

More from jaded DAVE LANGFORD, 94 LONDON ROAD, READING, BERKSHIRE, RG1 5AU, UK. Postal rates have soared by a staggering 1p, but 5 issues of **Ansible** still cost £2: cheques or money orders to **Ansible**, Girobank transfer to account 24 475 4403. Or \$3.50 to US agents Mary & Bill Burns (23 Kensington Court, Hempstead, NY 11550); or \$4 to Aussie agent Irwin (For GUFF) Hirsh, 2/416 Dandenong Rd, North Caulfield, Vic 3161. Subscriptions for fewer issues are also welcome, if you can handle the intricate mathematics involved: 40p for one, etc. Phone: Reading (0734) 665804 (talk loudly). Cartoons: ATom.

HAZEL'S LANGUAGE LESSONS, incorporating ANSIBLE

Last issue's absence of a Language Lesson plunged half fandom into war. Hazel had to burrow to the street through a mound of outraged letters whose size endangered the flight path of Concorde; I was compelled to subsidize the postman's new truss. Oh yes, the SF priorities of our readership are all too evident.... John Brunner was first to the rescue, with wisdom from a classic Chinese dictionary:

Wan: a small mouth. Some say a large mouth.

T`han: to pretend to look near whilst cherishing distant views.

Ch`huen Keih Seang Kwei: to bore a hole in the wall and peep at each other.

Chen: to stand still. To gallop at full speed.

Pee: a dog under the table. A dog with short legs. A short headed dog.

Mang: a species of bird with one eye and one wing, two of which when joined together are able to fly.

Kheih Iaou: various tribes of barbarians unacquainted with marriage and knocking out the teeth.

Wang Jen: to side with anybody or everybody.

Chen is the interesting one: Hazel remembers a Coptic word meaning "Go" or alternatively "Stop", and a Paul Jennings essay cites a Greek look-alike: (1) move quickly; (2) sit.

ME

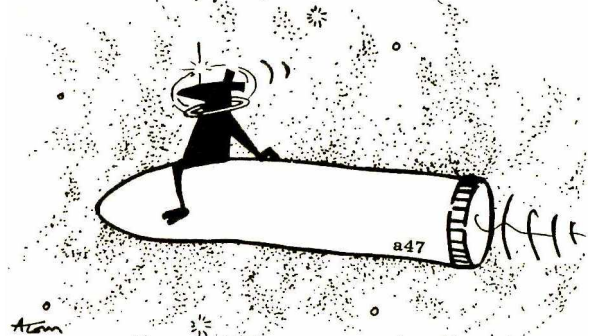
My own personal lukewarm news takes a load off my mind and at last provides an answer for the millions of fans awaiting the publication and remaindering of that putative SF novel **Wilderness of Mirrors**. I've scrapped it. The reasons are all too complicated, the results quite gratifying -- your editor can once again write other SF without feeling guilty, and was quick to bash out a story for what was to be called **The Orion Anthology** or thereabouts.

(This, edited by Rob Holdstock and Chris Evans, is a "British SF showcase" collection to appear as an Orion [Unwin] paperback just in time for Conspiracy '87. Its latest title is **Other Edens**, contributors besides the editors being Aldiss, Charnock, Garnett, Kilworth, Harrison [MJ], Lamming, Langford, Lee, Moorcock, Roberts [K], Tuttle and Watson. "Er, we mean British-resident SF," the editors hastily added.)

Instead of nobly following up with an October **Ansible**, I went on a holiday which looks set to inspire several meta-fictions about shifting perception. When you visit Snowdonia in company with Martin & Katie Hoare, the surface reality of mountains and sheep begins to fade, revealing instead the hidden webs of **realalespace**. Yes, the flickering communications pulsing beneath our society follow high-tech networks constrained only by the shortest routes between pub and pub. The hell with Gibson and Sterling: realalepunk SF is going to be the cutting edge of the future, portraying as it does the deadly interface between humankind and chemical transcendence. I have seen the future and it **hic!**

(During odd sober moments of the holiday I read -- as a respite from too much terrible SF for review -- Kingsley Amis's **The Old Devils**. "Bloody hell, this is good!" was my measured opinion, and sure enough, within weeks, the novel won the Booker Prize. It's nice to know one has influence.)

Meanwhile, historically minded readers may have expected a change of direction or editor after **Ansible 46**. It was at that ominous number that weary Peter Roberts stopped doing **Ansible**'s predecessor **Checkpoint**, passing control to new editors (until issue 74, but that's another story). Item: **Ansible**, exhaustingly, now has more than five times the old circulation of **Checkpoint**: (not to mention several times the



wordage). Item: Your editor is medically advised that each time he types a COA- or award nominations list, millions of his brain cells die. Item: There's something tempting about the half-century mark and/or the epochal period from one British worldcon (**Ansible** first appeared at Seacon '79) to the next. Tentative conclusion: I wouldn't subscribe beyond issue 50 if I were you.

MILFORD 1986, or

15 Characters In Search Of A Volume Control for Neil Gaiman
Paul Barnett was there:

There is more room in heaven for a flannel nightcap than for a silver codpiece.

Arriving some three hours before anyone else, I discovered for myself what metropolitan Milford-on-Sea thought about this annual invasion of skiffy writers. I strolled idly down to the seafront and into a café for an ice-cream. There the fifteen-year-old server and her fifteen-year-old hangers-on fell about laughing throughout the entire transaction. After a quick check -- yup, them flies wuz closed -- I danced away in glee: there were soon going to be fifteen other buggers just as hilarious as me.

Of course I don't believe it -- I simply embrace it fervently.

Various catchwords and phrases emerged at Milford, not all of which are easily comprehended by the amateur. Here is a brief glossary:

Crawling testicles: Term introduced by Alex Stewart in a short story. Describes feelings of male participants when their story is being discussed.

