

SUNNY OPTIMISM was noted in certain quarters as 1984 got under way. At the SF Supper Club, Roz Kaveney confided that she's escaped the <code>Interzone</code> chain-gang to become 'Queen of Sci Fi' at Chatto  $\S$  Windus, editing a 'small upmarket SF line'. Toby Roxburgh spread a little gloom and despondency by announcing that SF was dead and nobody wrote sense-ofwonder books any more-but soon cheered us all up with the stout avowal that even if we all did write super wondrous new books, his small, upmarket SF line at Futura would unhesitatingly reject them in favour of imported American Hugo-winners. Malcolm Edwards gloated over the leaked news that Mary Gentle's Golden Whichbreed (famous dog-pedigree guide) had acquired more votes than anything in the current BSFA Award nominations, while Brian Stableford skulked in Reading, bitterly complaining that his temerity in giving GW a bad review had earnt him an Official Reprimand plus blacklisting as regards Gollancz review copies... Everyone was reeling at the news that the Public Lending Right scheme was actually going to bring them money: "How much are you getting?" was the question at the tip of every tongue, and naturally evil Malcolm assembled the answers, subsequently calling the roll of authors present in strict order of PLR precedence, from those who hadn't registered at all (eg. himself) and were wailing and gnashing their teeth, up to the heights of such as Chris Priest (who later bought himself a new photocopier, and is writing articles for US papers trying to whip up enthusiasm for PLR over there, in hope of similar bounty from reciprocal agreements) and Brian Aldiss, who, when pressed for details of his PLR, smiled modestly as he ordered a further magnum of Moet & Chandon to wash down his tureen of caviar.

BRIAN ALDISS: "I noticed in your columns that the exwriter Ian Watson has done something or other about turning his books into games. I hope Sheila Bush gets a percentage. It reminded me to tell you that—without my lifting a finger -my Weidenfeld SF Quiz Book has gone onto cassette, and is so published by Acornsoft, as a Grandmaster Quiz entitled, briefly, Brian Aldiss Science Fiction Quiz for the BBC Microcomputer and Acorn Electron. Two cassettes, leaflet, lavish packaging. Next Christmas, Penguin will bring out this quiz and the other five along similar lines in one omnibus volume. Just think—this miserable bit of hackwork is curr-

ently earning me more than Helliconia...

"A report on 1983 Christmas parties which might be of interest to your readers. New Scientist: Booze and food good, crowded, many pretty girls. Pass. TLS: Well worth gatecrashing. Booze and food good and ample. Amiable chaps -no publishers. One pretty girl and Hermione Lee. Drink never dried up. Credit. Fiction Magazine: Boozy ambience over pub. Booze inexhaustible, food okay. Salmon Rushdie present (as at other parties) otherwise very jolly, chaps and girls friendly. Frank Delaney. Credit. Jonathan Cape: Begins late (9pm), goes on till 4am. Unstoppable flow of booze and food on all four floors. Many celebrities, including Diana Quick who wants to act in dramatized version of Helliconia. Hours of fun. Girls up to scratch, chaps friendly, no SF writers, except for Desmond Morris. Credit plus.

