first lesson. *
* * * * *

That Justly Interrupted WAHF Column

After those few words from our sponsor we return to the plot. Will detective Langford identify the guilty fan? On his shirt-cuff he quickly jots down the names of the remaining suspects... CHRIS LEWIS; DAVID V. LEWIS; DAVE LOCKE; JAMES MANNING; ERIC MAYER; IAN McKEER—who regrets the drying-up of Langford Car Horror Stories, little knowing that without cost to myself I've acquired a 1966 Ford Anglia in slightly imperfect condition—wholly, of course, for the purpose of collecting TAFF winner Stu Shiffman from Heathrow on April 11 and providing him with an inexhaustible fund of anecdotes (ie. Langford Car Horror Stories) for his own trip report. Must find time to clean the fungi from the interior before then...

Meanwhile there's always RICHARD McMAHON—"Everyone knows that giving injections is a BIG event to the young student nurse, and one that is viewed with much trepidation. Why? Well, you try saying 'Just a little prick' to someone without smiling..."; CHRIS MORGAN; BARNEY HEUFELD; JOSEPH NICHOLAS;

MIKE PAINE, 6 Grey's Road, Merriott, nr. Crewkerne, Somerset

"...The possibilities inherent in a mere three-foot-long grass snake are multitudinous. I had two names for this beloved reptile: Snake (obviously the sort of name only a profoundly subtle mind could think up) and Pussy (Picture a living room; picture some poor innocent teenage girl engaged in the mentally draining task of baby-sitting; picture a black-hearted, ginger-haired eight-year-old, who, hiding an evil smile, ventures: 'Have you met Pussy? Would you like to meet her?' Psychologists reading this will probably smirk to themselves, remarking on how this incident is highly significant as it contains the first glimmers of M. Paine's true nature).

"Apart from this, I remember its habit of sticking its head underwater for lengthy periods of time. Sometimes the rest of its length would get a short dip in the glass bowl, but mainly it was just the head. What it got out of this weird exercise I don't know: perhaps that's a serpent's way of reaching some strange philosophical state of mind; perhaps it was simply that it was suicidally inclined;

perhaps it just got very thirsty at times..."

** Weren't you astonished by this mention
** of a pet snake so soon after my reference to the subject two pages ago? Oh. You weren't astonished at all. Cynical sods... Onward, with JONATHAN PALFREY;

CELIA PARSONS, *The House In The Field, May Hill, Longhope, Glos. GL17 0NP*
"Our 'Introductory' course consisted of a few lectures along the lines of 'you hold a stethoscope this way up' and 'buy these essential textbooks for the bargain price of £30 each for the five of them', and a talk on 'The Role of Students in the Event of a Major Disaster'. This latter was quite interesting, particularly to the budding Florence Nightingales or McCoys amongst us. We listened for 20 minutes to a description of the rapid conversion of the hospital into a military-type unit with a certain command hierarchy, large-scale shunting round of patients, conversion of the Social Medicine Dept into a supplementary morgue (small change there) etc., in growing excitement, imagining the valuable contributions we could make in carrying unattached limbs, heads etc out of the way of the Casualty staff, making cups of tea, and perhaps even bandaging a few sprained thumbs or minor contusions. Budding 'healers of the sick'. Some chance. The lecturer, having been through the amazing redistribution of facilities & labour, showing how every resource would be used, concluded by telling us that our rôle, as clinical medical students, was to bugger off and keep out of everyone's way. Shows how valuable my last 3 years' training must have been. Still, I am an experienced rat brain surgeon—I suppose in a Major Disaster I could crawl into the sewers to succour the residual rat population and ensure that there were enough ratties around to spread bubonic plague etc through the surviving human population."

** I can't cope. I just can't cope.
** Probably, neither can ANDY PORTER; PETE PRESFORD; CHRIS PRIEST; DAVID REDD; DIANA REED; NEIL REST—"I don't know why I have a copy of TD#18." (He is not alone...); ROCHELLE REYNOLDS; ANDY RICHARDS (with delightful news of WAR IN 2080's possible remaindering—the heavies have been sent round to ask David &

Charles a few polite questions, which will be conveyed in Morse through strategically placed electrodes); JIMMY ROBERTSON; DAVE ROWE; RON SALOMON; JOYCE SCRIVNER (ever so many letters); BOB SHAW; BLOB SHAW—"And, finally, a word to really spread fear and loathing. Not a joke, nor even a Bob Shaw construct. A genuine bit of fear and diversion. Well, anyway, this word (which is not mine and is not thin at both ends and thick in the middle) is: Albacon II." (yawnnn...);

STU SHIFFMAN, 19 Broadway Terrace #1D,
New York, NY 10040, USA

"The 'Kate Schaefer meets ~~Bob~~ Greg Pickersgill' story is not what it might be. Kate Schaefer was one of many people in the [Noreascon] operations centre when Greg came in about something. He was not attended to, since everyone (apparently) was too deeply immersed in their job to do so. Finally, I suppose frustrated beyond endurance, Greg screamed 'Isn't there anyone here who speaks English?!' Gnash of teeth and exeunt. I don't think that this made a good impression..."

