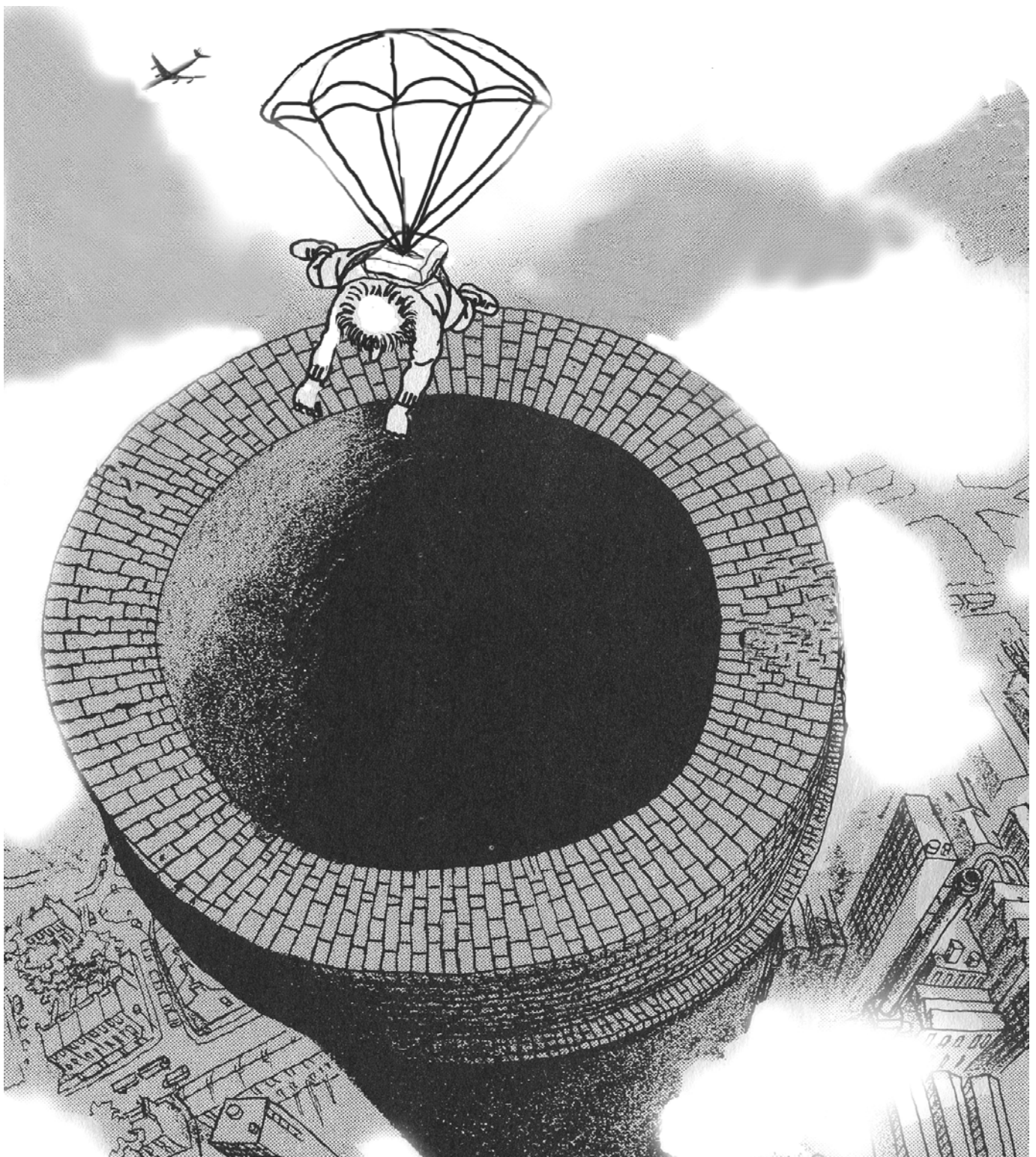


“Brit fandom of the 1950s-60s still impresses me with its graceful lunacy, humour and insight.”
– Greg Benford, LoC



Rich Coad suggested he might drop in on Kettering on his way back from Hyderabad.
BUT NOT OVER THE WEETABIX FACTORY, RICH!!

– *With the usual apologies to ‘Giles’*

INSIDE: ‘Kettering, Oh Kettering,’ – Special feature on *Cytricon V*; ‘The Globe Mystery’ by Rob Hansen; ‘The Wandering Ghu – Part 6; Journeys in Distant Lands’ by Bruce Burn; **PLUS** Moorcock, Locke, & more.



RELAPSE

Yes, this is indeed the Fanzine Formerly Called Prolapse, with a long-overdue name-change (but see below) brought to your door by Peter Weston, 53 Wyvern Road, Sutton Coldfield, B74 2PS (Tel: 0121 354 6059). Lots of pictures this time, which I hope might inspire you to jot-down your own memories of times past and send them to me at pr.weston@btinternet.com. This is a 'Paper First' fanzine though I'm sending out an increasing number of pdf copies (particularly for overseas readers) and the issue will go onto the *eFanzines* website a month after paper copies have been posted. As before, *Relapse* travels the time-stream to explore British SF fan-history. Chief Researcher; Greg Pickersgill, with much help from Rob Hansen.

"*Prolapse* turned up. Dropped everything. Read from cover to cover. Bloody good."

– Mike Moorcock, LoC

In early 1983 after a brief spell of *gafia* I chose the name *Prolapse* as a mild play on words; I said at the time, "Look up the dictionary definitions – 'falling down' (that's fannish) and 'to slip out of place' (which is exactly what's happened to me, as the microcosm has moved on in my absence). Also, in my previous incarnation I aspired to a sort of third-rate 'pro' status, and now I've lapsed back into fandom." So it made sense then, but I really missed a trick in 2006 (as Earl Kemp has never tired of telling me) by reviving the same title when I returned to fanzine fandom for a second time. After all, what was this other than a *relapse* into earlier patterns of thought and behaviour? Isn't this exactly what I want other contributors to do by casting their minds back into the deep past for anecdotes and information?

Because the rationale of this fanzine – the reason for its appeal, if you like – is my belief that once individuals are hooked by fandom they find it hard to put it entirely behind them. The years fly past but for old fans the magic never quite goes away. So it didn't take very much prodding to get long-gafiated people such as (deep breath) John Berry, Gerald Bishop, Bruce Burn, Ramsey Campbell, Chuck Connor, Dick Ellingsworth, Ted Forsyth, Tony Glynn, John Hall, Keith Freeman, George Locke, Mike Meara, Mike Moorcock, Dan Morgan, Peter Nicholls, Stan Nicholls, Joe Patrizio, Bob Parkinson, David Redd, Simone Restall and Fred Smith to start writing again, in this current issue joined by Ian Peters and Tony Thorne. I have hopes for others... Daphne (Buckmaster), won't you tell us more about the London Circle? ... Don (Malcolm), what happened to those stories about Bob Shaw and other SF writers? ... Don Geldart, were you *really* in MI5?

Whenever I've visited old fans – Brian Varley, Ted Tubb, Ina, Terry Jeeves, Alan Hunter – I find they're keeping the flame alive with a pile of ancient fanzines, old pictures, letters, and they're only too glad to talk about fan-groups, past conventions, happy times long ago. And I've had great conversations with people like Beryl Bentcliffe who, strictly speaking, weren't fans themselves but who inhaled some of the stardust ... there's a comment to this effect from Susie Haynes (Ken Slater's daughter) later in this issue.

So it's *Relapse* from now onwards. Sounds better, doesn't it! And that new heading up there is in a typeface called 'Stencil' which seems appropriate. But before we move on completely from the old regime let's give an airing to a little rhyme that Andy Sawyer has contributed in the general spirit of the thing:-

Weston's plans to immortalise fans
Deserves support. Let's go, chaps!
It's nice to see our secret vice
In WIDOWER'S WONDERFUL PROLAPSE

Speaking of wonderful things...

Less than fifteen minutes ago as I write, I heard from Wally Weber in Seattle that he's found the negatives from his TAFF-trip in 1964. And the reason that's so wonderful is because Wally attended the 'Bullcon' (or *RePetercon*, as it's now more generally known) which was my very first convention. For me it was a life-changing experience, so much so that I devoted an entire chapter to it ('Easter Brummies') in the 'memoir' I wrote for NESFA. But pictures from Peterborough have always been few and far between; almost no-one seemed to take a camera to the cons of the mid-sixties, in marked contrast to earlier years when many fans (Peter West, Norman Shorrock, Terry Jeeves, Eric Bentcliffe, etc) snapped merrily away at anything in sight. Until now I've had no more than a dozen or so blurry images from the 1964 convention.

So now you can see why I'm so looking forward to meeting Wally at *Corflu* next month. What will I find on those long-forgotten strips of 35mm film that have for so many years been sitting in a 'Caramel Delight' box next to his downstairs refrigerator? Images of Cliff Teague? Terry Pratchett? The Hum-&-Sway? Not that Wally has exactly been slacking – ever since we established contact a few weeks ago we've been swapping pictures from *Loncon I*, which he visited on his first British trip in 1957. Thanks to Wally I now have great new shots of Walt & Madeleine Willis, Mike Moorcock and Norman G. Wansborough, of whom you'll hear more at a later date.

Our cover this time

The idea came to me on the day before *Cytricon V* when Rich Coad wrote, "I'll cast a wave as the plane from Hyderabad via Frankfurt passes in the vicinity of the British Isles. Stopping over, unfortunately, did not turn out to be an option." Well, he didn't exactly *say* that he'd drop in, but in my mind's-eye I visualised him parachuting over Kettering and that just clicked with the Giles cartoon and a fanzine piece I'd read about the Weetabix factory which formerly saturated the townscape with its all-pervasive smell of cooking grain. Annoyingly, I can't find the reference now – and I've searched *everywhere* – but that must have been a BIG factory! And as a critic said of the cartoon, "the humour is eclipsed by the feeling of terror which the picture evokes. It is an amazing drawing and should certainly be kept well away from anyone who suffers from even the mildest form of vertigo, Greg."

Here's a nice bit of synchronicity. Last year I produced three display panels for the BSFA's 50th anniversary, and on the weekend after *Cytricon V* Mark Plummer took them along to *Newcon* in Northampton, where they provoked a blog post (whatever that is) from one Geoff Nelder. He wrote, (slightly abbreviated here):-

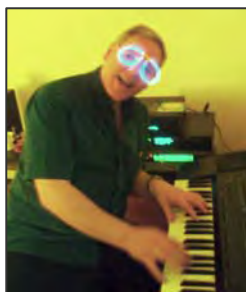
'One aspect that hit me full-on was a panel about the BSFA. It wasn't the words that mattered, but a picture. I staggered-back as I recognised a face before seeing his name. Eric Jones lived at #44 Barbridge Road, Cheltenham, and I lived at #43! When I was a kid my dad would create black pen & ink illustrations to be meticulously pin-pricked onto Gestetner skins for the Cheltenham fan-magazine, *Sidereal*. I thought all dads did that! I also thought all streets had their own mags!' [A misapprehension shared by Buck Coulson's young son after producing *Yandro* every month! - PW]

Mark contacted Geoff Nelder, told him Eric Jones had died in 1967, and pointed him at Keith's appreciation in *Prolapse #8*. He replied: 'It's quite likely I met Keith though I was only a short-trousered nipper at the time. I was often in Eric's house to help with the printing and stapling of *Sidereal* and stuffing envelopes, licking stamps – ugh! Eric had a dog and I persuaded it to be a stamp-licker. I would have been only eight or so and although I recall people coming and going I don't remember details. No. 43 Barbridge Road, where I lived, is across the road and up a little from number 44.'

Having in turn been tipped-off I made contact with Geoff who wrote, 'My dad is now 82, living in Ledbury. He is having radiation treatment for a bladder cancer but retains his humour and was really pleased to learn that Eric is still remembered, and that his artwork survives. Somewhere in this house is one of his original cover sketches. When I find it I'll scan it for you, Peter. We've no idea where Margaret went after Eric died.'

Cytricon V – The Final Reckoning;

One of my sillier ideas was the *Cytricon* song – 'Kettering, Oh Kettering', something I wrote a week or two before the con and which mad-rocker Ian Sorensen kindly sang and recorded. Unfortunately the effect wasn't quite what I'd hoped-for because the two small speakers plugged-into my laptop didn't have the power to do justice to Ian's rendition. But that can be rectified now; on request I'll send you the mp3 attachment for you to play in the privacy of your own home!



Kettering, Oh Kettering,
I still see the beanies spinning
How I miss your lovely wimmin'
I was 21, when I left Cytricon.

I still see that Liverpool party
With the Big BEM that we could see
And was the punch-bowl all for me
In the hall where we had our fun.

Kettering, Oh Kettering,
I still hear the fans a-chattin'
While I watch the bar-men battlin'
I drink my Blog, and dream of Cytricon.

Kettering, Oh Kettering, I am so afraid of drinkin'
Too much Blog without my thinkin'
Before I watch the fans a-cryin' one by one
At Cytricon, at Cytricon.



The Team Photo: Thanks to the technical wizardry of John Dallman we have the full line-up. Left-to-right, **Back row;** James Bacon, Greg Pickersgill, Andy Richards, Mark Plummer, Keith Freeman, Catherine Pickersgill, Jim & Marion Linwood, Dave Langford, Rita & George Locke. **Second row;** Doug Bell, Steve Green, Guests of Honour Peter Mabey & Ina Shorrock, PW & Eileen, and Alan Rispin. **Third row;** David Redd, Mike & Pat Meara, Rog Peyton, Eve Harvey, Claire Brialey, Susie Haynes, Anne Patrizio and Sandra Bond. **Front row;** Flick, Mike Scott, Christina Lake, Rob Hansen, John Harvey, and Joe Patrizio. That's everyone apart from Wendy Freeman and Gavin Shorrock (who were resting) and John himself (he's on Page 7). Immediately after this one was taken the whole squad dissolved into helpless laughter! - pw
This may be a good place to mention that I've nominated Steve Green for TAFF this year; go to: www.taff.org.uk/

Last October we celebrated the 50th anniversary year of the previous Kettering convention, so in this feature (with some help from the others) I'll explain what happened. We'll also take a brief look at previous *Cytricons*. - pw

Kettering, Oh Kettering!

Cytricon V – What was it all about, then?