Spung! Dignified Heinleinian term for the reaction of the female nipple to sexual stimulation. This word was used whenever there was a conversational silence.

Untenable: Term used by US cyberpunk (qv.) writer Bruce Sterling to describe stories either (a) not cyberpunk or (b) not written by Bruce Sterling.

Cyberpunk: Skiffy written by persons concerned with invasive technology -- the gadgets that Definitely Will Invade Your Body. Dildoes deliberately excluded, even if coked up. Derivatives produced during the event included **scifyberpunk** and the much more digestible **lowfibrepunk**.

Mirror shades: Adopted as the uniform of cyberpunks (qv.).

Mazola party: Term describing orgies so unstimulating that the participants have to use Mazola cooking oil to lubricate the parts that Heineken can't reach. According to Bruce Sterling (qqv.) such parties are engaged in by famous golden-age skiffy writers at worldcons. Your correspondent waved a block of cheap skate lard but got no takers.

Contabescent: A cold aerosol spray used in farming to wither the unwanted tumescences of billy-goats. (To think! -- Call My Bluff used to be a clean game.)

Cutting edge: Term used by Bruce Sterling (qqqv.) to describe cyberpunk (qv.). Cyberpunk is the cutting edge of skiffy. Us Brits are producing the frayed trailing edge. A stuffy rebuttal of this thesis by Neil Gaiman concluded: "We don't give a fuck. And you can't make us."

Bar pixies: The mystical elementals responsible for the fact that only 57 pints were recorded at the bar during the sinking of an 80-pint barrel. The "missing" 23 pints were generally assumed to be those thrown away by toppers who, although eager, regarded a fistful of evil-smelling foam as

undrinkable. (This one will run and run...)

You cannot kill a man with a poem. You cannot rule a nation with a sonnet. I will keep my guns, sir, and you may keep your verses.

All stories brought to Milford were generally peed upon, the only exception being Garry Kilworth's "Blood Orange", which was peed upon by a militant few because it was too perfect. Gwyneth Jones, using occasionally subtle trajectories, peed upon every story in sight on the basis that she hadn't written it, and was then astonished when her own incomprehensible piece vanished under a flood of urine. Bruce Sterling, whose mission was to persuade the Brits to take up the True Quill (ie., cyberpunk) peed upon all stories until the moment his own was discussed; thereafter, having discovered what it was like, he mellowed. Diana Wynne Jones and Judy Blish, two very nice people, desperately tried to find something nice to say about **everything** -- a difficult task, seeing as my story was one of those under consideration.

The battlefield is the place for blunders, not the cricket pitch.

Ah yes, my story. At 4750 words it was widely regarded as too long. What will they say of the 90,000-word **Earthdoom!**, I wonder. Too introspective?

Bear-baiting, sir? 'Tis not for me unless the beast a maiden be.

Various putative projects raised their heads during Milford. **Now We Are Sick**, edited by Neil Gaiman and Steve Jones, is to be an anthology of revolting verse for kids; surprisingly, money is being talked. David Barrett is soliciting contributions for a hypothetical series of short-shorts to appear in **Computer Weekly**; if this goes ahead the results will (or possibly will not) be collected to form a book. Neil Gaiman and your correspondent agreed to press famous Rupert Metcalf to allow us to try and flog a "Best of **Knave Fiction**" anthology: watch this space. It was generally agreed, too, that an anthology of sex skiffy was needed, and everyone except Gwyneth Jones and Bruce Sterling agreed to contribute. Alex Stewart was elected editor but doesn't fucking well want unsolicited submissions. "I'll get piles," he confessed in an unguarded moment, "of masturbatory fantasies from all those teenage wankers who read **Ansible**." The title of this editorial masterpiece currently wavers between the elegant **Spung!** and the catchy **Saucy Science Wonder Stories**. Who knows? Maybe some sucker of a publisher will buy the damn' thing.

Chief of men? He is a chief of murderers. But I will piss upon his grave -- I and a thousand others.

Chairman Colin Greenland -- Uncle Colin With His Merry Games for Boys and Girls -- led the evening sessions. Fifteen of us had heady fun while Mary Gentle had a cold. Games included: (a) Call My Bluff (hence "contabescent"); (b) a variation on Consequences introduced by Diana Wynne Jones, which led to unparalleled filthiness (rhyming couplets: "Ships that pass in the night/Are particularly hard on ducks"; "While we're all playing with silly rhymes/Dave and Mary are having a real good time [spung]), and (c) a version of Call My Bluff in which the **Oxford Dictionary of Quotations** was used. In this last the "host" gave the name and dates of an epigrammatist and the flog had to supply possible quotes from same. Hence the pithy epigrams cited herein -- and hence a competition! The first person correctly to identify the authors of the quotes listed here will get a FREE copy of John Grant's exquisite **Sex Secrets of Ancient Atlantis**. The runner-up will get a signed one. You Too Can Be A Lucky Winner.

'Tis the good Lord's will that a rabbit goes well in a crust with onions.

During the week, Rachel Pollack got the news that a new book of hers had been sold to Thorsons. Your correspondent heard that a new Langford/Grant collaboration had been taken by Grafton. Neil Gaiman sold a piece to **Today** on Fantasycon, which summed up a ten-minute interview with nubile pouting authoress Lisa Tuttle in a single quote: "Fantasycon is just like a great big party." Oh how pleased she was.

Hast thou heard, my little boy/Of famous Humphrey Davy? He put the sodium in our salt/And argon in our gravy.