"As for this kind offer to serialize Helliconia Winter, you're on. All the sf magazines have rejected it. 'Too literate' — Omni. 'Too downbeat' — Analog. 'Too intelligent' -Asimov's. 'Too long'—Interzone. 'Too amusing'—Punch. 'Two fingers' - Private Eye. Enclosed is an instalment you might like to begin with, still in a rough state. Typically, ANSIBLE 37 salutes 1984, famous scientifictional year of G.K.Chesterton's famous skiffy work THE NAPOLEON OF NOTTING HILL. Editor: DAVE LANGFORD, 94 LONDON ROAD, READING, BERKSHIRE, RG1 5AU, ENGLAND. Subscriptions: f2.00 for six issues, airmailed outside UK, to ANSIBLE; Giro transfer to a/c 24 475 4403; Americans can send \$3.50 to Burns, 23 Kensington Ct, Hempstead, NY 11550; and in the unlikely event of its being more convenient, continental Eurofans can rush f2 equivalent to Goudriaan, Postbus 1189, 8200 BD Lelystad, Netherlands. Institutions: f4/97. BRITAIN IS HEAVEN IN '87, and anyone sending an ANSIBLE sub is urged to add an extra f1/52 for presupporting membership of this triffic Worldcon hid. Cartoon by D. WEST (but vote for ROB HANSEN on your TAPF ballot), sticky labels by KEITH FREEMAN, special Supreme Editorial Taste Award to KARL EDWARD WAGNER. Thanks for collation last issue to Jan Huxley, Chris Hughes and Rob Welbourn. Mailing label runes: LASTISH NN = you are OK to ANSIBLE #NN; SUB DUE = send money instanter; \*\*\*\*\* NN = your sub expired with issue NN and you should be ashamed of yourself; TRADE = for some reason Langford wishes to curry favour with you, and wou should be on your guard. Essential reading for Spring 1984 includes MICROMANIA by C.Platt & D.Langford (Gollancz, 1 March) and THE LEAKE ESTABLISHMENT by DL alone (Muller, 27 April but there should be some at Scacon). This fanzine has received financial assistance from the Public Lending Right scheme and is saving up for an ISSN... Feb 1984

it has no excitement in it, no spies, no dialogue, no sex; but it has cooking-something lacking in previous sf

Empire-builders." (BA)

SCOOP! HELLICONIA WINTER EXTRACT (p.25A of draft): "twisted up through the building. / She paused at one of the tiny kitchens, where an old grandmother worked with a young maidservant. The old woman gave her a greeting, then turned back to the business of making pastry savrilas: The lamplight gleamed on pale and honey-coloured forms, the simple shapes of bowls and jugs, plates, spoons and rollers, and on dumpy bags of flour. The pastry was being rolled wafer-thin, mottled old hands moving above it irregular shape. The maidservant leaned against a wall, looking on vacantly, upper teeth chewing pouting lower lip. Water in a skillet bubbled over a charcoal fire. / It could not be true that everyday life in Koriantura was threatened, as Odim said-not while the grandmother's capable hands continued to turn out those perfect half-moon shapes, each with a dimpled stright edge and a twist of the pastry at one end. Those little pillows of pleasure spoke of a domestic contentment which could not be shattered. Odim worried too much. He always worried. Nothing would happen. / Besides, tonight Besi had someone other than Odim on her mind. There was a mysterious soldier in the house, and she had glimpsed him. // All the lower and less favoured rooms" (c) Brian Aldiss 1984. Wait for next senseshattering instalment, in which a glacier bursts through the kitchen wall and Odim says "I told you so ... "

FURTHER FICTION from POB HOLDSTOCK: 'RH's 110,000 word novel, extended from the story 'Mythago Wood', has been won by Gollancz after a mighty battle with Rob's old publisher, Faber, lasting just two phone calls. Faber's first offer included a 3-figure sum, no detectable enthusiasm, and heavy hints about massive cutting. Gollancz offered lots more and threw in a big, friendly grin from Malcolm Edwards. In the States, Susan Allison of Berkeley Books is reported to be delighted with the manuscript, which she had commissioned a year earlier. The Gollancz edition is due in July, with a 4colour cover, all of which will be subtle shades of yellow. A follow-up novel (not a sequel) Lavondyss is in production. Other great recent works from the mighty-thewed pen include Night Hunter 4: The Shrine. The terrifying saga of Dan Brady's endless bloody quest to find his lost family in the foetid and haunted labyrinths of occult England, continues. Again, he totally fails to find them. It is very possible that Dan Brady is extremely inept. Book due in August... Realms of Fantasy, new Edwards/Holdstock epic, is out from Dragonsworld: lavish illustrations of 10 fantasy worlds including Earthsea and Urth. The first publicity was an interview for Manchester radio. Rob was totally flummoxed by almost every question the crazy DJ interviewer asked, but particularly by one about Mars: 'There's a chapter on Mars in the book, and the pictures are very red. And, like, Mars itself is very red, isn't it. Do you have any opinions on that, Robert?' Listen carefully for the thud of someone's jaw impacting the table." (RPH)