By Peter Weston

Yes, the fans are back in town! PW visits the historic George Hotel to see what's changed.



After *Orbital* last April Greg Pickersgill wrote wistfully, “I’d love to go to even a 1970s style convention again. I even want Peter Weston to run or even licence his ReRePeterCon just so us over-40s have somewhere to be in a warm puddle of shared enthusiasms.” Then Jim Linwood helpfully added, “There’s always the George Hotel at Kettering. Is there still time to celebrate the 1958 *Cytricon IV*? I don’t see why fans of an uncertain age should be excluded, provided they dress up in clothes of the period and can handle a zap gun.”

This was altogether too good an idea to let slip since for once we didn’t actually need a real time-machine to recapture the spirit of Fandom Past. So having contacted the hotel, the following Saturday Eileen and I popped across to Kettering to take a look. It was a bright spring day though biting cold and we had an easy drive – only 50 miles or so, although we’d never been there before – arriving in late morning. And I have to say, fans, that it gave me quite a thrill to catch the first sight of the George, looking almost unchanged from those 1950s photographs.

I hadn’t realised the hotel stands at a corner where several main roads enter the town, on ‘Sheep Street’, which at that point is a wide, triangular area which once probably *was* the sheep-market. The George was built in 1639 as a coaching inn, being not far from the route of the Great North Road, and for several centuries stagecoaches must have come rumbling into the courtyard through a stone archway at the side, long since closed to traffic. In those days Kettering would have been a busy market town serving the farming community for ten or fifteen miles around and I can just imagine prosperous farmers coming to sell their sheep, getting drunk and spending the night in the hotel before staggering out the next morning to repent in the magnificent church of St Peter & St Paul opposite, the spire of which dominates the urban landscape.

So there it was, the historic old building I’d read so much about, a square, three-storey red-brick structure with period lettering on the wall and a canopy over the entrance supported on two slender pillars, just the way it was in the fifties and looking as though any minute Eric Bently, Terry Jeeves and the rest of the gang would come tumbling through the front door. If only!

But I was worried, because even a cursory glance at the relevant web-sites showed that in recent years the George had fallen on hard times. Not too long ago the then-manager had made headlines in the local paper by literally ‘doing a runner’, presumably with the week’s takings! And I’d seen reviews like this one:

THIS ‘HOTEL’ SHOULD BE SHUT DOWN IMMEDIATELY. It is absolutely the worst place imaginable. I never expected such a place to be open for business. The place is not fit to be an animal shelter. The first thing to hit you is the smell, then the bed crammed up against the wall with a filthy-looking blanket on it. The room did not even have en-suite facilities; in fact, the nearest bathroom was on the other side of the hotel! I checked out immediately and told them that I would be sending out the Health Inspectors to close them down. The guy in reception found that comment to be hilarious..... (November 2006)

They’d assured me it had been taken under new management during the last twelve months, but what would it be like...? We walked into a small and slightly scruffy reception area and asked for the manager, a young man of about twenty-five who turned out to be most obliging. I showed him some old pictures of the hotel from Ina’s photo-album, explained that we were going to run a 50-year ‘reunion’ (it seemed simpler that way), and he immediately offered a 10% discount from the already low rates. Then we went to take a look at the facilities.

It was clear that there’d been a lot of internal changes; the original residents’ bar had gone and what had been the ‘Basket Lounge’ was now an open area served by its own entrance, with a bar for occasional passers-by and little old ladies taking tea. The upstairs lounge was now a conference room and kept locked, and I could see no trace of the ‘Devil’s Kitchen’, that half-timbered area decorated with ancient swords, pitchforks, bed-pans, and even man-traps, where the fans used to hang out in the old days. I started to wonder if I could make this work.

We walked through a small restaurant and a doorway at the far end to emerge into a tatty corridor leading to the main hall. And joy!, it was almost unchanged from the way it looked in those 1956 pictures when Ted Carnell was launching his bid for the first British worldcon. It still had a low stage flanked by two pillars and the only real difference was that a suspended-ceiling had been hung under the original vaulted roof, with a private bar at the back of the room.

I had a pretty clear idea of how I wanted to run the con – a reasonably full programme during the day and two communal evening meals, just as we did at Peterborough in 2004. It's not the usual fannish way, I know, some people (Rog) like to go off for Indian meals while others (Greg) prefer to lurk in their bedroom with sandwiches, but this was an exercise in bonding, in Greg's own words to create 'a warm puddle of shared enthusiasms'. A small convention like this simply wouldn't work if we scattered into isolated groups in the evenings. But I was still worrying how to arrange things in a hotel which seemed to lack the facilities for the degree of intimacy I wanted to achieve.

I wandered around, touching things and fretting, until the manager demonstrated a sliding partition that split the room into two. A light-bulb went on inside my head; *that* will solve the problem, I thought, use the stage-side for our programme and the bar-end as our lounge. He assured me that the kitchen was right next door so meals could be served without difficulty, and bingo, we suddenly had our own private suite! The remainder was easy; four round tables seating nine or ten people, an area for coffee between programme segments, and tables around the walls in both rooms for displays of fannish memorabilia, books and fanzines.

We inspected a couple of bedrooms which were old-fashioned but seemed clean and reasonably comfortable, then went back to the reception area where I suddenly recognised a feature from one of Ina's photographs. Behind the desk was a whitewashed stone tablet between wooden beams over a disused fireplace. This had been the centrepiece of the 'Devil's Kitchen' back in the fifties, so the main lounge must since have been split to create another conference room and the lobby where we were now standing. Here, in front of that very same fireplace, was where the first St Fantony ceremony took place, back at Easter 1957!

Eileen and I went for a walk to explore the area. Time hasn't been kind to Kettering; in the mid-fifties it must have been a pretty little East Midlands town, bustling with people, but now it has suffered the malaise of small communities everywhere; all the real shopping is done in out-of-town retail parks leaving the old centre to struggle along with knick-knack shops and marginal businesses. It's not a tourist stop-off and the planners had allowed it to be further vandalised with a truly hideous concrete 'shopping centre', totally out of keeping with the fine old buildings that still remained. Very sad. And even the Weetabix factory is long gone so Rich Coad could have dropped in after all!

We had a light lunch in the only café that seemed to have any vestige of charm, and I looked for the Collectors' Bookshop in which Ron Bennett had found such wonderful bargains in 1958, but of course it wasn't there any more. On the way back we passed the Royal hotel – the 'overflow' for *Cytricons* – which seemed in much better shape than the George, just 200 yards further along Sheep Street. With that as competition plus the modern Travelodge-style hotels on the edge of town, no wonder the hotel manager had been so welcoming; I'll bet he was 90% empty most of the time!

Well, *Cytricon V* went off pretty much as planned with 36 celebrants in the end, even including one or two under the age of forty! Sadly, veterans like Terry Jeeves and Ted Tubb were unable to attend for health reasons, and others – Bob Parkinson, Brian Varley, Tony Glynn, Bill Burns and Mike Moorcock – were otherwise engaged or out of the country.

As a personal highlight, both Rog Peyton and I were delighted to be invested as Knights of St Fantony by Keith Freeman, duly authorised Master of the Order. Bearing in mind the impromptu nature of the event there wasn't much 'ceremony' but Keith had managed to obtain a measure of water from 'St Fantony's Well' which he administered in the traditional fashion. I sipped from the glass with some caution and can only describe the stuff as pure 'firewater', while Rog was more adventurous and downed his measure with a flourish, choking and spluttering for a good five minutes afterwards!

That was the only fannish liquor in evidence; I'd decided against making Blog, and while I brought along all the ingredients for a Saturday-night brew of 'Poleaxe Punch' – bowl, ladle, and assorted spirits (and Eileen went shopping for tins of fruit salad) – the occasion didn't seem to need a high-octane alcoholic boost so it all stayed under the table. Mark Plummer has written a fairly accurate account of *Cytricon V* in *Banana Wings* #36, if you discount the obligatory piss-taking, and on the next few pages I'm printing reactions from some of the other people who attended the event.

I was particularly pleased that Ina Shorrock and Peter Mabey agreed to be our Guests of Honour. Both have been in fandom for over fifty years and it's well past time that their long-standing devotion was recognised. Ina had of course been at all four previous *Cytricons* – the only survivor attending our re-enactment – while Peter entered fandom in 1956 with the Cheltenham group. I wrote-up their fannish careers for our Programme Book and am reprinting both pieces here. I'm also presenting the four photo-displays produced for the occasion, along with excerpts from past con-reports to try and recapture a little of the essence that made Kettering so very special.

//pw, January 2009



Above; The fireplace behind the reception desk with tablets which read, 'During alterations in 1925 this stone was discovered in the gable of this wall by the owners, G.G. & J.E. Westgate'. The centre stone bears the inscription 'SoL 1639'. Photo; Rob Hansen, 2008.

Below: Eric Bentcliffe, Frank Milnes (standing), two unknowns, Norman Weedall & Brian Varley in front of that same fireplace in 1955. Photo; Norman Shorrock.





Left, GoHs Peter & Ina (in beanie) take charge! (Photo: John Dallman)



Left, below: Catherine confides to Dave that she's brought a very rare handbag from her collection. (Photo: Mike Meara)



Above & left; PW wears Ken Bulmer's armour, while James Bacon wisely defends himself with the Shield of Umor. (Photos; John Dallman)

Below; Greg and Keith have a meeting of fannish minds! (Photo: Steve Green)



Left; Mike tells Flick that "the bar's open and the drinks are on me!" (Photo; Rob Hansen)



Left; Fannish sages Jim Linwood & Alan Rispin discuss old times. (Photo: Steve Green)



Left; "You've poisoned me, Keith Freeman" splutters PW, after tasting the Water from St Fantony's Well. Behind, Ina thought it was absolutely hilarious! (Photo; Mike Meara)



Below; George & Rita Locke share a magic moment! (Photo: John Dallman)



John Dallman



Photo by Steve Green

I've been going to SF cons for 29 years, which should make me an old-timer, but I have never quite understood the fascination that some fans have with our history. Fandom has always seemed to be largely ephemeral, best experienced in the moment. The ancient history of fandom is more interesting, because it tells us things about how it got to be this way, and how it actually works, but our recent history has always seemed more like a somewhat out-of-date fanzine.

Cytricon V showed me something of what fan historians find so fascinating. In part, this was because it was much more immediate: survivors from fandom of the fifties, and thanks to Peter Weston's sterling efforts, the pick of the photography in the best displays I've seen at any convention. With that help, you could still see the life and energy of the Ina Shorrock of the fifties within the woman of today, and with that as a reference point you could see how much the fandom of the fifties had in common with today's fans.

Because they do. The forms of fandom – Live Journal in place of letter-hacking, paperbacks in place of prozines – may have changed, and not everyone grasps that this change doesn't really matter. But the spirit of fans, of people wanting a community that doesn't fit with all the rules of society, and willing to be quite strange to that end, survives. There are many fandoms now, many of which have lost contact with their roots. That's OK, as long as some of us remember. // – John Dallman, January 2009

Keith & Wendy Freeman



Photos by John Dallman.

Having missed, purely through my own stupidity and neo-fannishness, the '57 *Cytricon* and, being in the middle of the Pacific for the one in 1958, I had only experienced a St Fantony get-together at Kettering. That left me little memory of the hotel... but very pleasant memories of a very convivial weekend with marvellous company. So... having booked everything we (Wendy, Dave Langford and myself) set off on a rainy morning.

The hotel was, as expected, very hard to find! We drove up to the road it was on and, naturally, turned right rather than left. Half an hour later we arrived back where we'd started (in Kettering, I mean, not Reading) and saw the sign. Second sigh of relief was when we found there was room in the car park – third sigh was when we managed not to hit Peter's Jag...

We had a room in the annex – fairly small, very hot, quite noisy but fine for a couple of nights. The main problem was only having the one key between two of us (we'd ditched Fanglord in the main part of the hotel) – normally OK but this time there was one key for the room and another for the Annexe itself, so you couldn't just knock on your bedroom door to get in.

[We were next door and had the same problem. I honestly wondered why they'd put us into that Annexe when we were first to arrive at an empty hotel, but on reflection I think they were just trying to be nice by giving us two of what they considered the best rooms!]

The staff seemed pleasant enough and quite efficient as far as we were concerned. But they came a poor second to meeting and greeting those already there and others as they arrived. We helped (or hindered) Peter to put up many fannish decorations in the Con Hall, beginning conversations (some of which, it seemed, continued until we were booking-out) which set the mood of the whole weekend.

Ask me specific questions – who did what on the panels... who got drunk... who got elevated(?) to the ranks of St Fantony and who missed breakfast (and who *nearly* did) would task my elderly brain. I think everyone mixed well and I, for one, found the programme interesting – with knowledgeable people on the panels (other than myself trying to decide if the BSFA has been 'a good thing') and in the audience. For a change I *never* felt any of the panels dragged on too long – indeed most had to be wrapped-up long before I'd lost interest.

The meals were adequate – far, far better than any Con Banquet I've gone to, and the only real difference I experienced was the lack of room parties – in *Cytricon I-IV* these would have been a necessity if one wanted to socialise (and drink) into the night. With today's more relaxed licensing, and the hotel keeping open a bar at the back of the Con hall they weren't necessary... but from sheer nostalgia I felt it was the one thing missing. //

– Keith Freeman, January 2009
[Trouble was, Keith, we're old now, and don't have the staying-power! None of us could keep awake late enough for any serious drinking (bar one), witness my comments about the planned punch-bowl!]

Susie Haynes (Slater)



Photo; John Dallman

It was really enjoyable and all ran smoothly from my point of view - it gave me an opportunity to bring out one or two bits of Ken's memorabilia (his 'rubbitch'), and as some of it had been hidden away for 50-odd years it was nice to give it an airing to an appreciative audience. I enjoyed getting to know people whom I have seen at conventions and to share memories – something I don't often do as I am usually too busy working. I have said previously that, at conventions, I often feel like an outsider looking in but at *Cytricon* I felt very much part of things.

I loved the smaller, more intimate convention and the 'historical' theme. I wonder if one appreciates looking back at times past more as you get older – a bit like doing Fandom family history research! I don't think I would have thought much about it in my 20's /30's. Even the 'time-warp' hotel I enjoyed and can forgive you for – it added more authenticity to the event!! It would not have been the same if it had been totally modernised.