Your correspondent and Paul Kincaid together won five games in a row of doubles pool on the last night, baffling all challengers. It was then agreed that they should play a singles game -- a Duel of the Giants. The following morning, Kincaid refused to remember who had won.... [PB]

[Published authors wishing to join next year's literary fun (and not already on Milford's mailing list) should ingratiate themselves with the current Chair: Paul Kincaid, 114 Guildhall St, Folkestone, Kent, CT20 1ES.]

EPISTOLARY FICTIONS IN THE GOTHIC OR POST-GOTHIC MODE

Greg Bear: "Ellen Datlow passed on your issue 46, containing a letter from Marise Morland-Chapman, who does not know me. I am very fond of Hal Clement, and of his work, but I don't remember reading a story by him called 'Star, Bright' and I can't find it in reprint anthologies I have immediate access to. Where did it appear? (Harry's novel 'Star Light' is not even close.)

"Tangents' is deliberately similar (because I love them dearly) to half the stories in the Clifton Fadiman math fantasy anthologies, in the second of which, **The Mathematical Magpie**, there is a story by Mark Clifton called 'Star, Bright' (1952). Is this the story, misremembered? I've re-read it, and other than touching on children and the fourth dimension, it bears no resemblance to 'Tangents', certainly not in plot or treatment. Both stories have a passing similarity to Padgett's 'Mimsy Were the Borogoves', even earlier. I have deliberately ripped off ideas in Rudy Rucker's **The Fourth Dimension**, but Rudy does not seem displeased; indeed, he's putting together a new anthology of math stories and is including 'Tangents', although, as he says (I paraphrase), 'Boy, you really did steal a lot from me, didn't you?'

"In short, Ms. Morland-Chapman, when I steal from someone, I let them know about it, and my charm is such that they immediately offer to reprint me.

"Thank you for the support for **Blood Music**. I'm really a very sweet guy, and hate lawyers and legal complications; I will not sue Ms. Morland-Chapman.

"By the way, by the time this letter sees print, I will be a father myself, and I will try to teach our child to see into the fourth dimension. Progress reports will follow. If my letters no longer carry stamps or postmarks...."

[A letter from Marise M-C, which I have brilliantly lost, conveyed that the Clifton story was indeed the one. She is apologetic about this mistake, but not apparently about anything else. So it goes. DRL]

Barry Bayley: "I promised to send you a note about Doubleday's constipated attitude towards reversion.... In April 1985 I -- through my agent -- made a formal request to them for reversion of **The Soul of the Robot**, published in 1974 and long out of print, after Doubleday had turned down its sequel **The Rod of Light**. They at first promised to revert or arrange to reissue within six months -- until someone looked at the contract and saw that Dumbo Bayley had allowed himself to get stuck with reversion 'by mutual agreement' -- virtually not a reversion clause at all. Doubleday then began to shilly-shally and to plead the lengthiness and difficulty of the reversion process. To date -- a year and a half after request -- the successive efforts of two agencies have come to naught. If there are any other authors as dim as me (which I doubt) I urge them not to be lazy over this clause...."

Ahrvid Engholm: "The Scandinavian SF Association (Sweden's BSFA) was mentioned in the Swedish daily **Aftonbladet** (second biggest evening paper here, with 500,000 readers) in a 2-page article about space/UFO clubs. SF activity was described as just another kind of UFOlogy. Quote: different space organizations have had ideological fights amongst each other. The SF people think the UFOlogists crazy when they see green men everywhere. The UFOlogists think SF is for dreamers -- while they do something practical and useful...." [Now you know.]

Marcus Rowland: "The Irish games mag **Fantasy Chronicles** has begun to pay contributors. The money is OK, though apparently all future payments will be in Irish punts.... Although it looks a bit naff at present, the editors seem fairly certain that they can make it to at least issue 8-10 (the next will be 4), and say they intend a lot of improvements, like a Brian Lumley special issue (yet another one). All of their fiction to date has been uniformly lousy.... By the way, Nick [Lowe, in **A46**] is wrong to say that it's only post-modernist authors who manifest the plot directly. One of the 1930s Saint stories (I forget which) has the hero saying something like 'You can't kill us yet, this is only page 96 -- it would wreck everything if I got killed in the first story!'"

[Marcus has been busy introducing himself (overtly) into a

plot in the role of God, as prescribed by Nick. His enthusiasm was somewhat dimmed by the discovery of the same ploy in a Lin Carter epic: it is not always cheering to find one's imagination runs precisely parallel to Lin Carter's. For the Saint book, try **The Holy Terror**, 1932. My favourite such line comes from the car chase in Edmund Crispin's 1946 **The Moving Toyshop**: "Let's go left... After all, Gollancz is publishing this book..."]

U.E.: "Do any of your tens of thousands of readers know of any publisher who would be interested in a pornographic F/F gamebook (and no, the F/F does not stand for Fighting Fantasy but something more relevant)? Also (but more respectable this time) a publisher for an educational gamebook, about the dangers of drug abuse...."

[Funny you should mention it: a filthy gamebook was one of several million ideas propounded by Langford and Barnett when trying to extract lucrative contracts from a kindly editor. This editor was not keen, since although the proposal was of course brilliant, hilarious, etc., he had his doubts about gamebooks in general: a bandwagon market, he opined, as with home computer books just a few years back, liable to fall apart under the sheer weight of new hopefuls leaping aboard. So much for my own experience: I flogged a short version to **Mayfair** and Paul did ditto to **Knave**, and there the matter rests in post-coital apathy.]

C.O.A.

