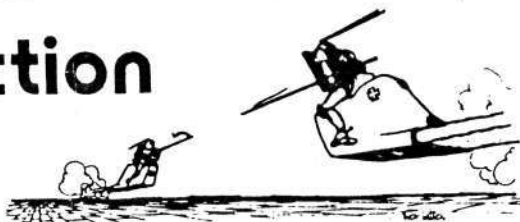


Birmingham Science Fiction Group

(Honorary Presidents: Brian W. Aldiss
and Harry Harrison)



Number 151 MARCH 1984



THE BIRMINGHAM SCIENCE FICTION
GROUP NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 151

MARCH 1984

Editorial address: Graham R. Poole, 86 Berwood Farm Road,
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utors to whom all rights revert upon publication.

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arily reflect the opinions of the Committee or the Group.

The Newsletter is published once a month and is distributed to
all members of the Birmingham Science Fiction Group. Membership
rates are £5 per person or £7.50 for two people at the same
address. The treasurer is Stan Eling, 124 Galton Road, Smeth-
wick, Warley, West Midlands, B67 5JS to whom all membership
fees should be sent.

The Birmingham Science Fiction Group has its formal meeting on
the third Friday of each month in the New Imperial Hotel in
Temple Street, Birmingham City Centre. There is also an in-
formal meeting on the first Tuesday of each month at the General
Wolfe pub, on the corner of Aston Road and Holt Street (near
Aston University and the science park). Newcomers are always
welcome

THE EDITORIAL

Hi! As you may have gathered from last month's Newsletter
Eunice Pearson has had to step down as editor for personal
reasons which means that I'm the hapless one who's inherited
the task of cajoling, demanding and threatening articles and
artwork out of you. Then I have to stay up all night typing
and trying to put it all together in some semblance of a half-
way decent magazine
ible minute before
time for the next
think I volunteered

at the last poss-
mailing it out in
meeting. And to
for this task!

I would like to thank
her hard work for
past and also to Phil
also stood down as a
A slight reshuffle
my move from
newsletter editor
has been opted onto
to take the treas-
Our thanks to Stan
the rescue!



Eunice for all
the Group in the
Probert who has
Committee Member.
has followed with
treasurer to
and Stan Eling
the Committee
urers post.
for coming to

Whilst on the subject of thanksgiving I wish to extend my
gratitude to all the contributors this issue, especially to

Martin Tudor for providing his longest ever fanzine/magazine contribution (and I had to retype it all too!), to John Dell who provided most of the artwork, to Cath if I receive her strip and APA-B News in time, to Pete Weston our illustrious chairman for details of the forthcoming meeting, to Paul Vincent and Steve Green for their births and deaths column conceived, laboured over and finally extractrated with forceps over several pints of beer at a General Wolfe informal meeting, Thanks also to all others who contributed, some of which may or may not appear in this issue depending on time pressures and last minute emergencies. If there isn't a book review column in this issue, don't worry, I'm not against them - next issue will see a bumper number, fingers crossed. Please keep the contributions flowing. Especially welcome would be letters letting me know what you think of the Group, life, the universe and the newsletter. I wish to promote an active letter column and hope that you can all play a part in expanding the interest of the Newsletter.

Talking of letters we had a letter from last month's speaker Malcolm Edwards. Yes, for all of you who played the game of who's the speaker? Malcolm? Malcolm who. Oh, Atkinson. No, it was Malcolm Edwards. Apparently he enjoyed the trip very much despite a little shyness at public speaking and I must admit that I found the evening very interesting too. For example, did you know that DUNE in the first three years of publication only sold 20,000 copies but has now sold over half a million. The most successful Gollancz book last year was Herbert's LAZARUS EFFECT closely followed by Mary Gentle's GOLDEN WITCHBREED, a first novel from her. And did you know... no, why should I tell you. If you don't do so already come along to the meetings and find out for yourselves. Anyway, thanks Malcolm and also thanks for the donation of 900+ pages of DUNE HERETIC manuscript which fetched £6 in a quick auction.

Whilst I think of it, and since I had a brief stint at being treasurer, a number of you have allowed your memberships to lapse. If this is the case please renew immediately and ensure that you'll continue to receive this Newsletter every month and so keep in touch with the Group's activities. On the bottom of this page I have indicated your membership status. If you think it is incorrect please contact me or Stan Eling as soon as possible.