L.RON HUBBARD FUNNIES: Although NEL backed out of the contract, for reasons, their boss Trevor d'Cruze has snaffled Battlefield Earth, to appear this year in both hardback and paperback from his own new imprint Quadrant Publishing. Meanwhile, famous Terry Carr has been nearly editing the 12volume BE sequel Mission Earth ("clean pulp prose, crude in style but quite serviceable," he noted): he verbally agreed an \$80,000 fee with Author Services Inc, the Hubbard marketing organization. Imagine Terry's surprise and delight when the contract did not arrive "within the week" as promised, nor at all: instead the grapevine reported that similar offers were also made to Algis Budrys, Dave Hartwell, and others; and finally a call came from ASI saying "I just want to set your mind at ease. We've decided to do the editing as an in-house project, so don't worry, we didn't hire another editor instead of you." Suddenly one remembers the original report that NEL dropped Battlefield Earth because ASI were impossible to work with...

RIP: "George Charters, Grand Old Man of Irish Fandom, died on Wednesday 18 January from a long standing heart complaint. The funeral, at Roselawn, Belfast, was attended by James and Peggy White (Walt and Madeleine Willis had to turn back on account of snow). George used to say that the proudest achievement of his career in fandom was to have stencilled The Enchanted Duplicator, but in fact he published many fine issues of his own fanzine The Scarr and wrote several articles in other fanzines. All are suffused by the gentle warmth and quiet humour which made him such a nice person to know

and so impossible to forget." (Walt Willis)

Also recently deceased: Mary Renault (78), noted for fine historical novels edging into borderline fantasy (eg. The King Must Die); Leonard Wibberley (68) of the SF romps The

Mouse that Roared, The Mouse on the Moon.

INTERZONE has received a no-strings-attached £100 cheque from that patron of the arts Sir Clive Sinclair. "Now we'll be accused of allowing ourselves to be corrupted by rich capitalists," says ever-optimistic Dave Pringle, adding that issue 8 features an unpublished Dick story 'Strange Memories of Death' and that IZ stories by Scott Bradfield and Malcolm Edwards are being grabbed by Karl Edward Wagner for the next DAW Best Horror Stories of the Year-information which would fill the Ansible editor with rage and envy were it not that his own short nasty from Ramsey Campbell's The Gruesome Book will be in that same volume, ho ho. And...

IAN WATSON: "Sold vol.2 of the trilogy (THE BLACK CURRENT TRILOGY), namely The Book of the Stars, to dear old Gollancz. Whoopee... 'Slow Birds' bought by Gardner Dozois for his new Best of the Year roundup from Bluejay Books... Have just become the Sunday Times skiffy critic, gosh. Amazing and horrifying how my prestige has shot up with the chaps in the Red Lion, mothers, aunts, etc, compared with when I was merely an author of books last week... Nene College, Northampton, phoned out of the blue and asked me to be Writer in Residence one day a week for the rest of the term for £1750; I said yes. Went out there yesterday: lovely campus, rose beds, Zen gardens, bars, coffee bars, nice laid-back attitude to life. Staff wearing velvet jackets: suddenly realized I was dressed in rags and should improve The Image... Back to Earth with a bump: Vicky Carne (Mosaic) phoned to ask for a final discussion of the game options in the programme for 'The Width of the World' before they go into production. As I don't have a computer on hand, still using a club and clay tablets for my work, I'll have to buzz down to London. 'Could you make it the week after next?' asked Vicky. 'Next week Simon—he's your programmer—is doing his mock A-levels.' A Humble Moment... You'll have heard, I newshound, that John Clute has been rendered hors de combat in St Barts with smashed femur, dislocated shoulder etc after being swiped off his bike. Can it be coincidence that a hit-&-run driver nobbled George Hay mere months earlier?" (IW) Am glad to report that John Clute has escaped hospital, though it may be a little while before he can put the boot into SF with his customary vigour ...