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13TH FRENCH NATIONAL SF CONVENTION (Lille, 3-7 Sept 86)

Ian Watson reports:

This was the best run French con for years, with the organizers pulling out all the stops of efficiency and hospitality, and even going without their own meals at times to labour harder -- missing out on meals is a pretty remarkable sacrifice in France! Already there's talk of Lille becoming the new Metz, now that the annual Metz festival has bitten the dust, assisted a bit by Ray Bradbury. Indeed the con was so efficient that the GoH speeches of Watson and Brunner were already printed, in French and English, and in the hands of the audiences. Fortunately most listeners hadn't had time to read them, so the speakers were able to orate afresh. Programme items included panels on French and British SF, book signings, exhibitions, prize givings, municipal champagne and lots of visits to restaurants, the most memorable of which

involved sitting in the street eating bushels of mussels. (Tip: use one empty mussel as a chopstick-cum-scoop to empty all the others.)

The con coincided with Lille's annual city-wide rummage sale called the Braderie, when anyone can sell anything tax free -- hundreds of streets for miles on end were choked with half of France and Belgium selling Land Rovers, antiques, African carvings, food, jewellery, clothes, books, paintings, junk, rubbish, broken china, old postcards.... Just a couple of miles from the old city (where the con happened) was the very strange "Site de l'Imaginaire", described as a sort of French Disneyland. Superficially it seemed to be a warehouse cum arts lab down a back lane, offering spatio-temporal voyages, which most visitors assumed would be a dadaist joke... until you started in, somewhere underground apparently, on an alien world very convincingly like the planet where "Alien" gets discovered. The alienness was very persuasive. If you're in Lille, go there: 12 Rue de Doceur Rouz, 59650 Villeneuve D'Ascq. I think you have to book a group tour.

Another memorable moment was the convention's pet rat wandering up and down the restaurant tables, a charming and polite animal that would only take food when offered. Numerous wonderful French writers, illustrators and translators attended, and there was a presentation for what will be one of the cons of next year: Comecon Montpellier 87 (28-31 May), held in the southern city of Montpellier, which has declared itself a city of the future and is thus supporting the con to the hilt. (Contact: "Science-Fictions", Comecon, 112 avenue de Toulouse, 34100 Montpellier, France.) Try it out -- and if Lille runs another con, head there too; Lille's close, and the Belgian (and northern French) beer is beautiful.

One star of Lille was Kim Stanley Robinson, there from Switzerland with amiable Lisa Nowell (who's working for the Swiss Gov as a water pollution chemist for a couple of years, which is how Stan's in Switzerland). A radical-thinking American writer! Delightful chap too; only just being published in France, but at the rate he's picking up French and using it, he should soon be the American writer for the French. Sadly he had to miss out on the mussels to take part in a baseball game with local Swiss devotees.... [IW]

SKIFFY PEOPLE

Leigh Kennedy has just been mugged and robbed during a visit to Madrid, and rescued from dishwashing only by the heroic mercy dash of **Chris Priest**.... **Brian Stableford** (engaged for some months to **Jane**, whose surname I have yet to catch) left Unicorn in mild disorder, baffled by the apparent hostility of **GoH Tanith Lee** ("I've only reviewed her once and it was favourable").... **David Brin**, winner of the John W.Campbell Memorial Award for his **The Postman**, will be in Britain for a year and has already been winning hearts by explaining to politically naive British fans (like **Chris Priest**) just why we need lots and lots of US nuclear bases here.... **Ian Watson** has been cited in the **New Scientist** letter column, his **The Gardens of Delight** allegedly showing a better grasp of evolutionary theory than one recent **NS** article.... **Charles Platt**, with permission, is writing the sequel to Piers Anthony's **Chthon** and **Phthor**, called **Spasm**. Sorry -- **Plasm**. His enthusiasm for publicizing the latest Platt best-seller (**How To Be A Happy Cat**, ill. Gray Jolliffe) includes volunteering to dress in a giant cat suit and guzzle Kattomeat if it'll help sell copies.... **David Garnett** is proud, or not, of writing "the Christmas sex story which is to appear in the next issue of **Mayfair**, with hero and heroine called Hugo and Nebula".... **Harlan Ellison** has married **Susan Toth**, writes **D.M.Sherwood** (living in Swansea, he hears all this kind of thing).... **Vincent Omniaveritas**, visiting Britain to attend Milford under a transparent cyberpunk pseudonym, published one hit-and-run issue of his SF broadsheet **Cheap Truth**: this features a guest polemic on the need for an "SF Writers of Great Britain" organization, written by an alleged Brit who thinks "critical mass" and "shrapnel" go nicely in the same metaphor. Investigation continues....

A North London mole writes: "Contrary to a report in **Locus** that he had been crushed by a filing cabinet, horror writer **Robert Falcon** is still alive, kicking and working on the outline of a new occult series. All six **Night Hunter** books are being published in the US by Berkley in both trade and mass paperback. The sixth volume, **The Labyrinth**, will be pub-

lished by Century Hutchinson in March 1987, together with a reissue in two volumes of the previous books. Faulcon is allowing the pseudonym "Robert Holdstock" to appear on this sixth and final volume. All six books are very popular in Norway, but with titles like **Undskapanes Natt**, **Morkets Fyrstinne** and **Gravens Forbannelse**, this is hardly surprising."

Ted White, as you may have heard, was busted some months ago for dealing in herbal substances. After a "farewell appearance" at the Worldcon (which brought some strange support from the woodwork, eg. Jerry Pournelle begging to know how he could help), Ted was sentenced to 30 years -- or rather, 3 concurrent 10-year stretches -- but with 9 of each suspended. He should in fact be out in January; meanwhile, the address is "Theodore White, A5, Fairfax County Adult Detention Center, 10520 Judicial Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030, USA". Personal letters are OK; no fanzines; no books unless mailed directly from the publisher. Patrick & Teresa Nielsen Hayden are acting as agents (as it were) for the White Letters From Prison, which may or may not become the fannish **De Profundis**. The first begins with the most damning thing the prosecution found to say about him: "This man has a sixties mentality."