It was good to see friendly familiar faces and also meet some new ones like Joe & Anne, though I was disappointed that Doreen Rogers couldn't make it at the last minute. Remind me, though, if you see me at another con that just because the hotel runs out of red wine on Friday night and we demand that they get more in for Saturday night that I should feel under no obligation to drink it all! //

– Susie Haynes, January 2009

Photo from
Norman
Shorrock's
album.



Ina Shorrock – fannish superwoman!

**“I was in love with Ina,”
sighed Jim Linwood.
“We all were.”**

And who could have blamed them? Lovely Ina, Hostess with the Mostest, was the ever-smiling heart of the Liverpool group and she was at the very centre of British fandom all through the fifties and sixties.

In 1947 Ina Picken was nineteen and already a secret SF reader when she went to a neighbour's party and amazingly – because he lived on the Birkenhead side of the Mersey – she met Norman. Was it love at first sight? Well, maybe, but after they'd been courting for six months the romance literally took off when she saw a copy of *Astounding* in his sports-coat pocket. Wow! – it turned out they *both* read science fiction! “After that I had to marry him for his collection,” Ina said.

The river was but a minor obstacle and after work Norman would come across from Birkenhead on the tube (you forgot Liverpool had an Underground, didn't you?) and Ina would meet him at the station. One time he had a nose-bleed and was late and while Ina was worriedly pacing back and forward outside the station she was told by another female to “push off, this is *my* pitch!”

They married in 1950 and moved the collection into a little flat on Norman's side of the river, and soon afterwards various dodgy characters started to turn up who he'd met on his trips to Frank Milnes' Milcross bookshop, people like Les Johnson and Norman Weedall, both early members of the British Interplanetary Society. So Ina was in at the start with the Liverpool Science Fiction Society in November 1951, throwing her first fan-party for the group that Christmas despite having given birth to daughter Janet earlier that year.

After that came their first con in 1952, decorating the Space Dive, more parties, and an unending stream of visitors from all parts of British fandom and beyond, most of whom spent the night on Ina's floor. She was our first costumer as a Bergey girl at the 1954 *Supermancon* (see above, with the Fred Smith Monster). She was a Space Warrior Woman at the first *Cytricon*, and she painted herself green as a Krishnan in 1956.

In a scene for the LāSFāS film ‘May We Have The Pleasure’ (shown at the first London worldcon) the camera zoomed-in on Ina lying in a bubble-bath; but after a couple of attempts at a tricky bit of filming, Norman said, “It's no good, love, we'll have to have that top off.”

So, all round good sport, yes, but to mention a more serious side Ina did her time as effectively the first chairman of the BSFA, for two years, 1960-62 (Dave Newman was elected in 1958 but gafiated without striking a blow), and, of course, she carried on reading *Astounding*.

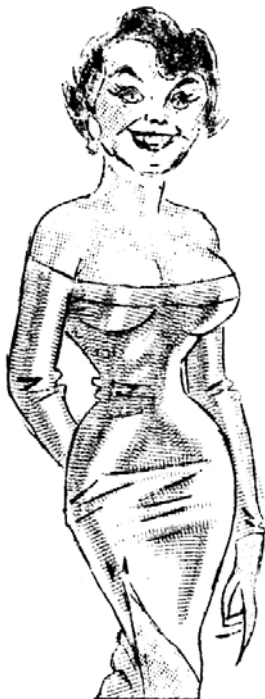
What else? Oh, I forgot to mention the other four children (Linda, Alan, Roy and Gavin) who somehow managed to arrive despite the Shorrock's busy social life. And the damson gin (already a legend when I entered fandom) which would be teleported into Shorrock room parties in innumerable plastic containers.

Ina was knighted a Lady of St Fantony at the very first initiation at Kettering in 1957, she won the ‘Doc Weir’ Award in 1976 (about ten years late!), and a special ‘Nova’ Award at *Novacon 33* for ‘Fifty Years in Fandom’.

Sadly, Norman passed away in 1999 but Ina has hardly missed an Eastercon and she still gophers most years. Unbelievably, however, she has never before been asked to be Guest of Honour. Well, we can put that right.

Here's to you Ina, Fannish Superwoman!

//pw, September 2008



Illo by Eddie Jones from Eric Bentcliffe's *Waldo*#1, 1959

Doug Bell



Photo by Steve Green

I'm very thankful that I was invited to Kettering for *Cytricon*, as I think perhaps this was one of my favourite-ever conventions, small but perfectly formed. The programme was very well judged, with enough time given to do each item justice but spaced out enough to allow time for socialising, getting some air and visiting the bar. I've been to some conventions so small I've been desperate to escape, but even when I was let out for a wander around Kettering at lunchtime I ended up in the pub with Christina and Rob Hansen talking fandom and fan-history. In fact one of the delights I found about the convention was that I got to spend far more time just being with fellow fans than I normally do at larger cons where you are forever worrying which programme item you should be in or who or where you are having dinner with on any particular given evening.

I'd realised that I didn't know much about 1958 Science Fiction so beforehand I went out and found as many books as I could that were published that year. Consequently I enjoyed the SF item far more than I think I would have had I not, so perhaps conventions with homework are the way ahead. And I loved the slide-show – I remember marvelling at one photo of 50s fans standing on the stage framed by those mock pillars. Here we were fifty years on looking at that image, being projected onto a screen on the same stage; it just seemed brain-bending and comfortingly familiar at the same time.

The St Fantasy Ceremony was undoubtedly the highlight of the weekend, so thoroughly unexpected but well deserved and long overdue. I can't help feeling privileged to have been there to see Peter and Rog inducted into the Order, and also for having just been at possibly the last-ever ceremony. This was truly fan-history in the making.

The communal dinners gave the event a feeling of togetherness, a glimpse of what things must have been like in days gone past. While I don't think my stomach could have handled another go-round on that menu, the food was generally good and the company better. Of course once wine and beer was mixed into the equation things were bound to take on a surreal bent – I remember a particularly vivid conversation with Steve Green about dogs' fondness for German expressionist cinema and Harold Lloyd movies...some things never change. //

– Doug Bell, January 2009

[That slide-show, Doug... it was billed as 'Illustrated Fandom' and until the week before I wasn't sure quite what images to present. Then the obvious answer came to me; I went through my photo-archive and extracted every picture I could find of Peter and Ina. As you'll remember, I asked them to comment on the scenes, which gave us a lot of fan-history from the mouths of participants, as it were. - PW]

Mike & Pat Meara



Photos by John Dallman

One day early in 2005 I received an email from Peter Weston. Nothing unusual in that – I'm sure many of you get them all the time. This one *was* unusual, though, because up to that point I hadn't heard from Peter, or indeed any other fans to speak of, for at least fifteen years. Out of the blue, it was – or more likely it was grey at the time. He'd somehow found my email address and was after any old fan photos I might still have, which he needed for an archive he was putting together. This led to an exchange which is still on-going, although winding down as my own archive gets mined-out: I send him the negs, he scans them and returns them along with a CD-ROM containing the digitised results.

What has this got to do with *Cytricon V*, you ask? Be patient – I'm getting to it. A couple of years later, early in 2007 he sent me my first issue of *Prolapse* – # 5 – and although the contents tickled my memory-bone, it was the photos of fans which really intrigued me: the people were older – aren't we all? – but almost all of those I'd known from the 1970s I recognised instantly, and easily. And of course, I was quite pleased to see that one of the photos was mine.

Having run as long as I decently could on the goodwill from the photo-scans, I loosed issue 9, and Peter printed it. See how I'm getting drawn in, here? Various fen said nice things, and I began to think I should get back on board. Then, in his editorial for #11 (May 2008), Peter mentioned a proposed 50th anniversary con, *Cytricon V*, to be held in Kettering in October. This was it! This was the portal we needed to re-enter the magic kingdom. Kettering was on the main Derby-London main line; we could go by train (though we didn't in the end).

Typically, I then forgot all about it until August, when Peter's editorial in #12 reminded me. Panic! I then sprang into desperate action, contacted the hotel, booked a room... Whew, done it!... and then it was too late to back out. Was this *really* a good idea? We recognised *them*, but would *they* recognise *us*? Okay, people had said how well-preserved I looked in *my Prolapse* photo, but that was a passport photo taken on a good day. It would be terrible if, having plucked up the courage to approach fan X, he/she then regarded us with a look of blank horror.

We arrived early, with the idea of establishing some kind of territory. The hotel was not a pretty sight: badly modernised, and with no conceivable role to play in the modern world, it looked like it had been specially reactivated, Magrathea-like, to perform this one last commission. Having chickened out on the territory idea, instead hiding in our room for as long as we dared, we finally summoned up the blood and went downstairs. The first person we saw was Rog Peyton, who turned, saw us, gave Pat a big hug and said "I remember the mini-skirt!" (a reference to the occasions when she would gopher for the auction, wearing an outfit which I {and Pat} blush to think of), then bought us both a drink.

After this ideal start (thanks, Rog!) everything went fine. We met fans old (the Harveys, Rob Hansen, Dave Langford) and new (Sandra Bond, Mark and Claire, Mike Scott) and were welcomed back by everyone. We'd been out of the room for twenty years, but it seemed like twenty minutes. We talked to fans who we should have talked to in the old days, but somehow hardly ever did (the Freemans, the Linwoods, Ina Shorrock). Somehow it was easier to talk (even to Greg!), not more difficult as I had feared; was some of it down to age, that great leveller?

Peter with Nancy Pooley on a Cheltenham visit to Ina's house, about 1960. Who's that snogging with Frank Herbert, Ina? (Photo from Simone Restall)



Peter Mabey – one of the Backroom Boys?

That reference is of course from Francis Spufford's super little book, one that should be required reading for all science fiction. Subtitled 'The Return of the British Boffin' it tells how Britain produced those patient, inspired characters whose story is largely unsung but who have come up with some of our greatest scientific and technical ideas. And without knowing a great deal about Peter Mabey's life in the real-world I get the feeling that he's been one of those boffins, working away in backrooms on truly ground-breaking stuff.

It's like that in fandom, too; Peter has been around for a long time but because he's a steady, conscientious, quiet sort of chap he's not one of the sort that usually attracts attention. Thank goodness he received the Doc Weir Award – the first one presented, in 1963 – for his sterling work in organising the BSFA library in 1958 and then running it from the Cheltenham basement for the next five years.

Peter began reading SF pulps at school in 1938, rapidly moving up to H. G. Wells and on to other things. Ken Slater put him in touch with Eric Jones in 1955 and he was one of the first to join the new Cheltenham Circle, just too late for *Cytricon*, although he subsequently produced his famous 'chart', published in *Sidereal* and recently exhumed in *Prolapse-7*, which suggested that the downward trend in convention attendances would go into negative figures by 1957!

Happily, these rumours of fandom's demise were exaggerated although due to family reasons Peter again missed Kettering and the first St Fantony ceremony in 1957, which was unfortunate because he had been very much involved in the months beforehand in helping Eric Jones and Bob Richardson create the entire mythos. However, all was well since he was able to take part in the second and somewhat grander ceremony at the London worldcon a few months later.

When the BSFA was formed in 1958 (according to Bobbie Wilde's report in *Femizine*) the Cheltenham group very generously donated their library to the new Association, and Peter was one of the two fans appointed as librarians. They must have had a great time in that cellar, shuffling the books and magazines, talking science fiction and sharing diverse memories of their war-time experiences; Eric had been in flying boats, Bob was a naval officer on midget submarines and Peter had gone to the Royal Aircraft Establishment for a crash course in structural engineering, working on such things as seats for troop transports. I get the feeling that they were advocates of the Campbellian tradition of SF, coming from Science/technology backgrounds rather than from the Arts/literary stream which is more common today.

A Maths graduate himself, Peter went looking for a job in computing as early as 1946 before moving into aerospace with Gloster Aircraft. He was assigned to the structures department – called the Stress Office – developing the Meteor, the first British jet-fighter (the tail unit was unsatisfactory, and a new one had to be designed). In this position he gained experience on Ferranti's PEGASUS computer, the biggest in world at the time, and eventually became department head in 1962 with the title of 'Chief Stress-man'. But since the aircraft industry was running down he had the melancholy duty of deciding on redundancies, which was so traumatic that he decided he would never go into management.

Peter says, "In the final years we were doing various jobs for other Hawker Siddeley firms, the most permanent being the structural design of the Brush 1500 electric locomotive, which was adopted as the ubiquitous BR Class 47. After Gloster closed I went to the Hawker Advanced Projects Group, but it wasn't long before I realised the projects were never going to reach even prototype stage. (The least advanced was a SST which lost to the Bristol proposal, whilst the one I spent most time was a hypersonic ram-jet, using a concept which NASA still haven't got to work 45 years later)."

After that he tried for a job at CERN and was invited there for interview, but as he says, "they were looking for a better mathematician than me". So it was 1966 before he finally got into computing full-time and joined STC as 'Computer Consultant', about which he says, "though I was really just a dogbody in the computing area, my relevant skill was an ability to pick up a language sufficiently quickly to be pretty good at debugging".

Unfortunately, all this meant leaving Cheltenham but at least his new location meant Peter was able to attend meetings of the SF Club of London, usually meeting at Ethel Lindsay's Courage House, the Nurses' Home in Surbiton. And that led naturally (and unavoidably, if I know Ella Parker!) into the job of Publicity Officer for the second London worldcon in 1965. This saw the third major outing for St Fantony, and Peter was Master of the Rolls at the induction ceremony that year, a position he has held for subsequent initiations. He has rarely missed an Eastercon and can always be found in the science-oriented programme topics.

// pw, with help from g&cp, September 2008



**John Harvey – the only one properly dressed for the occasion (though Mark did get a haircut)!
Photo by John Dallman**

The con itself was a perfect little gem, just the right size, so that I found I could hold everyone in the palm of my mind. The programme, which I now agree is necessary to give some focus (no more *FaanCons* for me!) was perfectly pitched, and very well executed by everyone involved; pretty well everyone turned up for all of it, too. The in-house evening meal worked well, because it was small enough in scale to seem all of a piece. Okay, the food was very average, and the drink not even that good, but we don't expect any better from our hotels (maybe we should). It didn't make any difference. (On the Saturday, we and the Harveys did find the only outstanding pub in Kettering {good} but missed part of Peter's slide show as a result {bad}.)