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF FANTASY: Maxim Jakubowski is in the throes of preparing a detailed outline of this massive project ("pace Peter Nicholls", who had more or less abandoned his similar plans), covering fantasy, horror and the supernatural, and running to some 600,000 words. Outline plus 20,000 words of sample stuff to be delivered to Allen & Unwin, after which "we shall then together pitch it to the Book Clubs and US publishers with a costly but professional printed dummy." Contributors include Greenland, Brosnan, Collins, Barron, Winter, Kaveney, Jones'n'Fletcher, Miller, Shippey, Grant,

Langford and whatsisname from Gollancz who's been mentioned too often this issue. Watch this space. Data from Maxim himself, who is also about to write the authorized biography of Philip K.Dick (reminding me of the PKD Society: 4+ newsletters a year, £3.50 surface/£7 airmail, cheques to V.Buckle, 47 Park Ave, Barking, Essex, IG11 8QU. Unpublished Dickiana promised).

DOUGLAS ADAMS: Neil Gaiman reveals all! "Re. last Ansible, I noticed you had a bit on So Long, and Thanks For All The Royalties - the new DA book. To set the record straight, that isn't necessarily the title. The 'plot' concerns A.Dent's quest to find God's Final Message To His Creation (which apparently will be revealed on the last page, don't hold your breath), and so DA's agent wants him to call it God's Final Message To His Creation. DA prefers So Long... but is currently thumbing through Hitchhiker #1 looking for a quote to title it with. (I suggested Eighteenth Printing, but...) He's not yet started writing it, still working on 'DA SCREENPLAY' as he is.

"Trivia: did you know that 'the most gratuitous use of the word fuck in a serious screenplay' has been bowdlerized to 'use of the word Belgium...' in the US edition? And the word 'wop!' -a multipurpose sound effect—has become 'whop!' to avoid offending any—ahem!—Italo-Americans that might read it. Both these in the Pocket version of Liff, the Royalties and Everything. Oh yeah, and 'You're an asshole, Dent,' has become 'You're a complete kneebiter, Dent,' for what it's worth. I find the concept of kneebiting more offensive that the concept of assholes, but maybe that's "because 'I'm not American.

Remember where you heard it first-" (NG)

NEBULA AWARDS PRELIMINARY BALLOT: This document contains hordes of things from 1983, to be voted down to a shortlist of 5/6 per category by the SFWA membership. Top novels are Citadel of the Autarch and Against Infinity with 17 and 10 nominations. Life is too short to list the lot, but here are some items of UK interest: Crucible of Time (Brunner, =12th novel, 4 votes), Helliconia Summer (Aldiss, =19th novel, 3 votes); 'Slow Birds' (Watson, 3rd novelette, 12 votes), 'The Black Current' (Watson, =15th novelette, 3 votes) and 'Brothers' (Cowper, =12th short, 3 votes). Rankings mean little as some stories have been picking up votes throughout 1983, while others appeared late that year. Final ballot soon.

RIP AGAIN: "Eric Needham died suddenly on Dec 1. I received word from his widow Kathleen. Eric was best known for offbeat writings in Harry Turner's fanzine and in particular was the originator of the 'Widowers Wonderful' verses. He was active in early Manchester fandom and had a truly original brand of humour, much appreciated by his friends." (Ethel Lindsay) "Slim Pickens who rode an H-bomb into the credits and Vera Lynn song of Dr Strangelove is dead." (R.I.Barycz) The mention of Eric Needham reminds me that at Novacon, Eric Bentcliffe asked for a further plug for WHEN YNGVI WAS A LOUSE, the 1950s fanthology, containing Needham material and verses. Send a couple of quid to EB at 17 Riverside Crescent, Holmes Chapel, Cheshire, CW4 7NR... Ed.