** Must admit it's a good line, though,
** and one which could reach the fame of 'Is there anyone here from Oregon?' (Just joking, Greg. Ouch.) Meanwhile, who can fathom the mystery of JOHN SHIRE—"Once more I try to write a letter to someone who seems so fed up with neo's that he'll probably never reach the next sentence anyway. Or at least that's how it seems. This is what we find." (Er... was it something I said?); JOE SICLARI; JON SINGER;

PETER SINGLETON, Newman Ward, Park Lane
Special Hospital, Maghull, Liverpool
"Some time ago you remarked about your surprise in seeing an ancient loc of mine in an ish of *The Scarr* [1965], because you hadn't realized I'd been around the fannish microcosm for so long. Actually I've been in fandom since the age of 13 and I'll be 42 next January [1981]. One of my first locs was in issue no.3 of *Vector*, and I also appeared in a Carnell-edited *SF Adventures*; and an articles appeared in the late Tom Reamy's *Trumpet* #9 detailing my medical history at the editor's request..."

** And there I was hoping fandom was
** something which wore off after a little while. Good grief, I'm only 28... unlike

KEN SLATER; KEVIN SMITH; STEVE SNEYD;
DAN STEFFAN; PHIL STEPHENSEN-PAYNE;
JOHN STEWART;

TARAL, 1812-415 Willowdale Avenue, Willowdale, Ontario, M2N 5B4, Canada

"So far I've seen nothing in print except praise for Noreascon. Which I can't understand at all. Given that the con had to be large and had to be run to cater to a large attendance, I suppose Noreascon was run both smoothly and efficiently. But, BNFness aside, I don't like having spent several years in fandom and have people constantly asking who I am in order to get into rooms, parties, functions etc. If anonymity was what I liked, I was doing fine as a non-fan. Somehow I'd gotten the impression that fandom was more personal than being one flunky among millions working for Bata Shoes or McDonalds, but Noreascon has put that illusion to rest. From this corrected point of view, the con can be seen as quite an excellently run Worldcon, just as, say, a roller derby is a well run hockey game, if you look at it right..."

"I've tried the Astral Master ceremony on people over here and so far have failed all but one undesirable whom I fobbed off with 'oh, well, I wasn't duly accredited to initiate Astral Masters, and in any case I had to push your foot through for you.' Amazingly undeft and unflexible people, fans. I'd like to see Joyce Scrivner or Mike Glycer try it some day. I only got through the ordeal, despite my unfortunately unsvelte build, because I have rubber limbs. When I still wore glasses (and not contacts) I could push them back up my nose with a drop kick. Well, almost. It was easier to push up someone else's glasses with a drop kick. And safer too."

** Now there's a notion. If ever the
** Astral League feels the need for an even newer initiation test, the challenge can be to push D.West's glasses up his nose with a drop kick. Additional points will be awarded for surviving D.West's reaction to the attempt. But sssshhh... the man himself is just over the page, after PASCAL THOMAS; LAURENCE URDANG; ROGER WADDINGTON; IAN WATSON; JONATHAN WAITE—"PS: we recently had an order for John Stuart Mill on 'The Subjection of Women': personally I can't wait to see how he went about it. / PPS: Interesting quotation from Samuel Butler as follows:

'The human intellect owes its superiority over that of the lower animals in large measure to the stimulus which alcohol has given to imagination.' Good one for Avedon Carol, maybe, whoever he/she is..." You cad, sir, you are bandying a woman's name. As for booze, let's pause for a word from that supremely noble SF author [in A.Dorey's words] G.K. Chesterton...

I suppose that some aged Moslem chieftain sat one day at the opening of his tent and, brooding with black brows and cursing in his black beard over wine as the symbol of Christianity, racked his brains for some word ugly enough to express his racial and religious antipathy, and suddenly spat out the horrible word *alcohol*. (G.K.Chesterton, *All Things Considered*)

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

"Having failed to get out of bed this morning and thus acquired a little leisure, here's a couple of cartoons for you. No news though, nothing ever happens around here except the same old sex orgies and stuff like that with drink and drugs etc etc. Life at University seems to be reducing all my fellow students to a state of complete apathy—attendance dropping off all the time. (And now me—I've been good so far, as well.) Must be the stuff we get on the reading list. Like George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia*.

"As I expect you have heard by now, I am thinking about standing for TAFF, on the grounds that it's about time the voters had some real choice instead of all those candidates who spend all their time being nice to each other. Not made my mind up definitely yet, being slightly troubled by the thought that it is just conceivable that I might win and be forced to go to the bloody place...