R.I.P.

Marjorie Brunner died on 5 August aged 65, having been ill throughout the summer after a stroke in April. Fandom loses one of its more unforgettable characters. John Brunner plans to hold a commemorative "Marjorie's Last Birthday Party".

Rob Gregg, a relatively new fan best known as an enthusiastic letter-writer, died on 29 September after a long illness. His sister asks you all to stop sending fanzines.

Author **Robert F. Young** (some of whose short stories helped hook me on less-than-hard SF) died on 22 June aged 71. [SFC]

Rex Warner of The Aerodrome fame died on 24 June aged 81.

And last issue I forgot to mention **Jorge Luis Borges**, the biggest shock about whose death at 86 was to learn from the obituaries that he never received a Nobel Prize. Good grief. One correction: the autopsy on **Rog Gilbert** finally decided on a heart attack as cause of death.

CONDOM

Novacon 16: too late now for thrilling advance coverage, but I have a longish letter from Chairman Tony Berry (as well as dark intimations from Rog Peyton) concerning my frightful gaffe of recording in **A46** what many fans were saying. Tony's chief point: it was essential, both as general policy and to placate a suspicious and paranoid hotel, to take a hard line re "the tossers who did the damage and behaved like morons" at Novacon 15. Agreed. The trouble was that the uncompromising stuff ("In all these cases the committee will back the hotel.") was by an error of judgement extended to cover normal fannish naughtiness such as sneaking in bottles for a room party... hence the disaffected muttering. "I know full well that people will do the things mentioned above, and it's fine by me as long as they are **discreet** about it," noted Tony, a truly wonderful human being (see DRL cowed by Peytonian threats of overwhelming COFF victory) who unfortunately failed to convey this subtext in PR1. Hotels are traditionally soothed by an unobtrusive note about corkage and the like. It would have been wise to clearly separate such lesser matters from the Heavy Warning which was seriously meant. OK?

"Star Wars: SF Dimensions" (North East London Poly Conf. Centre, 15 Nov): Duncan Lunan chairs an SF Foundation debate on SDI, with for-and-against arguments plus skiffy aspects. £10 att, inc. elevenses, lunch, tea. NELP, Longbridge Rd, Dagenham, Essex, RM8 2AS, more info Ellis Hillman on 01 590 7722 x4181. With D.Brin, F.Lyall, A.Nimmo, N.Turok, G.Webb.

Conception (Queen's Hotel, Leeds, 13-15 Feb): still £6 to 12 Fearnville Tce, Oakwood, Leeds, LS8 3DU.

Corflu 4 (Cincinnati area, 3-5 April): Bill Bowers is running the latest of these popular US "cons for fanzine fans". Cheques, or checks, to him (not "Corflu"): \$5.25 supp \$25.25 att, 2468 Harrison Ave, Cincinnati, OH 45211, USA.

Beccon '87 (Metropole/NEC, Birmingham, 17-21 April): FGOH (joint) Chris Atkinson & Malcolm Edwards. PR2 should be out by now. Hotel: £17.50/person double/twin, £18.50 single. £6 supp £11 att; 191 The Heights, Northolt, Middlesex, UB5 4BU.

Sol III (Liverpool, 1-4 May, Trekthing): info from 39 Dersingham Ave, London, E12 5QF.

Connote8 aka Unicon 8 (New Hall, Cambridge, 3-5 July): GoH

Geraldine Harris. £4 supp £8 att, to Connote8, Trinity College, Cambridge, CB2 1TQ.

Conspiracy '87 (Brighton, 27 Aug-1 Sept, Worldcon) develops a longer guest-list every day: the latest is Ray Harryhausen, the Jerky Stop-Motion GoH. £10 supp £25 att to PO Box 43, Cambridge, CB1 3JJ. PR2 now out.

Cymrucon (Central Hotel, Cardiff, now Feb 1988) has been oscillating somewhat, reports D.M.Sherwood. "Hotel is asking for money up front (guess why) -- several alternatives have fallen through. It'll almost certainly have to have a new name as the cancelled 1985 one left debts, as in DEBTS, including an unknown number of advance memberships (the old chairman, not on the new committee, has misplaced the records. If people still have receipts for payment **maybe** something can be done as to membership in the new con...). Contact man is Tony McCarthy, 28 Claude Rd, Cardiff, tel Cardiff 493590."

Follycon '88 (Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool) is one bid for the 1988 UK Eastercon. £1 pre-supporting to 104 Pretoria Road, Patchway, Bristol, BS12 5P2.

Norwescon '88 (unspecified hotel, Manchester) is the other bid, from the Warrington Group. £2 (such is inflation) pre-supply to 22 Summerfield Drive, Middleton, Lancs, M24 2WU.

Albacon '88 (?Central Hotel, Glasgow, July) -- started as a Eurocon bid but is supposed to be going ahead (info: 105 Craigton Rd, Govan, Glasgow, G51 3RQ), though Eurocon turned out to be:

Eurocon '88 (Budapest, date uncertain): info Hungarian SF Soc, PO Box 514, H-1374 Budapest 5, Hungary. The selection is apparently a bit controversial, thanks to disastrous communications within the European SF Society (see **Shards of Babel**, which also notes that Poland is after Eurocon 1990): for a start, after '86 in Zagreb, Eurocon should theoretically be rotating to the west....

Nolacon II (New Orleans, 1-5 September 1988, Worldcon): GoH Donald Wellheim, FGOH Roger (who he?) Simms, Toaster Mike Resnick. \$30 supp \$35 att to PO Box 8010, New Orleans, Louisiana 70192, USA.