BARYCZ MEDIA HORROR RISES FROM GRAVE: "Have you got big tits? Can you swing a broadsword? Can you wear Calvin Klein chainmail knickers? Redheaded? Then Dino de Laurentis wants to hear from you, as he's going to produce that figment of R.E. Howard's misogyny Red Sonja: She Devil With A Sword. Call Navarro-Bertoni Casting in California, on 212-765-4250, now. Any shortcomings in the above requirements can no doubt be made good with the help of IIM and the finest plastic surgeon Dino can find off Hollywood and Vine. Fascinating to see what sort of compromise he makes between the need for Sonja to have big ones and yet at the same time swing a sword about withou distraction... Keir Dullea is set to make a return in 2010, also Douglas Rain who did HAL's voice... Piers Haggard who directed the TV version of Pennies from Heaven hopes to make The Stainless Steel Rat. Script by Harry Harrison. Whatever happened to Limelight Productions ol' Harry was so enthusiastic about a few years ago?... Glen A.Larson does it again. To wit: ripped off Tron and any number of shows you care to think of with Automan, holographic image created by a police computer expert to fight crime in a blue halo, aided by his trusty sidekick Køblø a little sparkling light called Cursor... 2010 begins photography at MGM on 6 Feb: \$25M budget and nine months preproduction already done... 20th C Fox announce their ritual SF project for this year, Enemy Mine based on ditto by Barry Bongyear..." (RIB)

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INFINITELY Omni UK is no more, not even the token editorial office consisting of IMPROBABLE a broom-cupboard in Bramber Rd containing Andie Burland/Oppenheimer. The erstwhile Penthouse/Omni building has been flogged... SF in Southend: the usual searing controversy resulted from the Joe Beedell (?) letter last issue. Alex Stewart announces that all persons maligned in said letter are in fact nice, especially heroic Susan Francis; also that he's baffled by being advised "to don thermal underwear before attending any Star Trek conventions." Joe himself sends a more than usually cryptic note implying that last issue's letter was not (despite its fairly accurate rendition of his literary style) written by him: "i hope that what happened to me will never happen again as THEY made a Big mistake to be JUDGE JURY & EXECUTIONER don't let this happen again to any body else or there will be a traggedy tell people to get thier Fact's straight next time." (JBor is it?) Simon Gosden offers a local news clipping about the 'Orion Club' now reportedly meeting chez Beedell to watch films (videos?)... The Sun, favourite newspaper of informant Leroy Kettle, urgently asks IS YOUR NEIGHBOUR FROM OUTER SPACE? and gives hints (from such notorious loonies as Brad Steiger) on how to spot extraterrestrial infiltrators. "They sleep and work unusual hours... develop strange physical reactions near certain high-tech machines... show anxiety when using earth transportation... constantly gather information... misuse common everyday objects... have homes with ill-matching decor... have an unusual object in the home which is highly regarded and protected..." I swear I'm not making this up. Finally the Sun invites readers to report "space aliens" spotted in their locality, to ALIEN, The Sun, 30 Bouveric St, London, EC4Y 8DE. Leroy reckons a few write-ins for D.West would seem to be in order... SFWA Smites Pocket Books With Thunderbolt! Well, not quite: but despite exchanges in A36, SFWA President Marta Randall and I are pals really, and she did investigate the curious business of Pocket Books' failure to pay me my trifling advance despite having had Space Eater in print for most of 1983, and coincidentally (or was it?) Arrow announced that the cheque had got as far as their New York agents and was en route to London. This has been a public service announcement requested by local SFWA rep Ian Watson... Take That, Langford! Seems nobody is sueing me after all (see A36), not even SFWA as wrongly rumoured in the USA. Andy Porter appears to regret this, and in the latest SF Chronicle berates me no end for failing to check everything before publication. Gee, Andy, and I was so tactfully silent about your (doubtless carefully checked) SFC contribution which reported the dismally inept and universally criticized BMC SF promotion as (and I quote) "an unqualified success"... Censorship Horror: do you subscribe to Roger Weddall's Aussie newszine Thyme, and have you been wondering about the long gap between issues? We hear the UK agent, a notorious bon-vivant, GUFF administrator and Paperback Inferno editor, has suppressed the British mailing of the latest issue owing to Roger's alleged failure to accept the GUFF results with adequate good grace therein... Fermat's Last Theorem has been solved, according to the Grauniad, by eccentric cyberneticist and George Hay protegé Arnold Arnold (sic). The self-