"Received dire fanzine from Joseph the other day. Also somewhat pedestrian effort from A.Dorey. Always did maintain being a member of the BSFA led to brain damage. Must go and form new conspiracy to get Jeff Suter made editor of *Matrix*, Ken Mann editor of *Vector*. Pave the way for coming BSFA Dorey-substitute Michael Ashley.

"Bah. End of term coming. Have to write long essay on Nazi Propaganda. Seems appropriate."

** I can see the 1981/2 TAFF race is
** going to be not unexciting, with the

possibility of a Victory By Default for one candidate after all the others have been crucified on poles, drowned in flash-floods of verbiage to be published by Dave Bridges, or generally leant upon. Get your nominations in by mid-June, everyone: details in my Taff Talk 7.

I have this credibility problem: a special bumper Yorcon issue of an SF fanzine should make some passing reference to SF. A certain Mr Wooster has a credibility problem because US fans don't believe his claims to have been published in TD. To solve both problems at a stroke:

MARTIN MORSE WOOSTER, 8906 Talbot, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910, USA

"I had a run-in with Robert Conquest the other day. He was lecturing at George Washington University on the end of modernism to an audience comprised of bored English majors, who couldn't understand him because of his occasional lapses into French, and bored conservatives, who didn't approve of him because he talked about literature instead of beating the Russkies. I subsequently asked him a few innocent questions about sf, which resulted in a harangue that lasted over two hours. Some of his views:

"His manner. A cross between Evelyn Waugh and Arthur C. Clarke. A Tory prole. On *British sf*. Hates most of it, with the exceptions of Arthur Clarke and the partial exceptions of Brian Aldiss ("But Brian, you see, is self-educated, and he tries to make up for this by pretending his work is great art") and Christopher Priest. He turned very red when I mentioned Moorcock, and denounced the *New Worlds* crew for ten minutes. (I asked about *War In 2080*, which he said mildly favourable words about.)

"On *American sf*. If someone, such as my father, believes that nothing worthwhile has been written in sf since the death of Campbell, I would call that person a reactionary. On this scale, Conquest is conservative. ("But don't you really believe that the last really good sf was written in the Forties?") Likes all Golden Age writers. Reads *F&SF*, *Analog* and *Ikey Asimov's Thrilling Wonder Stories of Space and Time*. Wondered if Philip K. Dick had turned reactionary in the last few years. His favourite American authors of the last decade: Joan Vinge and Spider Robinson.

"...I eventually ended up at a reception to which half the Tory ~~XXXX~~ intellectuals in Washington, drawn by the

nameless power of cheap sherry, gravitated—
a reception in Conquest's honour... here I
met the notorious Peregrine Worsthorpe,
who talks as loudly as the stripes on his
shirts, mostly on being put on an IRA
death list. "So I called up a captain I
know in the Officials, and asked what I
should do about this death notice. 'Not to
worry', he said. 'When your time comes, it
comes.'" All that was missing was Paul
Johnson, probably the only editor of the
New Statesman ever to work in a chair
endowed by the *Readers' Digest*..."

I haven't read Willis' *Enchanted Duplicat-*
or. I got a copy in the mail, riffled
through it to see that it was just fannish
name-dropping crud, tried to read a few
pages, and threw it in the wastebasket in
disgust. (Marion Zimmer Bradley, 1955—
quoted in *Pong 9* from Steffan & White)

CRITICS SPEAK: No less for Dave than for
the rest of fandom, the time of testing
has arrived. (Steve Higgins) Leaves the
reader with the fixed grin of someone
trying desperately not to let on that he's
actually bored out of his mind. (Joseph
Nicholas) Manifestly running out of the
laid-back 'clever' gimmicks... (Joseph
Nicholas surrogate) Inherently repetitious.
(Gary Deindorfer) A strange feeling of
'forced' writing... (Alan Dorey) Playing
hard for laughs... (Kevin Smith) Fan writ-
ing as a Public Relations exercise. (D.
West) I don't want to see another issue
of *Twill-Ddu*... Now fuck off. (Michael Ash-
ley) They laughed at Galileo... (DRL)

WRAPPING IT UP: Last issue's competition
required you to identify the nonexistent
works whose titles were used as headings;
Roz Kaveney won and the puzzle was expanded
for a BSFA comp, so no answers yet (write
if you want to know the tedious details) †
The next *Boonfark*, wherein Langford reaches
Noreascon, may be had from Dan Steffan,
823 N Wakefield St, Arlington, VA 22203,
USA. † We also also heard from Bob Wilkin-
son and doubtless others whose letters have
been duly mislaid. † The as yet uncredited
interior cartoons were by D.West [p.7] and
Alexis Gilliland [p.13]. † Electrostencils
by John Harvey; inside cover text (as well
as art) by the Collick With No Name. †

Hazel's Language Lessons #8: Hausa

'yan garkuwa: Professional beggars living
by threatening to do obscene
acts unless given alms. (Esp. in *Bingley*?)

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