I hope to see you all on Friday 16th March at the New Imperial Hotel for our quiz.

Graham

YOUR MEMBERSHIP HAS LAPSED. PLEASE RENEW	YOUR MEMBERSHIP EXPIRES THIS MONTH PLEASE RENEW	YOUR MEMBERSHIP IS CURRENT AND EXPIRES IN

I've got some weighty matters to talk about this month in connection with the future of the apa and its relationship to the BSFG.

Basically, questions have been asked in committee (or so my spies tell me) about apa-B expenditure and what on earth is this £28 which is supposed to have been spent on it over the last six months? I haven't done all the sums yet, but it appears to be a bit of an overestimate as to the degree we were supported. I'll have a complete breakdown ready for the next newsletter, but our outgoings usually consist of second class postage to send mailings to contributors living outside the Birmingham area, photocopying of the occasional flyer, and a one off expenditure on card files which were to contain each mailing given to contributors.

Now, if you remember, in the AGM before last there was a projection for 1983 expenditure by apa-B and it was budgeted as £50. No-one raised any objection at the time, but I'm told at the last AGM someone queried the actual expenditure for 1983, viz. '£28'. As I said last time, I don't have a committee post or any executive powers, and if an allocation is made for the apa for a coming year, it really isn't fair for people to come along at the next AGM and complain about spending. I can only go on the mandate I'm given at the previous AGM for the following year, and that AGM is the time and place to raise objections if you feel it wrong to spend money on apa-B.

Alright then, what are the alternatives and consequences of spending BSFG money on apa-B? Well, if we receive no funding we won't be able to post apa-B mailings to contributors (all BSFG members) who live outside the Birmingham area. It's been suggested that an additional fee be charged to these people to enable us to send them their mailings, but I'm very uncomfortable with that idea because it creates a two tier system where certain BSFG members are penalised for not living within easy reach of Birmingham. And also remember that those people have already paid their membership fee to BSFG funds which in turn support the apa. Should they be asked to pay twice?

If you consider the example of the Womens Periodical, many contributors live in London and have the mailing handed to them, but they still pay the £7 subscription which pays for postage to more distant contributors. No apa I know of has a discriminatory membership system. The other point to bear in mind is that some of our best writers are those who need their mailings sent to them. If we lose funding we also lose these people, and at the moment apa-B can't afford to lose anyone. In such a situation I don't see that we could remain associated with the BSFG and still survive. The only alternative would be to disassociate apa-B from the BSFG completely, open up membership to fandom in general, and charge a membership fee. This would have the advantage that we would be independent of possibly precarious funding from the BSFG, we could attract a wider range of good writers (who may not be BSFG members), and possibly establish a better liaison with the rest of British fanzine fandom. We don't seem to be particularly well regarded at the moment.

If we did become independent I'd propose for the moment limiting membership to twenty as in this way we could keep the membership fee to a reasonable amount. We already have 14 members, ten of whom attend meetings regularly and are thus able to pick up their mailings, and so even with the worst case of the other 6 living outside the local area, we'd be able to keep the postage costs to a minimum. With a postage of 21p per mailing this would work out to be about £1.50 per member, and I'd imagine not more than £2 at most.

I'll be putting out a ballot form with the next mailing and I'd appreciate it if you'd fill them in and return them to me at the meeting. If you won't be able to attend the meeting, your voting form will be sent to you with your mailing.

And that's really all I've got to say for the moment. A rather serious apa-B news this time around I'm afraid, but we're in uncertain times.

Love,

Cath

PS: Thank you Eunice for all the hard work you put in on the newsletters, we'll miss you. (And welcome, Maureen Porter, to apa-B).



THE JOPHAN REPORT

First thing this month is the news that the results are in on both the GUFF and SEFF races for this year. A word of explanation is probably needed for those of you who have never heard of these illustrious institutions. GUFF, the Get Up-and-Over Fan Fund, was created to, on alternate years, bring an Australian fan to the British Eastercon and send a British fan to an Australian con. This year the race was northbound and so JUSTIN ACKROYD will be flying from Australia to attend this years Eastercon - SEACON '84. SEFF is the more recently created Scandinavian-European Fan Fund which will this year be sending the winner - DAVID NESSLE from Sweden, to this years joint EURO/EASTERCON, the very same SEACON '84. (If you haven't registered yet please do so immediately, full details are available elsewhere in this newsletter.) The original Fan Fund, the one and only - TAFF! is still open to votes, (TAFF means the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund and, as is fairly obvious, sends either an American fan to Britain or a British fan to the U.S., okay?). This years race is between ROB HANSEN and D. WEST and the winner will fly to the U.S. to attend the 1984 Worldcon in Los Angeles.