So I was right - it *was* a magic kingdom, one where you can only stay for two or three days before you're cast back into the dull, grey world outside. Looking at the calibre of the organisers, one would hardly expect anything less, I suppose. But had it been a bit duff, you might have seen little or nothing more of us; as it is, we followed it up with *Novacon*, I'm on an e-list (*fnzfen*), plus writing more locs than I ever did before, as well as stuff like this. Looks like you're stuck with us for a bit, all thanks to *Cytricon V*. Or more precisely, all thanks to Peter, who got our attention via that e-mail, lured us closer with *Prolapse*, then ensnared us with a con which, he somehow knew, was almost exactly how I want a con to be. Evidently we had been the target of a long campaign, carefully crafted by a true Secret Master of Fandom – so I can't really begrudge him that St Fantony badge, and anyway the look on his little face when he got it was a sight worth travelling to Kettering for.

Mark Plummer said of *Cytricon* (in *BW36*): "We should do it more often, only we shouldn't." I think I know what he means – you have to allow time for the magic to replenish itself before you pass through the portal again. A year should be enough. So what are we going to celebrate *this* year? I feel that by October, we shall all need *something*. //

– Mike Meara, January 2009

[And a word of appreciation from the Organiser, for John Harvey who was the only one to turn up in appropriate 50s-con apparel, in his sports-coat and tie. This was something I'd intended to do myself but my own sports-coat had mysteriously shrunk since I last wore it in 1980! - PW]

Steve Green



Photo by Mike Meara

Even for those of us whose con-going stretches back into the 1970s, the period evoked in the run-up to *Cytricon V* felt like ancient fan-history. A double-digit membership count, a single-stream programme at which attendance was pretty much mandatory, group meals every evening – whilst all these elements have occasionally re-emerged in isolation at more recent events, the collision of them all over one weekend might have seemed quaint, even anachronistic.

Instead, the fifth *Cytricon* came across as fresh and invigorating, a stark alternative to those conventions which have now grown so large and diverse that trying to get a handle on them is as easy as nailing jelly to a wall. The spirit of the weekend was crystallised at Saturday's afternoon surprise photo-shoot: assorted generations of fans, brought together by a core affection for the SF genre and the sub-culture it spawned.

On a personal note, this was the first convention I attended after Ann's passing, and it was one she was really looking forward to, despite having a less than overwhelming interest in the events of 1958. I know she'd have had as excellent time as I did. //

– Steve Green, January 2009

Against my better judgment, here's the terrible secret of how I lost my trousers at *Cytricon*. On the way up in the mighty Freeman-mobile I'd been reading Greg Egan's *INCANDESCENCE*, whose thrilling exposition of General Relativity may have left me overly inflamed. Anyway, my trouser zip broke shortly after I reached the hotel room. Luckily I had a spare pair and, next morning, took the fly-blown garment to a nearby dry cleaner's for repair. They insisted on payment in advance. I made a hasty exit from the Saturday-afternoon *Cytricon* programme to be sure of catching them before 5pm, and found they'd closed at four. After the con I wrote (with SAE) asking how much postage would be needed to send my property back to Reading. No reply ever. A fan's undying curse lies upon Staykleen, 11 Market Place, Kettering.

By the way, I have remembered a verse by Noel Coward which is not one of 'Widower's Wonderful' but drops the appropriate town name:

From Colwyn Bay to Kettering
They're sobbing themselves to sleep,
The shrieks and wails
In the Yorkshire dales
Have even depressed the sheep.

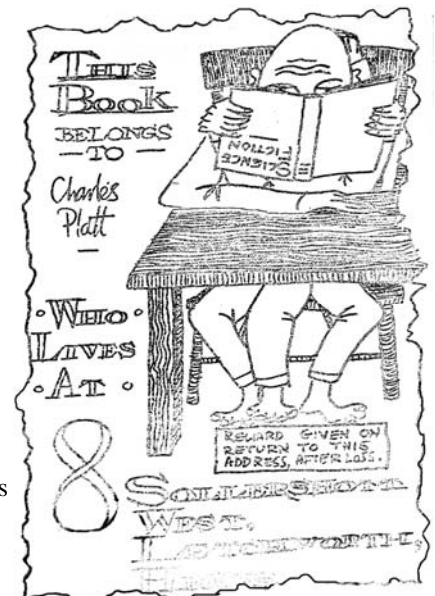
My only other paltry anecdote concerns a discovery in a book on George Locke's table: a 1960s bookplate design by none other than Charles Platt. I'd forgotten my camera but Rob Hansen photographed this for me. When I sent a copy to Charles, he was mildly amazed: "Actually I don't think I do have any copies of that old book plate. Most of my British science fiction collection was consumed in the fire that started when Michael Moorcock was staying at my old flat on Ledbury Road." He'd produced it on a then-expensive spirit duplicator that cost five months' savings.

Ah, nostalgia! //

– Dave Langford, January 2009



Photo by Mike Meara





Above: With beans and zap-guns Eric Jones & Mal Ashworth battle the fake-fans!
Right; Youngsters – Irene Gore, Tony Klein, Ken Potter, Peter Reaney, Archie Mercer. Front row; Sheila & Mal Ashworth.



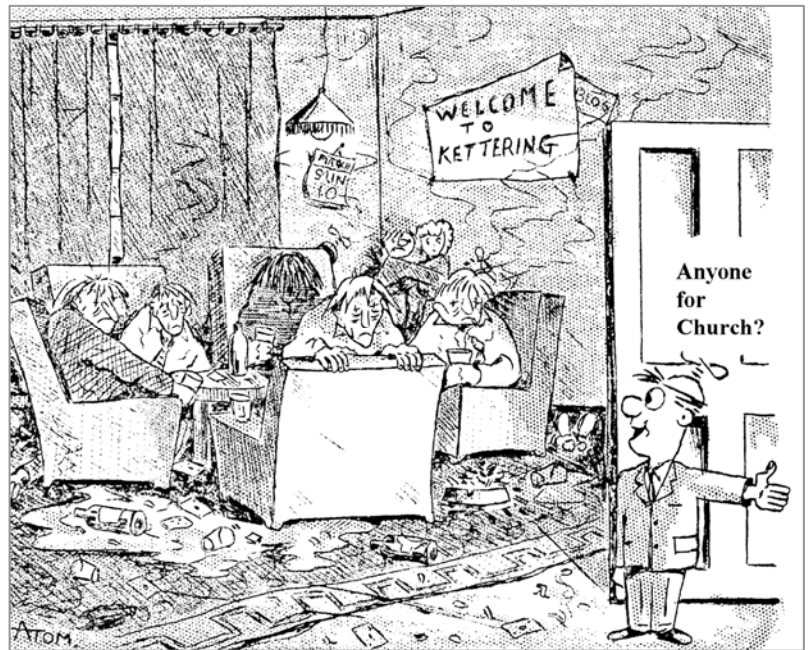
CYTRICON *the Blogcon*
8th-10th April 1955



Above; Ina as Space Warrior Woman & John Roles as Pharaoh, maybe.



Right; Denny Cowan, local fan and organiser of *Cytricon I*.



Right; A good-natured Peter Hamilton shows a bottle of his special-formula Blog to Peter Reaney (left).



Above; Don Allen is under the table with 'Shameless Shirl(ey)' Marriott.



Left: Ina comforts Norman Wansborough.

Far left; Sunday-night celebrations in the bar.

Impressions of Kettering Past – Cytricon I (1955)

Some extracts from the many reports which described the fun and games at the first Kettering convention.

Friday, 5.00 pm; The scene here in the bar lounge was picturesque in the extreme. Everyone seemed to be wearing helicopter beanies, all home-made and each more picturesque than the next. Sheila (O'Donnell) wore hers, a double-prop job, through the streets of Kettering without attracting more than cursory attention... which is a commentary on women's hats. Eric Jones's was by far the most imposing, incorporating as it did a radar antenna, several Van Der Graaf generators and a spaceship complete with launching bowl. He didn't so much wear it as shelter beneath it. During the official programme Terry Jeeves lit a small fire under the spaceship. It presented a most imposing sight but Eric remained oblivious, even when Burgess came up from the back of the hall and extinguished the conflagration with his zap-gun.

The presence of all these helicopter beanies... far more than can be seen at a dozen American conventions... was fascinating to the fan-historian. The beanie was first introduced to fandom by Ray Nelson and (I think) George Young many years ago, but they've never been conventional headgear in America as they now are in British fandom, and they owe their currency, it seems to me, solely because of their convenience as a recognisable symbol for fan-artists – mainly Lee Hoffman. As with conventions themselves, British fandom is acting-out what US fandom only dreams. – Walt Willis, *Hyphen #14*

Friday, 10.00 pm: The Night Porter arrived to take orders for tea and a sort of thrilled, tense feeling seemed to run around the room as everyone realised that the Manager, as a climactic attempt to make us feel at home, had imported an incredible denizen of the world of the Undead Dead to act as Night Porter. He was a sort of hyper-Karloff-Lugosi, stooping, massive, grisly – and a genuine nice guy. He liked fans! He stuck up for them against the police, he supported the spirit of All-Night Parties, he listened to an SF serial on the radio, he squirted fans with a water-pistol; I heard that he even refused one of their tips! You can't ask for much more than that! Walt suggested that Fandom hire him for all future conventions and pay him a restraining fee. – Mal Ashworth, *BEM #5*

Saturday, 2.00 pm: By now the walls of the hall were covered with adverts for various fanzines, prozines and BLOG! Chairs, books, tables were all buried in quote-cards. Archie Mercer distributed the largest amount of quote-cards, he must have had thousands, other cards came from the Liverpool boys but these were mostly adverts for the tape-recording they were putting on at three-thirty, sponsored by BLOG, an imaginary product that 'caught on' better than I think was expected. The barmen put up an advert for the stuff and I heard that regular customers of the hotel had actually been asking when it would be available. The waiters and barmen were right in the groove of things and played along fine, saying that BLOG would be on sale soon! Yes indeed, a real tru-fannish place, the manager was delighted with everything and the barmen even went as far as getting their own zap-guns. BLOG adverts were all over the hotel and so were Archie's quote cards.

The con hall was a most fannish scene indeed, zap-gun duels were being held, pros were talking in groups, beanies bobbing up and down, fen chasing femmes, Burgess jerking around... oh yes, Burgess had a lovely hat, one of those Alpine types with a fifteen-inch feather stuck in it, the hat was green and the feather white and he wore it the whole weekend except when somebody took it from him and emptied their zap-gun into it! – Don Allen, *Satellite #6*

Saturday, 10.00 am; I went down to the party in the hotel Billiard Room... The only stuff worth drinking seemed to be well-protected by the group around Ted Tubb so I wandered off and raked-out the obliging night-porter and got myself a lovely double whiskey. Having only taken a couple of sips from my glass, I'm standing in the middle of the room beaming upon fandom in general, when a devilishly gloating voice (which might well have issued from the graveyard of a fog-shrouded Highland Kirk at midnight on All Hallows Eve!) said, "Have some Blaog". Before I could do more than shudder at the Awful Menace in the tone, I did have some Blog – all mixed-in with my lovely double whiskey. Peter Hamilton was grinning like a Bogle! Well, there wasn't much I could do but try the mixture. It wasn't quite as bad as I'd expected, and I was pretty canned anyway. Soon after, someone added some ginger-ale to the concoction, then the fan dressed as a Roman or whatever gave me some rum as well. – Mike Wallace, *Triode #4*

Sunday, 4.00 am; Everything that happened after ten-thirty is just a vague haze, I remember necking under a table with Shamey, punning with Archie Mercer and Eric Bentcliffe, receiving quote cards from Chuck Harris, talking into the tape-recorder, drinking my bheer after somebody had doctored it (which nearly killed me) and a million other things. There were fen in Fancy Dress and Ina Shorrock was wearing a Space Maiden's rig-out and looking very attractive indeed. My senses were brought back to normal when the Law entered the room. It was pretty near empty at this time, four a.m., and I was lying on the floor behind Walt's chair. When I saw those uniforms through the haze I shot bolt upright, a deathly hush fell over the room, then one of the policemen explained he was just checking-up to see if everybody present was a resident.

Quick glances and knowing winks passed from fan to femme as the ball started to roll and those present gave their names and room numbers. Came my turn - "Ron Bennett," I said, "Room 101." The cop checked the register, said everything was in order and then left without even bothering to wake Harry Clements who was sprawled across a table sound asleep. (He told me later that he slept there all night). After the cops had gone silence reigned for a while, not broken until a snore echoed from the sleeping beauty, then everyone laughed and started to talk at once. – Don Allen, *Satellite #6*

Sunday, 5.00 pm: We all wandered off down to the station – Walt and Madeleine, Chuck, Arthur Thomson, Vince and Joy, Ken and Pam Bulmer, Eric Bentcliffe, Eric Needham (who had just arrived a few minutes earlier on his motor-bike), Sheila and I. There we stood chatting until their train arrived; then, just as they were boarding it, we all sprinkled confetti, which Sheila had distributed surreptitiously, over Walt and Madeleine. Someone said Madeleine looked radiant, and Ken Bulmer called, "Give our love to the children". Then they were gone. – Mal Ashworth, *BEM #5*

In retrospect: It seems as if the *Supermancon* has set a pattern or rather a lack of pattern from which all subsequent cons will be unable to escape. Now this *Cytricon* for instance did indeed have some sort of an official programme, but that was only good for laughs. So was the convention itself, but it had nothing in common with the programme. Nevertheless, what with beanies, zap-guns and other people's girlfriends we had a jolly good time, took most lunches in liquid form and went to bed tired and late, if at all. – Nic Oosterban, *Alpha #10*

Cytricon II

30th March – 1st April 1956



Above; Front row is Sheila O'Donnell, Pam Bulmer, Dave Kyle, Lee Hoffman Shaw, and Arthur Thomson.

Right; Ted Carnell leads the discussion about a London worldcon in 1957.



Left; Ina, René McKay, Dave Newman, & Stan Nuttall in their costumes.



Left; the March on the Royal, with Dave, René, Stan, John, Norman & Archie with his trumpet.



Left; Dave Newman introduces the cast after the Liverpool Group's tapera of 'Last and First Fen'.



Left; Eric B, Terry, & Eric Jones rescue Ellis Mills and his bottle from clutches of the 'Big BEM' (Dave Newman) in the car park.