confessed mathematical intelligentsia of fandom (Phil Palmer) opine that either the Guardina has left out important bits of proof or—as wickedly asserted by New Scientist—this has to be a con. I myself have developed a magnificent proof which this Ansible is too small to contain, marginally... John Sladek, who is supposed to be many thousand miles away, was sighted over here the -25° Minneapolis Xmas. "London a haven of tropical warmth, he states" -(MJE)... ConStellation, not content with being fandom's all-time financial disaster, has found a lot more bills under the bed etc and cheerily announces that the deficit has swelled to \$44,000. "The people who lost it aren't even apologetic," complains Joyce Scrivner. "I was told they bought 19,000 plastic registration envelopes to get a good price break." So among their assets are, presumably, more than 12,500 plastic envelopes—also a good few thousand felt-tip pens accidentally acquired after an attempt to order a few hundred (SFC)... Isaac Asimov underwent triple heart-bypass surgery in December and is convalescing: we leave you to guess which Gollancz editor drew parallels with Heinlein's "brain-bypass surgery" and suggested Arthur C.Clarke should look out... Seacon 84 has signed up further famous persons: Forrest J.Ackerman, Fred Pohl, Marion Zimmer Bradley, Joe Haldeman. A publicity flyer from hyperefficient Chris Hughes adds the name of Gene Wolfe, which has somewhat nonplussed Gene Wolfe... Games Centre Kaput: the 9-shop empire went into liquidation on 31 Dec, a variety of reasons being suggested. GC plead economic recession and loss of trade thanks to London bomb scares; averyone else mutters "total ineptitude". Reportedly GC cocked up their supply & demand thanks to a misprogrammed stock-control computer (an accountant—D. G.Langford FCA—comments that it's not unusual for a small business to program stock-ordering giving priority to what's on the shelves rather than what's popular and has therefore been sold). All employees of Games Workshop are of course in deep mourning for the passing of their rivals, however bravely they try to hide their grief with hysterical giggles... D. West, with unaccustomed public spirit, asks "how come the Albacon committee [who admittedly made a fairish profit] can't afford more than a lousy £10 donation to TAFF? Does this have anything to do with the reported failure of TAFF person Avedon Carol to lick the arse of certain committee members with sufficient enthusiasm? I think we should be told." Surely D. must be totally misinformed here... Sweden: "An official Star Wars Fan Club has been formed and this club dislikes the fan-operated nonprofit SW club 'Tattooine'. One can suppose the existence of an idealistic SW club makes it harder for SWFC to sell stuff to the innocent young addicts and earn itself a fortune. They threaten to sue if Tattooine continues to use commercially protected words like 'Star Wars', 'Tattooine', etc. T's answer is to change name, to 'The Rebel Alliance' (Rebelalliansen) and continue as before... Kaj Harju and Jan-Olov Segerström claim to have founded a Christopher Priest Society... SEFF has collected about £200. This means the SEFF trip to Seacon 84 is secure. Donations are still welcome and will go to the next SEFF trip, probably aimed for the planned Sweepn 85 in Stockholm." (Ahrvid Engliolm)... 1934: The View from Two Shores—UK/V9 contier nee(s). UK Dit 2-5 Buly, costs a mere £75+VAT; ask Colin Mably, SF Foundation 601 599-31 00 1 599-31 00

Hazel's Language Lessons #28: Tibetan Yugs-sa-moi dor-rta des yza srun, rma-la pan Wdn: the middle part of a widow's drawers prevents epilepsy and heals wounds. (Tibetan-English Dictionary, H.A.Jaschke, 1881.)

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