The latest news of last year's Worldcon in Baltimore, CONSTELLATION, is very bad. Although reports vary it would appear that the con has lost at least \$40,000 and maybe even as much as \$69,000! This means, (as TED WHITE points out in his fanzine EGOSCAN 3, available from Ted for the Usual or a couple of international reply coupons...see address below,) that CONSTELLATION is the first Worldcon to lose money since 1956 - when the deficit was somewhere around a thousand dollars. At the moment the concom (the convention committee) are writing to all members of the con as well as attempting to raise cash in various other ways. The question of how they managed to lose so much money when no Worldcon has done so for so long is rather interesting, and it is worth getting a copy of EGOSCAN to read Ted's views on this.

Actually, losing money would appear to be an unfortunate trend amongst U.S. cons at the moment, the well publicised CORFLU - the Fannish Fan's Convention, has also made a loss of around \$900. I hope the British equivalent, this year's MEXICON: TYNECON II are more fortunate financially. (THE MEXICON: registration is £5, to SUE WILLIAMS, 19 Jesmond Dené Road, Jesmond, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, NE2 3QT). Fortunately, by all accounts the notion of a fannish fans cons is in fact ideologically sound as all at CORFLU had a GOOD TIME. The Guest of Honour was drawn from a lottery and although the first winner wasn't

interested (in fact he handed in his badge and went home!) the second winner - PASCAL THOMAS, from France, proved very popular.

Still on the subject of conventions, the BRITAIN IN '87 WORLDCON BID continues to go from strength to strength. With over 160 pre-supporting members already we are, as far as we can tell, ahead of our competitors - Phoenix and San Diego. BUT have YOU sent your £1 to Malcolm Edwards yet? (Address elsewhere in this newsletter). If not don't worry, in an effort to save you wasting your hard earned cash on postage I'll be accepting pre-supporting memberships at the next BSPG meeting. Ask for me.

Now, before I turn into Rog Peyton, I'll stop trying to extort money from you and instead recommend an excellent clubzine called ANVIL, from the BSPG. ANVIL is available for \$5.00 per year or the Usual and it is the clubzine of the BIRMINGHAM SCIENCE FICTION CLUB, ALABAMA, USA. Published "several times a year" it features an excellent fanzine review column by VALERIE MCKNIGHT, some very good book reviews by PATRICK GIBBS, a below average letters column and an interesting editorial. It's a better than average clubzine as well as being a damn good fanzine. Get it.

Closer to home we have the good news and the bad news. First the good news - Birmingham has a new group. (That's Birmingham England for you jet-lagged types!) Due to the popularity of the BSPG Informal Meetings, a new informal ~~drinking~~ SF club has been formed. Called for 'reasons' THE MERCIAN SF TRIANGLE, or the MISFiTs, this group will be meeting to consume vast amounts of real ale and discuss deep and meaningful philosophical questions on the LAST FRIDAY of each month. The first meeting being this month FRIDAY THE 30TH OF MARCH. BE THERE....or you won't know what you missed.... ((The editor here: Might help, Martin if you let people know where the meetings will take place. It's the General Wolfe in Aston, near the University))

Now for the bad news. Some of you have heard of the Obscene Publications Act 1959-64, what you probably haven't heard is how in recent years the Act has been abused to confiscate books dealing with drugs. Since July 1982 the Officers of the Obscene Publications Branch of the Metropolitan Police have carried out themselves, or advised local police, raids on 24