Noreascon III (Sheraton-Boston Hotel, 31 Aug-4 Sept 1989, Worldcon), GoH to follow. \$20 supp \$40 att to PO Box 46, MIT Branch Office, Cambridge, MA 02139, USA.

Holland in 1990 (The Hague, Worldcon bid): **Ansible** is still keen on this, having been thoroughly intimidated by the clever clogs of Larry van der Putte. £3.50/\$5 pre-supply; Postbus 95370, 2509 CJ The Hague, Netherlands.

Footnote for the confused: "Supp" means supporting (you get the literature only) and "att" attending membership (you can go to the con too). Cheques should be made out to the boldfaced con name (Cymrucon might be an exception: check first). "GoH" stands for Generator of Hackwork, and the F in "FGoH" is for "Failed". OK?

WOOSTERGRAM

Thomas Disch has been in the news quite a bit lately. Not only did he reveal to the **Washington Post** that the model for "The Brave Little Toaster" was in fact the toaster in his apartment, but he granted a fifty-page interview to **Last Wave** in which he cast vile accusations at the works of Jack L. Chalker. Disch charged that Chalker's books were designed to corrupt children: "he writes books that are sort of training grounds for nine and ten year olds to move on to Gor novels. They're preliminary S&M fantasies. You go on from reading Jack Chalker to being more thoroughly corrupted by a John Norman and then go on to rape children." Disch did not give specific examples.

Arthur C. Clarke unravelled his mind in the pages of **Playboy**, and quite a mind it was. He revealed that the monolith of 2001/2010 was nothing more than a plot coupon: "I like to think of the monolith as a sort of cosmic Swiss army knife -- it does whatever it wants to do." Clarke sidestepped disgusting charges about his sexual preferences, except to note that, in his eyes, both **Imperial Earth** and **Rezdevous with Rama** were homosexually-oriented novels, and that he has a "relaxed sympathetic attitude" towards bisexuality. "I'm not just a private citizen any more," Clarke said. "I have to keep certain standards, or at least pretend to, so that I don't shock too many people."

Peter Dickinson became the first British fantasist ever to become the hero of an American cartoon when his **The Flight of Dragons** was adapted by the same crew that had previously

turned Tolkien into cartoon fodder. The film was so bad that it was shown three years after it was made, but there was a perverse thrill in hearing James Earl Jones, who played the villain, saying "Peter Dickinson! That contemptible fool!" in his best Darth Vader tones. (Dickinson was played by John Ritter. The show also featured characters from Gordon Dickson's **The Dragon and the George.**) [Martin Morse Wooster]

ALL THE NEWS YOU'VE READ ELSEWHERE

After 46 issues there are still people who expect **Ansible** to contain news, however boring, familiar or outdated, and we must try to indulge their pathetic delusion. Thus:

Hugos: **NOVEL Ender's Game** (Card), **NOVELLA** "24 Views of Mt Guji, by Hokusai" (Zelazny), **NOVELETTE** "Paladin of the Lost Hour" (Ellison), **SHORT** "Fermi and Frost" (Pohl), **NONFICTION** **Science Made Stupid** (Weller), **DRAMATIC** **Back to the Future** (but much applause for **Brazil**), **PRO EDITOR** Judy-Lynn del Rey (refused on her behalf by Lester del Rey, via a letter whose gist was that she was not keen on awards given chiefly for having died, and wouldn't have fancied this belated accolade, seeing the voters had never thought her worthy when alive. In the audience, a deeply impressed Greg Pickersgill cried "Fucking integrity!" -- this remark bowdlerized in certain reports...), **PRO ARTIST** Michael Whelan (who withdrew from the 1987 Hugo race but not others to follow), **FAN ARTIST** Joan Hanke-Woods, **SEMIPROZINE** **Locus**, **FANZINE** **Lan's Lantern** (interesting statistic: "No Award" dominated the first count, only to fall back during the Australian-ballot elimination system and wind up in second place), **FANWRITER** Mike Glycer, **JOHN W CAMPBELL AWARD** (not a Hugo) Melissa Scott.

Australian SF Review has risen from its grave and is now published bimonthly: solid SF criticism in the heavyish **Foundation** mode, leavened with a bit more fun: "The Long Words objectors are just blatantly lengthist. **ASFR** defies them, rejecting their prejudice. Where a long word works better than a short one, nobody scares us out of using it." £5 for six issues, to sesquipedalian UK agent Joseph Nicholas, 22 Denbigh St, Pimlico, London, SW1V 2ER.

World Fantasy Awards will have been presented by the time most of you see this, so I'll merely mention the nominations for best novel: **The Damnation Game** (Barker), **Illywhacker** (Carey), **The Dream Years** (Goldstein), **Winterking** (Hazel), **The Vampire Lestat** (Rice), **Song of Kali** (Simmons). Brits will be chauvinistically pleased that Peter Dickinson's "Flight" is nominated in the Novella category, and both Clive Barker and Angela Carter under "Collection/Anthology".

Eduard Markov is a Soviet SF author and fan who wants to move to the West but since 1979 has been denied permission on trivial grounds. He's asked for help, and the flyer going the rounds suggests that you write (urging the USSR to relent) to Leonid Zamyatin, Ambassador, Soviet Embassy, 18 Kensington Palace Gardens, London, W.8. For the flyer with further suggestions, contact Dov Rigal, 68 Eden Rd, London, E17 9JY.

British Fantasy Awards presented at Fantasycon XI went to: **NOVEL** **The Ceremonies** (Klein) -- couldn't finish it, myself; **SHORT** "The Forbidden" (Barker), **SMALL PRESS** **Fantasy Tales**, **FILM** **A Nightmare On Elm Street**, **ARTIST** J.K.Potter.