Right; 'Rita Peaney' with hapless victim!



Left; Peter Hamilton of *Nebula* meets the Big BEM, with Eric Bentcliffe lurking behind.

Right; Dan Morgan plays John Brunner's guitar to a late-night gathering of fans.



Remembering Kettering Past – Cytricon II (1956)

More extracts from convention reports, explaining what was going on in the photo-page, facing.

Friday, 4.00 pm: It was at Kettering that I became probably the Only Fan Ever to Keep Ghod Waiting on the Doorstep. I was sharing a room with Walt, and when Sheila and I arrived [at the Royal] Walt hadn't, so we collected the keys of both our rooms (Sheila's was a single next door to ours), dumped our luggage and ate a sandwich tea sitting on the window-ledge in Sheila's room, looking down into the street below to watch for Walt arriving. Someone – maybe cleaners, or porters, or rickshaw boys, maybe – kept tramping up and down outside in the corridor, but we saw no sign of Walt. After an hour or so we decided to go out and see whom we could find and – what do you know – Walt had been walking up and down the corridor for an hour, waiting for me to turn up so that he could get into the room. – Mal Ashworth, *Triode #9*

Saturday breakfast: All sorts of transatlantic types were now in evidence. Lee Hoffman of course – who looked nothing at all like a BNF, or even an ex-BNF, but looked in fact like nothing more sensational than a perfectly normal specimen of healthy American girlhood. Larry Shaw, who had just scooped world fandom by marrying her, looked exactly like the typical Englishman's idea of a typical American. Dave Kyle, on the other hand, looked more like the typical American's idea of a typical Englishman. Ellis Mills just looked gently Transatlantic. – Archie Mercer, *Ploy #6*

Saturday, 11.30 am: First item on the programme was Harry Powers with his demonstration of hypnotism. It was an outstanding success – so I'm told – but Harry called for volunteers, and I was one. Apparently I went under quite fast, and to those who have never been hypnotised I can assure you it is a weird experience – but nothing to be scared about – not to have full conscious control over one's actions but at the same time be aware of all that is going on. The effect of a final suggestion that I should stop smoking had an effect for four hours afterwards... it would probably have lasted longer had I been anywhere but at a con.

The afternoon session was opened with the Liverpool Group's tapepic, 'Last & First Fen', which ran for 50 minutes. In conjunction with this the most excellent etchings of scenes from the tape were displayed around the hall... Attila the Fan... Bonnie Price Hamilton.... A poster 'Hear and Thrill to the exploits of Robin Shorrock and his Merry Fen'. The tape itself went back through the ages to the time of Cleopatra and Mark Antony and went on to the future when Fen would travel to Mars and beyond. Afterwards Dave Newman brought the cast on-stage to take a bow. – Eric Jones, *Sidereal π*

Saturday, 5.00 pm: Some quotes: There was Terry Jeeves struggling to break the all-time convention tea-drinking record in one of the cafes nearby, breaking off to exclaim, "Phew, I shall be glad when I've had enough." Ellis Mills saying, "You have to be in bed by 7.00 a.m. to get your morning tea." Or Larry Shaw explaining, "Infinity was late because of a genuine, honest-to-goodness shortage of paper," and Lee adding dryly, "Yeah, the green kind." – Mal Ashworth, *Triode #9*

Saturday, 6.00 pm: After tea I brought down the gramophone and some records and got a jazz session going. Shirley Marriott contributed some records to the heap and for several hours there was always a group on the platform, listening. The London Circle Punch-Party came and went, we all got drunk, and the gramophone was evacuated. I now had four people's records in my room – my own, John Brunner's, Geoff Wingroves's, and Shirley's. (I think the only 'independent' was Peter Hamilton, who'd brought a hand-wound model to play his records on). Then I went off to don my tabard, constructed of quote-cards [such as, 'Yngvi is a Scouse' – PW], pick up my 'Goldentone' toy trombone with hanging banner attached, and join the Liverpool Fancy Dress Party in the guise of 'Fantasy Herald'.

Eric Jones's 'Big BEM' costume was the high-spot, other notables being Ina Shorrock (painted green all over – virtually so, anyway!) – as a Krishnan, Norman as a sort of fannish Robin Hood in a Davy Crockett hat complete with motor-powered propeller, and of course Peter Reaney as 'Rita Peaney'. With the very minimum of props – a cloth around his thighs and a headscarf, mainly – he looked extremely effective. Everyone circulated – until the Great Procession.

Actually there were two processions. The first was merely a circular tour through the bar lounge, round by the back exit and in again through the front door. (If you haven't seen the Big BEM navigating the revolving door, you haven't LIVED!) Then somebody had the wonderful idea of 'parading to the Royal to let the overflow hotel have a look at us'. As before I was detailed to lead the procession, since I was the nearest thing to a marching band on the premises. At any rate I provided a noise about which the milling masqueraders were able to rally, which was the main thing.

We assembled in the yard, and Ken Slater ably marshalled the happy band, I was told to march, and I marched. On the trombone I could – if lucky – strike the notes for four jazz-type marches' Gettysburg, The Saints, Maryland, and my favourite, Oh Didn't He Ramble. So I did, and distracted only by Burgess, headed boldly up the road for the Royal. Behind me came the Procession. Across the road by the fish-&-chip shop, past the post office, past two policemen who never said a word, finally to bring up against the Royal Hotel's main entrance.

I pushed in, made sure someone was following me, and asked which way. "Upstairs," I was told. So blowing again, I went, and we huddled on the landing in a sort of 'disaway-dataway' argument, which was where the Manager found us, and peremptorily ordered us off the premises. [He threw them out with some remark about not wanting any bloody circus in his hotel – PW]. So we went, retreating with full military honours and to the stirring of 'Maryland, My Maryland', I piped the procession back to the George and the Liverpool Party. – Archie Mercer, *Ploy #6*

Sunday, 2.30 pm: I remember Dave Kyle's outline of the plans for the 1956 New York World Convention. His listing of all the committees and sub-committees they had lined-up for this affair caused me great doubts as to whether we should have enough fans in Britain to have one on each of these committees, if London should get the Worldcon in 1957. [Ted Carnell said the venue would either be London or a holiday camp at Great Yarmouth – PW] – Mal Ashworth, *Triode #9*

Monday, 2.00 am: Dave Newman did the ritual shaving... this time instead of half his moustache he shaved half his face, which was liberally covered with a few weeks' growth. Entertainment was provided by Ina Shorrock and Shirley Marriott who danced a hula (complete with grass skirts) on Dave's bed... I then adjourned to room 12A where a tape was made of sundry drunken fen singing, to the accompaniment of Dan Morgan with John Brunner's guitar. – Eric Jones, *Sidereal π*

Cytricon IV

4th-7th April 1958

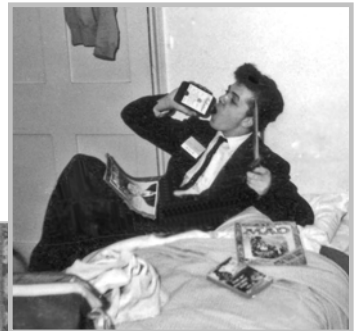
Birthplace of the BSFA – though sadly the occasion was not recorded on film.



Above; Sandra, John & photographer friends take a stroll to the local cemetery!
Right; Watched by Eddie & John, Doc and Joan Hammett study form in Ploy-12



Above; Bryan Welham & Barry Hall of the short-lived Clacton group.



Above; Bill Harry has a private bottle!



Top: Eric & Terry. Above, rare picture of Ted & Iris at a con.



Left; Ina and Dave Newman dispense 'Poleaxe Punch', watched by Dave's girlfriend Jean Vallis.



Above; Chuck Harris is exhausted by Bobbie Wilde's attentions!

Left; Homeward bound – a mixed bag of fans pose at Kettering station.

Forever Kettering – Cytricon IV (1958)

A final set of extracts from con-reports of the time. No programme at all this year, just Desperate Fun as illustrated by the images opposite, until suddenly things turned serious.....

Thursday, 1.15 pm: Bryan [Welham] and I arrived at the George Hotel and found that we were the first fen to arrive, thus winning a race with Ron Bennett who was our first contact with extra-Clactonian fen, and who wasn't forthcoming until 4.15 in the afternoon. I found Ron a sincere fan with a streak of humour that makes him doubly nice to know. He invited us up to his room where we perused photographs of past Ketterings and Ron told us what to expect over the coming weekend. But it wasn't anything like what actually *did* happen. – Barry Hall, *Perihelion* #3

Friday, midnight: A few chose to wait up for Brian Burgess who has phoned the hotel to say that he is hitch-hiking very slowly in the wrong direction and that, having reached Scotland, he is now back on course and will they leave the front door open, please? I hear that when he arrives at 4.00 a.m. his first action is to chase one of the girls along the passage, but I can hardly believe that. Who can have so much energy? When I breakfast with him at nine, he is perfectly fit and talking chiefly about having had trouble with a Jaguar's big end. – Sid Birchby, *Triode* #14

Saturday 9.00 pm: Throughout the day John Roles and Ina Shorrock had been collecting money from the sale of raffle tickets for TAFF and the draw for the cover paintings to be held on the Saturday night. Eventually most of the fans adjourned to the Basket Lounge, where several tapes were played – mainly jazz, and too much Elvis Presley. I was sitting with Chuck Harris (he had a bottle of Scotch) and we were getting high. Just as the last of the Scotch disappeared, Ina and Dave Newman appeared with the punch. It looked and tasted quite mild, but Ina told me the base was 140-proof Polish spirit. She forgot to tell me the other ingredients included rocket fuel and a dash of Brasso. – Bobbie Wilde, *Femizine* #10

Sunday, 3.00 am: We found ourselves swept along by the mob to Sandy's room again. It was here that Terry Jeeves held us enthralled for half-an-hour while he told the shaggiest dog story I've ever heard and balanced a glass of bheer on his nose at the same time. Brian Burgess came in full of life, plonked himself down on the nearest bed and dropped off to sleep. Sandy tried hard to get everybody to sing his latest composition, 'Charlie Mopps', but nobody seemed very interested and the room gradually emptied of fen. Passing that way several hours later I saw my very first example of Norman and Ina Shorrock's handiwork. Sandy's bed had been turned upside-down and inside-out and the bedclothes were scattered all over the floor. Together with Sandy we tracked-down the two guilty Liverpoolians, who hotly denied being the culprits. If I'd had any sense I would have locked our bedroom door then. – Barry Hall, *Perihelion* #3

Sunday, 5.00 am; Gradually the numbers shrink until only a dozen hard cases are left. Allow me to describe the scene, it may help to convey some of the Marx-Brotherish atmosphere of the night... A smell of coffee drifts up the stairs... that's Bill the night-waiter brewing up, I suppose. A little while ago someone has locked me in the pantry, and while getting the door open I have made tea. Through the skylight I watch the... uh...sky lightening and hear a thrush singing. All is peace. Then with a wild shriek Ina Shorrock flees past the pantry door hotly pursued by Lawrence Sandfield and the mob. I never know why. Staggering along in the rear is Ron Bennett, roused from slumber, but fast relapsing. I shrug, and go back to my pantry for a second cup. Peace again... Thunder of footsteps. Bennett races past. There's no-one else in sight. "How d'you do?" I say politely, putting my head into the dark corridor. "How d'you do?" he replies, not pausing to see who it is, and steams into the distance. Again, I don't know why, because by now the hotel is at last asleep apart from a groaning far-off, like the unquiet spirit of Archie Mercer's accordion. – Sid Birchby, *Triode* #13

Sunday, 2.00 pm: Everyone gathered in the lounge pending the arrival of Dave Newman who had the difficult task of starting a discussion on the formation of a new SF Society. At first the atmosphere was very sleepy, but within five minutes I saw a most dramatic change came over all fen present, as fandom went from the light-hearted mood of the room parties to the deadly serious manner of the discussion. Dave did an absolutely grand job of getting it running smoothly, with a tape from Vinç Clarke and Walt Willis to set it going. The results of the discussion far surpassed anything hoped-for, and at the end of the afternoon a vote was taken. This was pretty unanimous, there being only two dissensions – Brian Burgess and Norman Wandsborough, both of whom were asleep. – Barry Hall, *Perihelion* #3

Sunday, 5.30 pm; It was getting towards tea-time when it became obvious that conditions were ripe for something really constructive to come from the meeting. This placed me in something of a dilemma as I didn't particularly want to offend those not present by rushing ahead and forming an organisation effectively 'over their heads' and without their approval. I thought that the likelihood of giving offence was all the more strong because it was becoming increasingly evident that any organisation born from the meeting was going to diverge quite strongly from ideas already expressed by leading fans. On the other hand, I was beset by the conviction that if the session closed on a note of inconclusive discussion then an unparalleled opportunity might have been missed. There was no possibility that a similar meeting of a large number of fans could be assembled together until the next convention – and God alone knew when that might be! I wasn't really left with much of an alternative, was I? – Dave Newman, *Prodigal*

Sunday 11.00 pm: For a moment we see that fandom is slipping away, and with a unity of action and lack of heroics that is rare in fan-politics, we do something about it. This is the third national fan-society I've seen, and the most likely to succeed where the SFA and the BFS have failed. We stay talking in the lounge until 2.00 a.m. when Bobby Wilde and Ella Parker invite Jack Wilson, Ivor Mayne and me to a room party with sandwiches and coffee. Somehow, we find Brian Burgess in a corner, reading the Bible aloud. We feed him sandwiches to stop him. He hides the crusts in Ella's bed, where she finds them with a merry laugh at 6.00 a.m. and he begins anew. In desperation we turn off the light, so he quotes from memory. We light up again and give him some SF to read. That quietens him. He goes to sleep. Phil Rogers taps on the door, says hello and this signals the invasion of everyone left awake... final count, 24 in a room for two. – Sid Birchby, *Triode* #13

Finally – Cytricon III (overpage). Photographs only, since we ran a commentary on that year in *Prolapse* #9.

Right; Ken Slater sells pro-mags to Ken McIntyre.

Far right; Ron teaches Dave Jenrette how to lose money at 3-card Brag.



Cytricon III – The 'Forgotten Convention' 19th- 21st April 1957



Above: Lawrence Sandfield entertains Ina, Dave, Bill Harry, Norman and John in the car park.