THERE'S SOME MEN HERE. WANNA KNOW
IF YOU'VE GOT ANY COMICS IN THE CELLAR

bookshops and suppliers throughout the country. There are charges in London, Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol and other towns, under the Act. The police still hold over 20,000 books and comics, of some 250 titles. These include Hunter S. Thompson's FEAR AND LOATHING IN LAS VEGAS, Tom Wolfe's ELECTRIC KOOL-AID ACID TEST, William Burrough's JUNKY as well as FAT FREDDY'S CAT and FREAK BROTHERS comics which have sold several million copies since the late 1960's. So what? you may ask. Well, the Director of Public Prosecutions has stated that the forthcoming trial of AIRLIFT BOOKS and KNOCKABOUT COMICS (the main British publisher and importer of 'adults only'

underground comix) is being used as a test case which, if successful will open up the scope of the Act to cover more than purely sexual matters. Now although I don't use drugs or read underground comix I find these developments very worrying. Quite apart from the obvious infringement of our personal liberty, such prosecutions could conceivably spread to SF. Once this precedent is established anything construed by the police as 'drugs-related literature' would be liable to prosecution; Philip K. Dick's A SCANNER DARKLY, VALIS and THE THREE STIGMATA OF PALMER ELDRITCH, are three that spring to mind. If you are as concerned as I am, and would like to help, donations to the KNOCKABOUT COMICS defence fund would be greatly appreciated. (Account No. 7337635 at Lloyds Bank, 32 Oxford Street, London, W1.)

But now on to lighter matters. April should see the launch of Britain's latest apa -- GET STUFFED, THE SOFT TOYS APA. Membership is open to all soft toys with a base in British fandom and full details are available on request and SAE to Big Ears, Pam Wells, 24A, Beech Road, Bowes Park, London, N11 2DA or to the co-administrator Little Weed, Lilian Edwards, 29 Talbot Road, Wembley, Middlesex.

FALKON 85 PR ONE has also just appeared detailing a proposed Eastercon (?) in the Falklands.

1982. Northern fans complain about the arduous journey to Brighton.

1983. Southern fans complain about BR services to Glasgow.

1984. Scottish fans again worry about travelling 500 miles.

1985. FALKON redefines the word remote."

Further details are available from FALKON 85, 38 OUTRAM ROAD, SOUTHSEA, PORTSMOUTH, HANTS.

As I'm now typing desperately late on the evening of the informal meeting at which the Big Bad Newsletter Ed Grapo has insisted I present this column, I'm afraid there isn't time to do more than mention a couple of fanzines received this month.

SONGS QUARTERLY - is a cross between a diaryzine and a review zine. It's produced by PETE PRES-FORD and is available for the Usual from 'TY GWYN', MAXWELL CLOSE, BUCKLEY, CLWYD, NORTH WALES.

MICROWAVE 7 - is an excellent genzine available for the Usual or 3 x 10p stamps, from TERRY HILL, 41 WESTERN ROAD, MAIDSTONE, KENT, ME16 8NE

JUNGLE TALES OF XYSTER - is another interesting genzine, this time with a more personal touch. Probably available for the Usual from DAVE WOOD, 1 PRIARY CLOSE, MARINE HILL, CLEVEDON, AVON, BS21 7QA.

WHIMSEY 2 - a very entertaining personal zine from JEANNE GOMOLL, available for "letters of comment and bad English translations, especially those found in instruction books and on packages." - PO BOX 1624, MADISON, W1 53701-1624, U.S.A.

(The Usual - means promise of a letter of comment, trade, article or artwork)

Now here are the promised addresses:- TED WHITE, EGOSCAN, 1014 N. TUCKAHOE ST., FALLS CHURCH, VA 22046, USA and ANVIL/BSFC, PO BOX 59531, BIRMINGHAM, AL 35259-9531, U.S.A.

This Month

IT'S QUESTION TIME!

Every once in a while the Group actually does get round to talking about science fiction, and never better than in 'Question Time', our version of the popular TV series in which "experts" are invited to field a selection of comments and queries from the floor.

Last year this was one of the most successful of our home-grown evenings, and so for the March meeting we once again invite your participation. Chairman and moderator will be genial Ray Bradbury and the panel consists of undoubted authorities on matters sfnal, comprising Rog Peyton, Vernon Brown, Simon Norburn and well known fan Ann Other.

So let's have your questions for our experts to answer; Has Heinlein lost his touch? What do you think of FOUNDATION'S EDGE? Read any good books lately?

AND AFTERWARDS....

We will hold our January auction, a bit late but all the better for it. This time we don't merely have the usual ~~old~~ old paperbacks, but some really class material too. Clearing out his cupboard, Peter Weston has donated such goodies as the galley proofs and authors' corrections for ANDROMEDA II; an original Eddie Jones colour study for the dust-jacket for RINGWORLD; original artwork for three SPECULATION covers, plus four pasted-up sets of photographs used for the 1972 Speculation photopage supplement (Chessmancon) - your chance to see how a great editor works, fans! (Hoo-ha!). Then there are four limited-edition colour posters printed (by hand) by Kelley and Polly Freas to promote NASA; and a portfolio of 10" x 30" colour posters by Sidney Mead, issued by U.S. Steel.