Les Flood has retired and passed the reins of the mighty Carnell Literary Agency to **Pamela Buckmaster**: the retirement occasioned a special Fantasycon award and a presentation at the SF Supper Club.

Transatlantic Cultural Barriers! Dennis Virzi published an "Open Letter to British Fandom" in **Texas SF Inquirer**, begging to be told more about the grim alien land ("Are you Britfen as murky, downbeat and gloomy as your SF?") he means to visit next year. Some people got quite excited about his queries, and Kate Solomon (a disciple of Gerard "Try the famous echo in the British Museum Reading Room!" Hoffnung) wrote a long "Open Reply". Space and concern for international détente forbid full transcription, but here's the Solomonic response to Dennis's worried query "**Femefans**. What's the scoop? ...Will there be enough to go around?"

"Judging by the lingo, old chap, this is one you should address to the frogs. But if you're interested in meeting (etc.) **British** ladies, try to remember that your formidable knowledge of meeting (etc.) American women may not guarantee such good fortune with us **British** Memsahibs, despite our boundless admiration for you Stallone-like American hunks. No need to worry about supplies, though; there are certainly

'enough to go round': indeed, every machofan in this country possesses several 'Memsahibfen', so if you ask him nicely he might lend or sell one of us to you for the night. However, if you're serious about extending your conquests to this side of the Atlantic, you must study and understand certain cultural differences between your American women and ourselves, before attempting seduction. Most importantly, you must realize that namby-pamby radical feminism hasn't yet achieved the stronghold on British ladies that it has on your own American harpies. So yes, Mr Virzi, you are expected to pay for meals. Also drinks, taxis, tips and entrance fees for any sightseeing you may do together. [...] Many British ladies have a soft spot for you hunky Texan Rambos, so provided you can prove yourself to be truly masculine, you should have no problems. Most of us female fans, however, are lesbians (not 'gay' -- British ladies never adopt such uncouth labels), so you should be discreet before attempting any kind of advance. It's understood that British Memsahibfen who are so inclined wear spectacles, so direct your flowers and chocolates at those of us who don't. For an easy mnemonic, remember that 'Boys Don't Make Passes at Girls Who Wear Glasses', and you should get on beautifully." [Kate Solomon]

Mr Virzi (last seen poised to marry **TSFE** editor Pat Mueller) is reported to have withdrawn this particular query.

INFINITELY IMPROBABLE

Past Cons: I dimly remember **Koancon** over August Bank Holiday, a games event which successfully tried to shift from the "Compulsory D&D Tournament" approach to something more relaxed, not to say newted: to increase the soddenness there were **GoH** talks from Pete Tamlyn and, inexplicably, me. Hadn't realized my SF column in **White Dwarf** made me a Representative Of The Industry... like being Maggie Thatcher's rep at a CND rally. The fannish **Rubicon** overlapped, but we arrived in time to try not to hear resurrected fan Ken Potter bellowing about astrology, while fastidious Julian Headlong (suave founder of Club Class Fandom) spoke tremulously of sharing a room with D.M. Sherwood ("I could cope with finding Ken Potter and bits of corned beef on the floor, and even the cold baked beans in the bath; but when I found beans in the toothglass I had to vomit..."). **Sheepcon**, already alluded to, had as its high spot a Welsh Banquet in a historical cottage up a blasted mountainside. Climbing the granite-strewn grass-track from Ffestiniog, Katie Hoare was momentarily less proud of her open-topped car, thanks to thickening twilight and torrential rain: in the car ahead, Martin kept having to get out and open gates, leading to outbursts of wifely compassion ("God, I'm so glad he's getting wet too!"). Our wine-soaked return was more exhilarating, with sheep clogging the track and being dislodged only by stentorian cries of "Mint sauce!"

Spinal Manipulations: I've been idly staring at the spines of Gollancz's eight "Classic SF" reissues. Each has a tasteful logo comprising the quoted phrase in a triangle... but one logo is extra-large, coincidentally adorning the only British selection to date (Clarke's **The City and the Stars**). Can we theorize that American authors get smaller logos? Well, one logo is extra-small -- on **Wolfbane**, the only choice which has two American authors....

Language Lessons: Malcolm Hodkin rushes to relieve the shortage with "another precision-turned, durable and cost-effective word from the Germans (guaranteed for five years against rust, Americanisms, misspelling and body odour):

"Ansatz, m. ear, lug, projection (anode), deposit, incrustation, sediment, attachment, added piece, shoulder, insertion, ingredient, mixture, scaffold (of a blast furnace), recess, mouthpiece, start, formula, expression, formulation, statement, charge, obstruction, extension, prolongation, tail, run (in series of parallel experiments), side arm or appendage (of a bulb or tube), adapter (phot.), relation, loss, nipple, setting into action, sending into battle, estimate, evaluation, rate, price, quotation, wing, root, bulge, sortie, assumption, disposition, arrangement, article, method...." [enough!]

Nigel Frith, Reanimator! Unwin author Frith got a letter into the **Literary Review**, making "a claim which might be investigated by your critical or followed by your authorial readers." It concerns his epic fantasies: "obviously the work of more than a decade of research and experiment. They have been completed in isolation from the modern literary world,

and I am aware that they reverse the processes of 19th and 20th century artistic fashions.... I have re-established the Homeric epic as a living form... a new way for literature to develop has consequently been opened." Don't all rush, now.

Novacon Trends: Steve Green notes that Novacon 15's chair (Phill Probert) resigned during the convention, N16's first chair (Martin Tudor) resigned after the formation of the committee, and N17's putative chair (Maureen Porter) has outdone them both by resigning before the committee was finalized. Anyone wishing to carry it further by resigning in advance from the Novacon 18 chair should write to the Bureau of Useless Statistics, Birmingham....