Above; Dave Jenrette's cover for Ploy #10

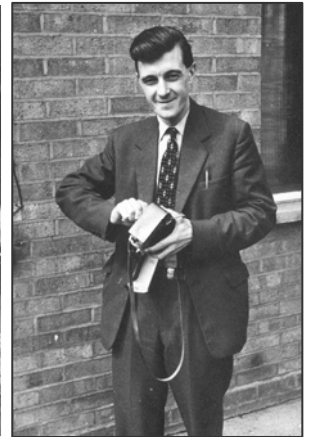
Right; Ron always was a bit of a charmer!

Below: Victims line up for the first St Fantasy ceremony



Left; Eric advises Archie to take it easy!

Far left; Norman changes film after a busy session!



Below: Archie, Bill Harry, Ken Slater and Ron raid the local second-hand bookshop.





And now for something completely different. It's funny how we can lose track of even the most basic facts after a few years have passed. Take the case of the old London 'Globe'; considering the number of fans who went through that pub, you wouldn't think there'd be any doubt about its location. Not so, however, as Rob Hansen found out..... (pw)

The Globe Mystery

By Rob Hansen

Is this the old
Globe, refurbished
and with a coat of
bright pink paint?
Photo by Jim
Linwood.



A while back I lamented to Peter Weston that though I had photos of the exteriors of almost every pub where London fandom had held its Thursday night meetings since the 1930s – including even a partial shot of the bombed-out remains of the very first one, the *Red Bull* – I'd never come across one of the *Globe*. Given that London fans had congregated there for more than twenty years, this was remarkable. Someone must have taken a photo of it at some point, surely? This prompted an e-mail from Peter:

"I remembered that in the summer Jim Linwood took a few pictures of the building that was the *Globe* – I'm attaching them here for interest. Jim said, 'Attached are a couple of photos of *The Bleeding Heart Tavern* (formerly *The Globe*) in Greville Street, Hatton Garden. It's structurally the same on the outside and a refurbished cafe/bar inside...."

This was a startling thing to receive. As I wrote back to Peter:

"OK, now I'm deeply confused. I'd always understood the *Globe* was demolished in 1974 and that the *King of Diamonds* – where BSFA meetings were held in the early 1980s – was built on the site. This is what Greg and others who were round at the time and were *Globe* regulars told me, anyway. Either they're wrong or Jim is.

To which he replied:

"Yes, I'm equally confused; my understanding also was that the old building had been demolished. And yet Jim's pictures look awfully like the old *Globe* in physical size and shape."

I know from interviews I conducted with old-time fans when doing research for *THEN* that people's memories are fallible, but surely the *Globe*, renamed, hadn't been standing there all this time, after all? I had always believed that impending demolition was why London fans had moved the by-then first-Thursday-only meetings to the *One Tun*. The obvious first place to check this out was the contemporary British newszine, *Checkpoint* (<http://checkpoint.ansible.co.uk/>).

The first reference I found was in #44 (Dec '73), when editor Peter Roberts reported: 'THERE'S A DEATHLESS HUSH AT THE GLOBE TONIGHT, mainly because they are pulling the place down... They will rebuild it, however; but the pub which has housed the regular London meetings for the last twenty years is changing owners and is to be completely revamped. I'm not yet sure when the place is to be closed, but I believe there's some leeway yet. Meetings will be arranged elsewhere, at any rate.'

In *Checkpoint* #48 (May 6th, '74), by now edited by Darroll Pardoe, it was reported that: 'The *Globe* was still there last time I went down Hatton Garden but its days are now definitely numbered, as the devastation creeps nearer along the street....'

And in #49 (May 29th, '74): 'It is hoped to organise a special *Globe* meeting to honour the visit of Dr Asimov, at which he will be present. I've had conflicting reports on the date of this, but Wednesday 12th June seems most probable. Need I point out that this may well be the last-ever meeting at the *Globe*?'

By #54 (Oct '74) the move had taken place: 'A NIGHT AT THE ONE TUN. We went along to the First-Thursday-of-the-Month gathering in London last week, and are happy to report that the move from the *Globe* hasn't affected the popularity of the event. In fact, although the floor area in the bar at the *One Tun* is greater, the people density seemed just as large as it used to be at the *Globe*. Apparently the *Globe* hasn't yet been pulled down, and now that we've moved away they've installed a new sign showing an astronaut and planet.'



A fragmentary view of the *Globe* during the Asimov visit. Rob says, "From the orientation, it looks as if it was taken in Greville Street." Photo from unknown source.

And that, alas, was the last thing *CHECKPOINT* had to say on the matter. That bit about the sign worried me. Why would you put up a new sign on a pub that's about to be demolished? Was it possible that, after London fans had moved on to a new pub, the old one had been given a reprieve?

Greg Pickersgill is aiding me on a project with which I'm currently involved, to get every issue of WWII news-zine *Futurian War Digest* on-line (<http://www.fiawol.demon.co.uk/rob/>). Since I needed to e-mail him about that project anyway, I decided to run the problem past him, including a copy of Jim Linwood's photo, quoting what Jim had said about it, and giving my reaction to receiving them thus:

"Uh, what? I thought the *Globe* was demolished in 1974 and the *King of Diamonds* – home of early '80s BSFA meets – built on the site. Attached is one of Jim's photos. Does this look like the *Globe*? (I never saw it.) Have we all somehow slipped into a parallel universe?"

Some days later, Greg responded: "Well, I wonder. I've been prodding this little problem a bit over the last few days and damned if I can be certain either way. I certainly went to the old *Globe* every month between late 1971 and whenever we transferred to the *One Tun*, but I don't really have much of a memory of the outside of the building. It was on a corner, and the main door was where it apparently is (not the one on the corner, I mean the one on the left side of the building as seen in the photo) but there definitely wasn't a functional door where that corner door is.

"I dunno. I was quite sure it had been demolished along with a lot of other large buildings in that area. I remember walking past the building sites, especially the huge one where the old Gages building used to be. This is peculiarly baffling. And hard to resolve. Who can we find who went to the *Globe* regularly and wasn't so hammered every time that they now can't remember anything about the outside of the place? Irritatingly, I remember the interior quite well, really."

When Peter had first sent me Jim's photos I was convinced Jim must be mistaken, but by this point I was beginning to have my doubts. It still seemed likely he was wrong, but I needed to prove it one way or the other. From my time doing research for *THEN* I knew how this could easily be accomplished. Replying to Greg, I wrote:

"This shouldn't be too hard for me to resolve, actually. A web-trawl yesterday turned up nothing directly about the *Globe* and its location, but from this site: http://ultimatepubguide.com/pubs/info.phtml?pub_id=249 I learned the '*Bleeding Heart Tavern*' which Jim Linwood identifies as the former *Globe* had been called, of all things, 'the *Windsor Grill*' until 1998 – though no mention of from *when* it was called this. Now, my office at work is having secondary double-glazing installed on Monday so I've taken a day's leave in order to do some Xmas shopping. While I'm in town, I can pop into Holborn library and do a bit of research in their local history section. This should only take a few minutes. A phone book circa 1970 will give me the exact address of the *Globe*, and whether it's the same as that of the current-day *King of Diamonds*. If there's also an entry for the *Windsor Grill*, I can then ask Jim to change the captions on his flickr page since we really shouldn't be spreading false information." (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/brighton/2561415670>)

Simple, right? Yeah, that's what I thought, too. By now, I really should have known better. So, anyway, on the Monday I visited Holborn Library and checked out their local history section. This wasn't my first visit to the library or to that section. Twenty years earlier I had combed through their bombing records to discover exactly when the *Red Bull* and the legendary Flat (pre-war home to Arthur C. Clarke, William Temple, & *Novae Terrae* editor Maurice K. Hanson) had been taken out – April 16th, 1941, for those of you interested.

The old phone books I went through weren't as conclusive as I'd hoped they would be. There was no entry I could find for either the *Windsor Grill* or the *Bleeding Heart Tavern*, and the address given for the *Globe* – 91 Hatton Garden – was not the same as that of the current-day *King of Diamonds*. Given that 'the *Globe*' is not that uncommon a name, it was even possible this wasn't the same pub that fans had met in. Still, it was all I had to go on so I decided to check out Hatton Garden and to see where number 91 might be. Starting at the southern end, I walked along the street, getting further and further away from known fannish haunts, until it ended – at number 57! So, all in all, my little expedition had proved a complete bust, leaving me more confused than ever. My (non) findings were frustrating to Greg, too:

"I've been searching the British magazines for any reference to the *Globe* – particularly the 1953/4 issues which might have had something as a result of the change from the *White Horse*, but if there is anything I haven't found it. I also did a run through the Willis column in *Nebula*, but nothing there other than just a mention of the *Globe* as a meeting place, no address. Just the usual 'Hatton Garden' reference which does actually reinforce my feeling that the 91 HG address IS the correct one. I haven't checked any fanzines of the day yet.

"This is actually incredibly annoying; I must have gone to the *Globe* about fifty times and it was a very important place in my life for some years. It's very irritating to find I have no clear memory of where it was! I tellya, if it wasn't so damned expensive to get a train to London I'd go up and look around myself, just to see if anything shook a memory loose. But then, I do believe that the whole area was redeveloped. Well, I think I believe that. Arrrrgh!"

At work, I have a large-scale copy of the London A-Z, from which I decided to scan a map of the area in question. That's when I spotted something and had one of those Homer Simpson "doh!" moments. I was pretty sure I had solved the mystery. As I wrote to Greg:

"OK, I think I've sorted this out now, though I'll need another site visit to confirm it. Attached is a map of the area with the locations of the *King of Diamonds*, *One Tun*, and *Bleeding Heart Tavern* marked. This is copied from a large-scale A-Z in work. As A-Z usually does, it has building numbers periodically shown along the length of each street. If you look at Hatton Garden, you'll see a 9 and a 43 on the eastern side of the street, heading north. However, if you look at the western side of the street you'll see number 74. When I got to northern end of Hatton Garden yesterday, following those eastern numbers I arrived at number 57. Glancing across the road I saw number 58. Somehow, it never occurred to me that the numbers might march up one side of the road and back down the other, but I think they must do (not all shops display the building number so this is not at all obvious).

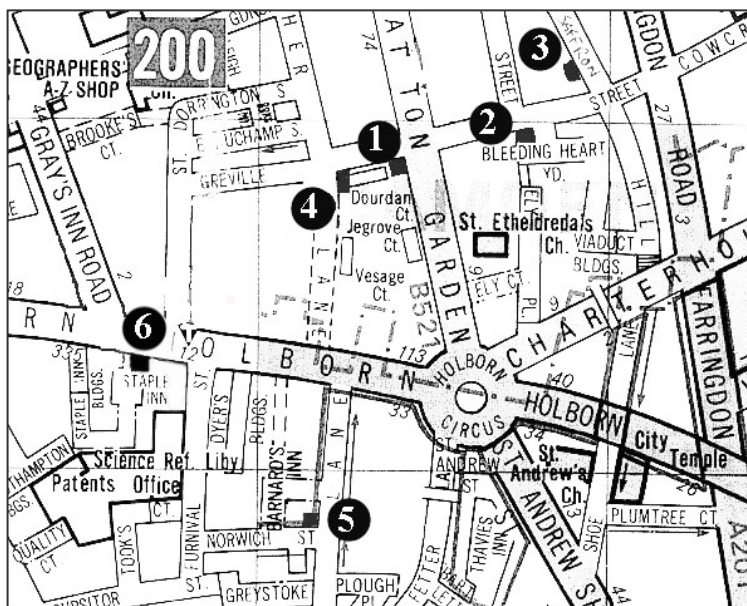
“That being so, I think number 91 Hatton Garden would be on the corner of Greville Street, only one corner up from Bleeding Heart Yard. That would put it on the same block as the *King of Diamonds* – the block bordered by Leather Lane, Greville Street, Hatton Garden, & High Holborn – a block whose buildings are much more recent than those nearby and which was obviously rebuilt in its entirety not too many decades ago.

“I’m next in town – and in Holborn, as it happens, this Thursday evening, so I can check this out. OK, it will be after dark but this being the diamond district it should be well-lit enough for me to see any numbers that are visible.”

Rob’s map, with fannish locations marked. North is towards the top of the page.-

1. Site of the *Globe* (corner of Hatton Garden & Greville Street)
2. Location of the *Bleeding Heart*
3. Location of the *One Tun*.
4. Location of the *King of Diamonds*.
5. Site of the *White Horse*.
6. Present meeting place – the *Melton Mowbray*.

The complete trail of London fan-venues over the years was published in Banana Wings, #22



And so it proved to be. The *Globe* had indeed stood on the corner of Hatton Garden and Greville Street (the old building directly opposite is numbered 88-90 thus proving this is where 91 must have been), whilst the *Bleeding Heart Tavern* is on the corner of Bleeding Heart Lane and Greville Street. Different corners, thus different pubs. I immediately conveyed this information to Jim Linwood, who quickly responded:

“Yes, you are right. I did a similar search on the internet recently but wasn’t 100% sure. I’ll amend my Flickr photo after writing this – perhaps it will get more hits with the ‘Little Dorrit’ connection. The reason I thought it was the *Globe* was mainly because I recall that area was deserted on Thursday evenings back in the 60s while the Hatton Garden/Greville street junction was very busy on my recent visit. Nevertheless, the *Bleeding Heart Tavern* is very much like a gentrified *Globe*.”

So, I’d proved Jim wrong but I’d also discovered I had been labouring under a misapprehension for decades. While the *Globe* was on the same block where the *King of Diamonds* now stands, the two do ***not*** share the same spot. I wonder where I got that idea from? Either way, it shows just how shaky some of the ‘facts’ we know about such things can be, just as the preceding demonstrates that the process of researching even fairly basic fan-historical information is not always quite as straightforward as it should be.

Rob Hansen, 13 Dec 2008.



Final proof; a postcard issued when new landlords took over the *Globe* in 1962 or so. Image from Terry Jeeves’ album (I think! – PW)

Rob’s photo of the present-day junction of Hatton Garden and Greville Street, showing a typically seventies concrete monstrosity.

PW commented, ‘I thought the *Globe* was at the junction of two fairly narrow lanes, whereas Hatton Garden itself looks to be a wide thoroughfare.’