Other ~~old~~ ~~old~~ veteran members are also believed to be emptying attics for this auction, and may we remind you that ALL CONTRIBUTIONS ARE WELCOME! Our target is to raise at least £50.00 for the Treasury, so let's get at it. Auction master is, of course, good old Rog himself, making his first appearance since we moved to the Imperial venue. Welcome back Rog!

JUST A REMINDER

That the normal April meeting date would clash with the Easter science fiction convention this year, so we are bringing forward the BSFG meeting night by ONE WEEK, to Friday 13th April. (Hope that's not an omen of some sort).

Peter Weston

AND A LATE FLASH....

The remaining items in our visual library will be at the auction, numbering about thirty in all. Whilst there will be a modest reserve price, they will still represent tremendous value for money.

BIRTHS & DEATHS

DEATHS

It was a long time ago, in a bar far, far away, Solihull actually. Amid a mob of disharmonious drunks a weird chemical reaction was taking place, stranger even than life's first bubble in the primeval soup (no, I'm not talking about the first course at the Christmas Party...) Thus came the Solihull Group, and now - three years, 13 fanzines and innumerable hangovers later, I emerge to record its death. No, I'm not crying...it's just that Paul Vincent's poked me in the eye to hijack the spotlight.....

BIRTHS

....and lo, even as the last spark died in the glowing embers of the SSFG funeral pyre, something stirred. Something glistening, mewling. A babe, born from the settling ashes. It emits it's first words - "Gimme a drink!" Ah, truly a misfit born. As befits the birth of this grimy poor man's phoenix, the Christening will be a splendid affair - a celebration of the child's first words. His acolytes intone the ritual rejoinder: "Be there or be Square".

SEACON⁸⁴

THE ANNUAL BRITISH SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION

GUESTS OF HONOUR PIERRE BARBET, WALDEMAR KUMMING,
JOSEF NESVADBA, CHRISTOPHER PRIEST, ROGER ZELAZNY

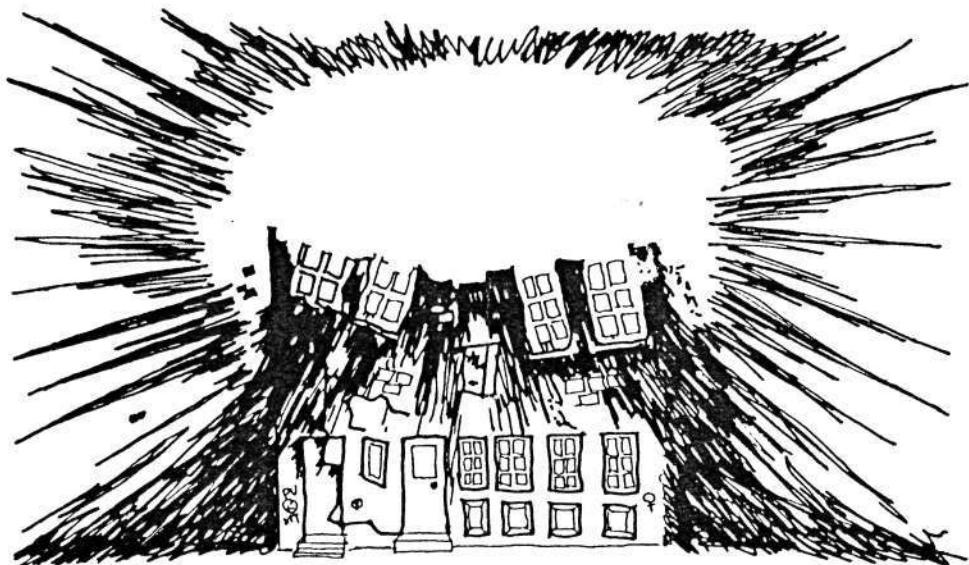
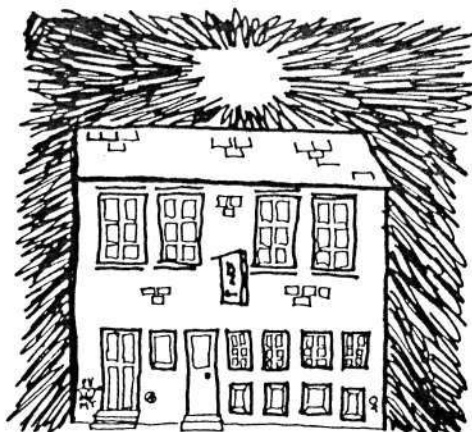
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Membership: £8 until 31 January 1984, £10 until 31 March
£12 at the door.