Small Press Cuttings: Kerosina have come out with **Shades of Darkness**, a ghostly 144pp novel by Richard Cowper (and winner of a coveted Malcolm Edwards Rejection Note from RC's usual publisher): £10.95 hardback from Plovers Barrow, School Road, Nomansland, Salisbury, Wilts, SP5 2BY. A Keith Roberts novel, **Grainne**, follows next Easter.... In Sweden, LFP (Laissez Faire Press) offer **Fandom Harvest**, a 191pp hardback collection of Terry Carr's fanwriting -- enjoyable stuff despite the misprints, well produced and illustrated (by Grant Canfield). To get hold of it, send \$16, plus say \$2 postage, to John-Henri Holmberg at LFP, Rasundvägen 129, 171 30 Solna, Sweden. (My pleas for a sterling price were in vain.)

Fan Funds: The **GUFF** race (bring an Australian to Conspiracy) is in full thing: Valma Brown, Irwin Hirsh and Jean Weber are the candidates, and fans at this end of the world should rush their ballots and £1 voting fees to Eve Harvey, 43 Harrow Road, Carshalton, Surrey, SM5 3QH, by 31 January. **Anible** is divided: the Hazel's Language Lessons Dept supports Valma, doubtless hoping for samples of authentic Strine, while the Subscription/Mailing Dept cannot but respond to Irwin's heartfelt plea ("Support me or I lose all the Aussie copies."). Meanwhile Tim Jones of New Zealand offers himself as a write-in candidate.... **DUFF** is also back on the road, with candidates Lucy Huntzinger, Kathy Sanders, Lauraine Tutihasi and Tom Whitmore contending for the trip from America to Australia next year. There's no UK administrator: the closest are Marty & Robbie Cantor, 11565 Archwood, N.Hollywood, CA 91606, USA. \$2 voting fee, 31 Dec deadline.... **SEFF** wants nominations for the lucky Swede to be brought to Conspiracy next year -- administrators are Jim Barker and 1986 winner Maths Claesson (c/o Björck, Saltmätarg 14, 113 59 Stockholm, Sweden).... **COFF**, the Concrete Overcoat Fan Fund, will cease at Novacon 16 after its final sense-shattering presentation: "The fix is in!" said an unnamed administrator with many a significant nudge and wink.... **TAFF** has gained a further candidate, Bob Lichtman: ballots should be out soon, and voting will continue until 14 March. More in our next.

Puzzle Corner. Which **Vector** editor slagged a "Witch World" book thus in 1974: "I never get on with any of [Andre] Norton's books, which I find turgid in the extreme"? Which Gollancz editor is launching a new paperback imprint beginning

with three Andre Norton epics, two of them from the "Witch World" series? Could they be related?

The Moral: So much (last para) for your typical **Anible** twitting. It does not follow that the apparent contradiction (in fact one needn't like a book to think it a sound investment) brands Malcolm as a wicked hypocrite. He might even have changed his mind. Nevertheless there is a pissy school of fannish thought which favoured us with a great deal of such logic in 1984-5, and is now at it again. (It was no good my asking to be removed from Puerto Rican mailing lists -- the crap still comes, via Cincinnati.) Maybe the new target, Greg Pickersgill, is indeed a despicable exemplar of hypocrisy, criticizing TAFF in 1981 and winning it in 1986. It depends whether you accept the hypothesis, so useful when scoring cheap debating points, that there can never be any non-reprehensible reason for changing your mind.

Barycz Mediates Again: "My imaginary polish-viking grandmother once told me there were three trades it was very hard to go bust in: they were midwifery, cookery and undertaking. A few years ago she added a fourth: having producer's gross points in **Stars Wars**. Gary Kurtz had them and has now ended up with assets of £100 and liabilities of £3.3M. The reasons are simple enough -- a Californian divorce which involved him paying off his wife's debts, a small matter of \$5M from her publishing company; she screwed him for what was left and he made **Dark Crystal** and **Return to Oz**, neither of which set fire to cinema screens around the world. An impulse to set up something on the lines of Kurtz Aid comes now and then....

"A suspicion that Ballard's **Empire of the Sun** has been thrown into the Hollywood equivalent of a black hole, viz it is talked of as a Steven Spielberg project. Since Stevie, if one believes all the stories, is booked dead solid to 2870 AD with other projects, is this a polite way of saying the film is not likely to be made at all? Ho hum.

"The ubiquitous Empire Films are busy with something called **Robojox**, script by Joe Haldeman, all about these huge robotic war machines that can transform to fight on land, in air, on and in the sea etc., fighting nations' wars by proxy. Espionage and romance also to be thrown in and Kenner Toys to do the merchandising with yet another bleeding line of transforming robots...." [R13]

Licence To Print... LA-CON/SCIFI has donated \$2000 to buy a photocopier for Vin Clarke's UK fanzine library project!

Great Moments In Hard SF (or, The R.L.Fanthorpe Plot Device Is Not Dead). Context: a slothful doomsday weapon must fire away for 150 years to make Earth uninhabitable. Now read on, as one astute villain sees a potential difficulty:

"...What if you turn on the W-particle flow and then someone else turns it down in the course of the next fifteen decades?"

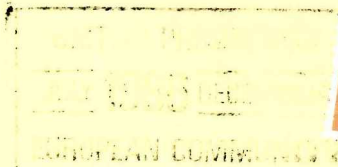
"Not possible, sir. Once the device is set, an internal atomic shift will freeze it in that position. After that, the process is irreversible...." [I.Asimov, **Robots and Empire**]

ANSIBLE



HAZEL'S LANGUAGE LESSONS: Advanced Welsh

tacsi public conveyance
bus larger public conveyance
cwrw golff place of recreation
club snwcer smaller place of recreation



OK to issue 51

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