Rob replied, ‘Possibly that bit of Greville Street and that end of Hatton Garden were narrower then (finding a pre-1970 London A-Z would **really** help here). That might’ve been one of the reasons for re-developing that block and losing Gamages in the process. I think the fact there are now wide pavements there and that the corner now starts with number 95 – numbers 91-94 are no longer anywhere to be found – suggests this could be true.’

PW: ‘In which case the exact site of the *Globe* must now be under the pavement/street. Shame!’





Bruce – soon after arriving in Britain.

Last time I was proud to present the final two parts (I thought) of Bruce Burn’s epic, in which our young New Zealander described his arrival in the UK back in August, 1960. But almost as soon as it appeared Bruce began a further episode, based on his notes and memories from long ago. As he says, “Previous chapters were written when I was a young man in my early twenties, attempting to keep a record of my life as I weaved my way through the years, not knowing what design the tapestry might reveal. Indeed, my naiveté extended to being ignorant that life produced a tapestry. The events of which I wrote were recent in my own past and it was no effort of memory to bring to mind the minutiae of relationships and the personality and appearance of those of whom I wrote. Now, it is many years later. While memories of some events and some individuals are clear in my old man's mind, the details of conversations and the sequence of events are much subdued and have sometimes become lost in that tapestry, which now covers a span of well over sixty years.” *All pictures by Bruce, unless noted otherwise.*



By Bruce Burn

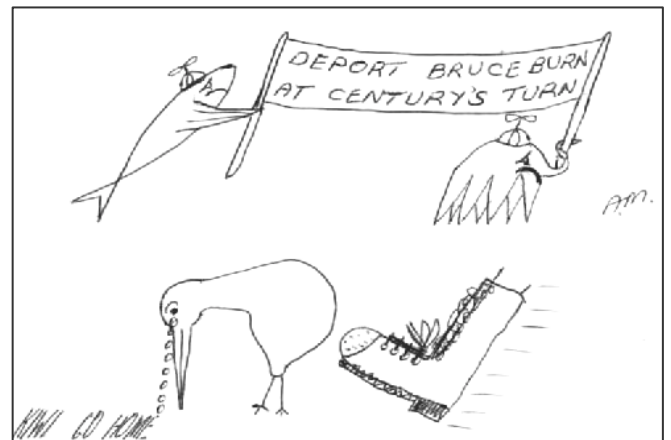
Part 6 – Journeys in Distant Lands

Following the strange Welcome party provided by the fans of London and other parts of the UK, I attempted to settle into life on the other side of the world. I still have little mementoes from those days, with excerpts from some of the first mail I received in London. A postcard from Archie Mercer continues the theme of “Ban the Burn” from the great welcome he and others had given me in Southampton. Jim Linwood, now safely back in his home in Nottingham, had similar thoughts when he found a picture in a Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament publication:

My Uncle Eric Burn had kindly agreed to let me stay at the home he shared with my paternal grandmother in Temple Sheen for a “while” as I sorted myself out. But my stay would be much shorter than I imagined it would be.

Uncle Eric lived in a small two-bedroom terrace house in a little oasis of houses in a quiet side-road in East Sheen. He had converted what would once have been called a “box-room” into a very small bedroom for me. The house itself was a few minutes walk from Richmond Great Park, as Eric showed me on one of those wonderful long autumn evenings. The evening lasted almost to midnight if you didn’t mind walking home under what seemed to be gaslights. And who would? It was chilly, but a warm coat and a scarf and the exercise of walking the pavements and the turf of the park kept one comfortable.

We’d had dinner quite early, because my grandmother planned her day to finish early and she liked to go to bed before seven. After Eric had made sure she was safe and secure, he and I headed for the walk to Richmond. We had only to walk along perhaps three blocks (although East Sheen is much too ancient to have square blocks and the roads all twisted thither way). Thinking back, it was the London that story-tellers love to picture: now you see it in



Above; Archie’s postcard. Below; Jim’s press-cutting.



delightful movies like *Mary Poppins* or some scenes from *Hook*. Almost a fairytale setting, you might imagine some characters from the mind of Charles Dickens walking the pavement ahead of you! Likely they still do!

The gates of Richmond Great Park loomed ahead of us, as a wonderful soft golden light introduced us to the long twilight of an early September. This was the twilight I had remembered from my childhood on the other side of London, in a nondescript 'dormitory' suburb in Kent, called Sidcup. In New Zealand, sunset was a brief affair rarely lasting more than half an hour, but here in the higher northern latitudes the closing of a day might last four hours or so from full light to darkness. We would certainly have ample time to stroll around a tiny part of the park.

Richmond Park is over two and a half thousand acres of hills and long sloping pasture, woodland, gardens, and many gracious old trees. It is a sort of semi-urban nature reserve which dates from 1637 when Charles I had the walls built to enclose what was his private preserve. The Park actually dates back at least two centuries earlier when King Edward owned it and knew it as the Manor of Sheen. Henry VII changed the name to Richmond, and in 1625 Charles I moved his court to Richmond Palace to escape the plague in London. He turned it into a park for red- and fallow deer. Although many people objected to the walls he put about the park, he did allow pedestrians the right of way, which freedom persisted to the times I was in London.

And walk is what you do on Richmond Great Park. It had been given to the nation as a nature reserve, and was still used for farming, despite being surrounded on all sides by the ever-spreading metropolis. I could see livestock in the form of sheep roaming over the acres, there was wildfowl further down the lea, and the park is famous for its population of deer, many of which could be seen on the green sward. They numbered over half-a-thousand, and a few were near enough for us to offer them food. From a coat pocket, Eric revealed slices of bread which he strewed on the ground around us. The animals, including young stags with points on their horns, placidly ate their way through our offerings, but sheered away from petting range as Eric reminded me it wasn't done to touch the stock.

In the distance there were copses of trees and shrubs, and I sensed there might be a lake nearby for the wildfowl, but what had started as a perfect evening began to cloud over and we expected our walk back might be rather a damp affair. The showers were light and sporadic, but they forced us from the gates of the park well before the various game-keepers and park attendants would be around to close them. However, the experience was a pleasant release from the granite, concrete, brick and steel environment of the London suburbs I had only begun to explore.

I was grateful to my Uncle Eric for his hospitality. One night he even took me to the theatre: a revue called *Pieces of Eight*, which was a series of sketches built around a group of very talented actors. But the performances, the material used, the style of the show reminded me so much of the old Victoria University Capping Revues from Wellington and hardly touched the production standards of the shows put on by our colonials, so I found it hard to show much more than lukewarm appreciation.

That was the night I met Vera, his long-time friend whom he later married. But at that time, poor Vera wasn't even allowed to enter the home at Temple Sheen. My

grandmother, called 'Nana' by everyone, was a tough old lady and she wouldn't let Eric bring "that woman" into the home. Marriage was out of the question so far as she was concerned. Eric by then was in his early fifties, and clearly had his course charted to seek retirement in a few more years. He would have liked to have married Vera then, but grand-mother made the position impossible.

Nana herself had had a tough life, married to a doctor in the Army, one of the first Army wives to join her husband in South Africa during the Boer War, making the best of life under bivouac, then losing her husband in the First World War where he had been injured, gassed, and buried alive for three days in a trench. After his death, she still had two sons to bring up, with meagre means to call upon. As she grew older, only her iron will seemed to have survived the wearying years, and by the time I arrived in England she had become a thin, fading, isolated, and forgetful old woman. She seemed to hold a bitterness within her that made conversation difficult, she was very hard of hearing, and she probably had enormous gaps in her memory. During one afternoon she expressed her bitter hatred of my mother, because as she saw it, mother had taken her older son away from her to the other side of the world, where he died just a few years later.

I didn't have the wit to remind her that my father had been born into a family that would have disappeared from the face of the Earth had he not married my mother and produced five sons, three of whom had by then produced another generation of sons and daughters. And she could not comprehend that it was my father who had wanted to leave England. Like many returning servicemen after WWII he saw little hope for the country he had helped defend, and wanted to establish his family elsewhere. I wonder how many other post-war families had similar divisions and resentments?

If Eric held similar feelings, he kept them to himself. He really didn't talk much about personal matters, and I quickly detected the tensions in the household. He hadn't married, led a quiet life, had worked since the war for the Midland Bank in the City but was currently on an extended leave for a combination of long service and sick leave, and of course he looked after his mother.

At home, he coped as best he could with Nana's tantrums, refusal to wear any new clothes to the point of using safety pins to hold old dresses together, her worsening acute deafness, and insistence on doing all the cooking on an old coal-range. I'd frequently hear him muttering quite loudly under his breath when she would be intransigent again, usually voicing what he'd like to say to her, and it seemed clearly evident that filial duty had long replaced any warmth of love in their relationship.

There was little I could do to help the situation. My relationship to Eric was strange. He was the younger brother of my father, who had died half a decade before I arrived in London. He was about the age my father was when he died, and bore some striking resemblance to Pop, but had quite a different nature. He had also seen service in WWII, and the two brothers met in Egypt while on active service, but otherwise he never spoke of his time in the Army. Because of the home situation, there seemed a sad and empty quality to the life he led, even though it was the life of a city gent for him. He and Vera would enjoy a couple of overseas cruises twice a year, usually to the Caribbean or somewhere in the Mediterranean, and frequent outings to the theatre. Clearly they were able to lead what they took to be a pleasant life away from Nana – but it must have been frustrating.

I had held some vague notion that Temple Sheen would be a base from which I might depart on expeditions into the countryside and further afield into Europe. I had the innocent optimism of youth, and expected to be able to do pretty well anything. I was healthy, I was energetic, and I could turn my hand to many things. That youthful arrogance expected everything of life. I'd never known want for food or comfort and had learned to be frugal. I had little money beyond enough to buy a ticket to get home, but I'd always found problems, when recognised, usually went away if dealt with patiently. That's how young I was.

In the last months of my OE, two and a half years later, someone asked me why I'd come to London, to England, to Europe. The question bothered me, because there seemed no single answer. Then an answer occurred to me but I don't think my questioner could quite appreciate it. The answer was, "To find what it's like to be hungry.", and that's what I said. I had to explain, "Where I grew up, in Wellington, New Zealand, if anyone had a bad time there was always someone who would help them through it. Collapse on the street, someone would pick you up, get you whatever help you needed, see you safely on your way." That was life as I had known it in the New Zealand of the fifties; it really was GodZone. I'd never known hunger. Never known material needs that were not met, and was brought up to keep my needs simple and of an essential nature. It was a very good attitude in a very good place to grow up, although it left you a little naïve for facing The Big Cold World Out There.

So, I had this happy disposition to explore the world with the optimistic thought that all would be well.

It came as a shock at the start of second week in London when Uncle Eric asked me how long I intended to stay at Temple Sheen. A termination to the stay hadn't occurred to me, so I was somewhat at a loss to reply. He said, "A couple more weeks?" and I realised he really hadn't opened his home to me forever. So I set about finding somewhere else to live.

It actually wasn't too hard. Rather than rush into private board or renting a room, I decided to do what many other Commonwealth travellers did and zeroed-in on the Overseas Visitors' Club in Earls Court.

The OVC had become a focus for huge numbers of New Zealanders, Australians, Canadians, and South Africans when they stayed in London. It was an octopus of a business, really, run by three young entrepreneurs, at least one of whom was a Kiwi. They'd begun buying properties in the vicinity of Earls Court, doing them up, and leasing them to holidaying 'colonials' who didn't want the fuss of finding their own accommodation and didn't mind sharing with others. Since many of their tenants had already got used to sharing cabins on the ships to get to London and most of them were young people, the idea of sharing rooms and houses was no great problem. If you put four or five such tenants into one large room of one of these converted houses, it kept their rents down pretty low and made a pretty profit for the OVC.

The Club itself also operated all the facilities young travellers needed, almost all under one roof not far from the Earls Court tube station: overnight accommodation, travel bookings, baggage storage, mail collection and forwarding, banking arrangements, a small short-term casual employment bureau, a shop selling all the gear you might need for holidaying, display boards for people to sell the things they no longer needed, and the DownUnder Club. The last was a night-club where you'd

be sure to bump into fellow ex-pats, a great place to catch up with gossip from home. It also featured great music and entertainment from the likes of the young Rolf Harris, an arts student who was just establishing himself as an entertainer.

It was really the sensible place for me to head, so within a fortnight, on the 11th September, I'd moved to Room 302, 16 Pennywern Road, one of the OVC rooming houses. Into a large basement room with three Aussies and a bloke from South Africa. The room contained its own wash basin and shower cabinet, but toilets and kitchen were in other rooms, and there was a sitting room and dining space upstairs. I never did find out how many other people lived in the place, partly because the population kept on changing and people came and left during their own travels, but I'd estimate the OVC made a pretty good killing from the rents of upwards of sixteen to twenty occupants in the building.



Wakey-wakey! Bruce in his room at Pennywern Road.

I promptly bought a motor scooter from a couple of Aussies who'd just 'done France' on it. A Lambretta with the number plate TXR721, which cost me fifty-five pounds. It suited me because the day after I left Temple Sheen and moved to Earls Court, I'd found a job, of sorts. It was working for a casual employment organisation, The Graydon Bureau, who essentially fitted people into the vast numbers of jobs available in a big city, especially during the summer when the 'regular' employees took their holidays and thus created short-term vacancies.

Much of their work was around the heart of business areas of London, and their office was right opposite the Law Courts where the Strand becomes Fleet Street. Indeed, my first job was actually working in their office doing some clerical task and copy-typing (no doubt, while they assessed me to ensure I could actually do that sort of work). When I signed up with them I'd said I was 21, even though it was a couple of weeks before I would attain that age, but they cheerfully gave me a bit of a birthday party on the actual date of my birthday.



The central criminal courts were right across the road!

I did a number of jobs with Graydon, running an Addressograph system at one place, operating a lift in a building owned by Nippon Yusen Kaisha in Cornhill Street, filling in during the holiday of an elderly law clerk in the sort of place where you'd expect to bump into Horace Rumpole, copy-typing form letters and addressing envelopes for the Crown Law Office, and eventually working in the Competitions Department of the Royal Automobile Club in Pall Mall! The last place eventually offered me a job permanently, and I worked there until February 1962, at one time even being the official Secretary of the very first British Karting Championship at Brands Hatch.

Meanwhile, the scooter had become my means to touring parts of the countryside, in addition to my daily transport. It also enabled me to visit a few fans in and around London.