Contact:
Pauline Morgan, 321 Sarehole Road, Hall Green, Birmingham, B28 0AL





NOTHING

STOPS A MISFITS MEETING!!

MERCIAN SF TRIANGLE

(NOT A RELIGIOUS ORGANISATION)

Last Friday of the Month. FIRST MEETING FRIDAY
March 30th. in the GENERAL WOLFE.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS CONTACT: ➡ Martin Tudor ◀

Join Us!!

845 Alum Rock Road, Ward End,
Birmingham B8 2AQ • 021 328 2161



•CATH•3•84•

Thanks Jacie!

BRITAIN IN 87!

Britain was Fine in Seventy-Nine...

We think the time is right for another British Worldcon. Seacon 79, the last World SF Convention in this country, was tremendously successful and popular. Now we're bidding for 1987, armed with the experience of Seacon plus great gobs of fresh talent, ready to make this a more superbly wonderful convention than any previously held in Britain.

Britain's Heaven in Eighty-Seven

What has this bid got going for it? We're better-prepared than ever to handle a Worldcon, with lots of people now experienced in running the British cons which have grown hugely in size and number since 1979. We're not merely a local group of fans: we have the whole country's talent and expertise to draw on. We've been encouraged by noises of support from America, Australia, continental Europe and the professional SF world. (You don't need to look beyond, say, number 1 on our pre-supporters' list to find such names as Gene Wolfe.) And for British fans 1987 is a special year, a golden year. In 1937, eleven fans—including Arthur C. Clarke and Eric Frank Russell—gathered at the Theosophical Hall in Leeds for the world's first organized SF convention. Fifty years later, at a 1987 British Worldcon, would seem the right time and place for all of us to celebrate a sort of Golden Jubilee.

Where and When?

Provisionally we've rejected the Theosophical Hall in Leeds as our venue. As yet, spies are still checking out the best possible sites in the country. The choice may seem restricted, but we still hope to surprise and delight you all. Watch this space! The date will be on and around the Bank Holiday weekend near the end of August 1987. This normally falls the week before America's Labour Day—so intrepid con-goers would again be able to hurtle straight from the British Worldcon to North America's substitute event the NASFIC.

We Name the Guilty Ones

The present bidding-committee nucleus, small but frighteningly efficient, is poised to expand fungus-like and engulf vast sectors of British fandom. The spores, as it were, are Chris Atkinson, Malcolm Edwards in the chair, Colin fine, Dave Langford, Hugh Mascetti and Martin Tudor. Between us we can boast experience on countless past and present con committees (including Seacon 79 itself, various national cons and the imminent Eastercon/Eurocon, Seacon 84), plus assorted Hugo nominations, professional SF writing, editing and publishing achievements, fanzine publications, fan-poll and TAFF victories, and general fannish know-how. Also we are modest, incredibly modest.

A Word from our Treasurer: 'Money'

The day of judgement comes in 1985 at Aussiecon II, Melbourne, whose members will select the 1987 site—join Aussiecon now! To win our Worldcon against stiff opposition from two North American bids, we need to advertise all over the place, to convince waverers of Britain's true worth and open-handed generosity, to hold con parties promoting the bid, and much more. This costs money. Donations from fans, organizations and cons are always highly welcome; further ingenious schemes to separate you from your money will be unveiled throughout 1984. Our leading bargain offer is Pre-Supporting Membership: for a mere £1.00 or \$2.00 (US or Aussie) we will put your name on a list and publish it ruthlessly. The cost is ultimately deductible from the cost of full con membership, assuming we win, which of course we shall. Send money quickly, before we come to our senses and raise the amount—to your nearest Britain in 87 agent if his/her address is somewhere on this sheet. Otherwise, direct to our permanent address:

BRITAIN IN 87, 28 DUCKETT ROAD, LONDON, N4 1BN, GREAT BRITAIN.