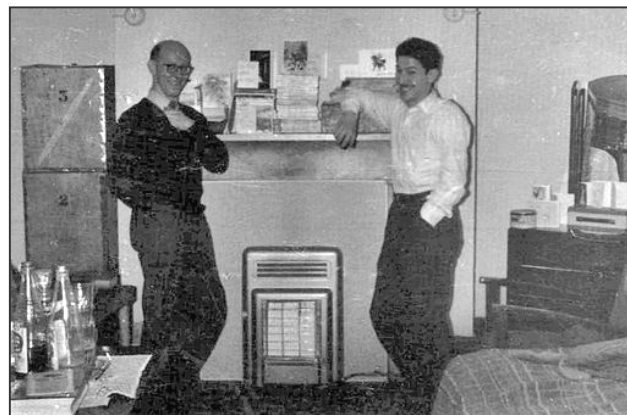


Ella Parker, Joe Patrizio, Ted Forsyth and Bruce, on the trusty scooter, autumn 1960.

I'd already been to The Globe at the start of September, before I had the scooter, and I'd found my way to Kilburn and the Penitentiary. Don Geldart had shown me many of the places You Need To Go around London, but my first longer trip on my own means of transport was in late September or early October. Starting at Jim Cawthorne's in Warwick Road (in Earls Court), I then headed to Richmond Park, Heathrow, and finally Eton and Windsor, where I happily joined the throngs of tourists wandering about the courtyards and some of the buildings of the royal residence.

What impressed me most was the complete freedom one enjoyed to roam about what is a magnificent castle, take pictures whenever and (it seemed) wherever you wished, and spend as long as you wanted in the castle. It was an attractive place, with the reality of ancient buildings and cobbled courtyards and paths graced with carefully tended trees and gardens and the picturesque presence of red-coated soldiers on guard in their bearskins. Riding my scooter home to the OVC, as the long autumn evening enriched the seasonal colours of gold and scarlet and russet deciduous trees, was a pleasure all of its own.

As September turned to October, I changed from being a tourist to living as a Londoner. I moved to a sparsely furnished room in Fernhill Road, Clapham North (in South London), where Joe Patrizio and Ted Forsyth already had a much more spacious couple of rooms.



They were two young men who'd come to London from Scotland, to make their fortunes in the fledgling computer industry. Joe had the ineffable charm of a Charlie Chaplin appearance – the actor not the tramp – and Ted presented a more serious (if not downright grim) exterior, balding and with thick glasses fitting him into the highly intellectual cybernetics mould.

My room had its own cooker and sink, but I had to share a communal bathroom, and access for everyone was through the front door and up the squeaky stairs. Furniture was a spartan bed, a chair and table, an easy chair, and basic bedding. The floor was linoleum with a well-worn rug covering the middle. I quickly bought some cooking pots, a towel and pillow-slip, sheets, a length of light rope as an impromptu indoor washing line, and an electric 2-bar fire.

Fandom became almost my entire social life, and I encountered a constant stream of faces new to me. Ken Cheslin came to town from his home near Birmingham. A very cheerful soul with a strange accent that took some getting used to, Ken published a fanzine called *Les Spinge*. He had worked as a machine operator but he'd had an accident at work which took off his right hand.

He accepted his loss with great aplomb and cheerfully used the various attachments provided by the Health Services: a hinged device for grasping things which required him to wear a belt rather like a gangster's under-the-jacket gun-holster, a simple 'dibber' which he used when typing, a spoon-like attachment to help him turn a steering wheel in a car (with a ball fixed to the wheel).

Many years later, in the late 1990s, Ken was one of the first still-active fans I contacted. I rang him early one morning and we had a long conversation over the telephone. He explained he'd married, had children, lived in a house where circumstances forced him to do his fanac in a small garage, which was pretty cold for much of the year. He hadn't got involved in the Internet, so writing and telephone were the only ways to keep in touch. He had produced some huge volumes of fanzines, including a reprint of the Atom Anthology, and a further edition, along with thick books of his favourite cartoon character "Olaf". He sent me a couple of packages of some of his works, and was about to send some more when he suddenly died. But that was all far in the future from the early 1960s, and deserves another article entirely.

Ken and Irene Potter invited me to stay a couple of nights at their flat, and after one of them we all got together with Mal and Sheila Ashworth, who were old friends of theirs from Lancashire days. It can be a difficult thing meeting someone like Mal; in print he had such a facile wit, but in person he seemed diffident and a little subdued.



Sheila & Mal Ashworth – this picture taken a little earlier, in Ella Parker's flat. (Photo from Ethel Lindsay's album)

Ken and Irene were expecting a baby, and within a few weeks they moved to a caravan on a site at Roydon, well to the north of London. I also met Chris Miller, a fan who was about to enter Oxford University, and as the next years passed his speech changed to take on the very distinctive "Oxford Accent", which is really more a manner of speech. One memorable afternoon I went to the famous Tate Gallery with Ron Bennett, Don Geldart, and Chris Miller to see the Picasso exhibition. Ron, who had had such problems with colour casts on his photographs, could hardly believe his eyes when we reached Pablo's blue period paintings!

I had a solo outing to Olympia on one occasion, to attend the Motor Show, and was lucky to be at the show where they introduced a new Jaguar and the new Morris Mini Minor and Austin 7 models to the public. There were many other cars, but what came to be known as the Minis, and the Mark II Jaguar, were all I really took notice of.



A Pair of Fine Rumps on Bruce's Scooter

As the long arm of summer shielded us from the approach of winter, I continued my longer rides into the country, visiting my own birthplace in Marlborough Park Avenue in Sidcup. The old house looked much as it had been a decade before when we left it to migrate around the world, and the same lovely old couple lived in the neighbouring house. Well, same house in a way, because they and we had lived in what was called a semi-detached house: separate house and gardens but one shared wall on the common boundary. And they were the same Mr and Mrs Rump I remembered, who greeted me on my popping scooter and made me stay for lunch.

In the afternoon I rode round to the home of a childhood friend, Peter Courtney, where he was visiting his parents at their home in Burnt Oak Lane, and eventually made my way to my old school, Pernovena, which had moved from near the Sidcup Oval to Station Road.

Ted Grant, the sole teacher was still running his little private school, but he had the help of some of his now-grown children to take some of the classes. It was a warm and friendly visit, but I sensed Mr Grant was feeling older than his years and the keen mental edge that I remembered from my school days was somehow missing.

This was all "Darling Buds of May" country once, only a dozen years previously. H. E. Bates, the author of the Larkins books, used to live in the district at some stage, probably during his war service in the Air Force, and the rural charm of those books could still be found in the countryside around Sidcup and Chislehurst.

I roamed around some of the winding country roads on the fringes of the built-up areas and reminisced, about the day Donald Davis somehow obtained an ex-army Indian motorbike and sidecar (which was the armed services version of a Harley-Davidson) and drove a load of about seven or eight little kids for a glorious ride along those same winding, hedgerow-hidden English roads; about the times we used to dig tunnels in the waste-land beside the golf course; about the long summer days playing in the copse, hiding from the golfers and hoping to score a golf ball if it came into the long grass; about the wartime bomb-craters which to us kids seemed to appear overnight where houses had disappeared, and in and around which we tiny tots used to scramble and play during my youngest years; about the mighty elms we climbed, the stream in the parks where we had played 'river-he' which always seemed to end with someone trying to leap too far and going home wet. But even English autumn evenings have to end some time, and I'd turn my scooter back onto the highway and head for the crowded spaces of London.

My notes reveal we had a birthday party for Ella's brother, Fred Parker, inexplicably on the 22nd and 23rd October 1960. Why the two days? I can no longer recall correctly, but I think it was something to do with uncertainty over the birth register. The party must have been a good one because it didn't break up until noon on the second day! Present were the core members of the Science Fiction Club of London: Ella Parker, Ethel Lindsay, Don Geldart, Jim Groves, George Locke, Brian Burgess, Joe Patrizio, Ted Forsyth, Arthur Thomson (who'd made a special card for the occasion), Bill Temple (who brought cigars), Fred Parker (of course), plus Ron Bennett, Elizabeth Humbey, and myself.

Fred Parker was a quiet chap who just gently hovered round the fringes of the fannish company his sister Ella kept. He seemed bemused by all the coming and going but was most helpful to the guests who breezed



Bill Temple smokes a cigar, Fred Parker holds a slide, Bruce is sitting, with Don Geldart at his left and Jim Groves in front.

through his home. He'd had what I would call a tough life, just surviving early life in the slums of Glasgow, orphanages, and showing the marks of those times with a badly broken nose and a 'hang-dog' stance and facial expression. Nothing in life could now be tougher than what he'd come through; hence the impression of bemusement.

Ron Bennett was very much one of the mob, even though he lived far to the north in Harrogate, regarded as a centre of England's genteel society of retirees and those of the polite middle-class. He carried his Jewish background with little effort, making no impositions on his hosts or friends, although I suspect there might have been pressures on him to conform to the norms of his family's expectations of him. He vaguely introduced Elizabeth Humbey, a warm and pleasant companion, as his fiancé. Liz promptly joined in the spirit of the occasion by joining Ella and Ethel to 'adore' Joe Patrizio! Eventually she and Ron were married but then took several months to actually announce the fact, and again I felt they were concerned about any family ructions over the lives they had chosen to live.



Whatever did they see in him! Liz, Ella and Ethel appear to hang onto Joe's every eyelash!

Bill Temple was a delightful man, unfailingly friendly and courteous in every way save his habit of smoking. That, he could not forsake. So, we all put up with it, as indeed non-smokers were expected to do in those days. He was of a burly average height, always dressed in a dark suit, and gave me the impression he was either an administrator or worked in some profession, but I must say I never asked.

He had a delightful sense of humour, taking amusement in pursuing the niceties of detail in what others might consider unimportant. We had an exchange of mail concerning introducing his daughter Anne to the world of fandom, which somehow got mixed into the work I did with the Royal Automobile Club and Bill's desire for her to have scrutinising registration with a Formula Junior Race Licence.

Brian Burgess is a figure who hovered over lesser mortals because of his sheer bulk and height. He had a genial nature, with rarely a harsh word on any subject. Most of us went with the general impression that he was just a little 'simple', and Mike Moorcock introduced me to the game of losing Brian in the alleyways around Hatton Garden and Soho which added a silly finale to a drinking spree at the Globe some winter nights. But I remember Brian best as the bloke who brought the meat pies around just when you needed them at late-night parties at conventions, or indeed, anywhere else!



Bill Temple, Ted Tubb, Ethel, and Brian Burgess.

A couple of my long touring trips took me to the north of London, mainly to visit Ken and Irene Potter and see how they were getting on in the usually muddy surrounds of the Roydon Mill Caravan Grounds. They'd moved there on the theory that it would provide cheaper accommodation than the flats and rooms of the city, but I don't think they'd realised the transport costs would quickly erode any financial advantage. They were buying the caravan, and Ken realised it wasn't really roomy enough for their growing family so he was attempting to build a small shed alongside it, and tame the squelchy ground with packing case sides as a primitive porch. I was happy to help where I could, but the approach of winter made things difficult and the site was very exposed to strong winds.



Above: The caravan, with Ken's shed on the right. Harry Hanlan is on the ladder, assisted by Irene Potter (see below).



Above; Ken enjoys a few moments of tranquillity!



Right; Irene Potter and Harry Hanlan do some work on the caravan.

I surely recognised the Potter's courage in what they appeared to be attempting: to make their own place in this inhospitable terrain, surmount the difficult living conditions and establish a family life. For them, the youthful optimism we all shared was being confronted by the realities of life in a largely uncaring world, a baby was soon to bring its needs to add to the burdens Irene and Ken were under, and the grind of earning a living in a society based on the principles of exploitation was always threatening to wipe away their will to continue making the effort to survive. If it weren't for their hope in a dream of actually winning against such insurmountable odds I doubt they could have attempted what they were about.

I remember meeting Harry Hanlan at the caravan, and I can recall Don Geldart not only being there but also accompanying me on at least one journey when we tried out the train route. I think Harry was an old workmate of Ken's, and I got to know him and his wife Leslie quite well over the next few months. They lived in a huge room overlooking a private park in Paddington, about halfway between central London and Ella's Pen in Kilburn.

The room was part of a large ground-floor flat with a second smaller room at the other end of a short corridor. Another tenant rented the smaller room and they all shared the kitchen and bathroom. There was something about the scale of the place, the high ceilings, the proportions of the Hanlan's room, and the location in a large Victorian crescent-shaped tenement which curved gracefully along the wide avenue, as well as the sight of trees and grass out the large windows, which appealed to me. When I learned later that they were planning to leave the flat, I jumped at the chance of taking over the lease, and that's how I moved from Clapham to 36 Warrington Crescent, Paddington.

But that wouldn't happen until well into 1961, and in the closing months of 1960 I was getting to know the other visitors to the Potters caravan. People like Don Geldart, who at that time was still a sergeant in the Army with MI5, the famous 'ghosts' of internal security. He never spoke of his work, but I presumed it was in the background of the organisation, and he did seem to be disillusioned with army life. I suspect the obvious difficulty of working in a covert activity where you simply couldn't talk to other people about your work, your career hopes, or even the nature of the bosses you might detest, would surely make life more miserable than it should be.

Eventually he quit the service, but about then I lost touch with him and can only wonder how life worked out in Civvie Street. I'm sure others were there when I visited the caravan, but memory tells me the visits were pretty devoid of anything but the sheer pleasure of each other's company. Rather like visiting a favourite relation in a remote and wild landscape.

On one of these visits, I decided to detour to a town not very far away to the west, Hoddesdon in Hertfordshire, the home of a man known for being unknown in British fandom. His name of course, was Alan Dodd. He was well-enough known as a writer and fanzine producer, but he rarely visited other fans and never attended a convention. On the other side of the world we had considered he must be a Big Name Fan in England, simply on the strength of his fanzines, with which I was particularly familiar since most of them were distributed through the Off-Trails Magazine Publishers Association, or OMPA, which I had joined several years previously.

In all innocence and prompted by a reminder in a letter from Mervyn Barrett in New Zealand, I had dropped a line to Alan, suggesting a get-together. I suppose I should

have been able to figure out that he really didn't want to see other fans from the letter he wrote me in reply on the 3rd of September:

"I don't know whether Merv told you but I work for the local equivalent of the river catchment board which is fair enough during the summer but unfortunately during the latter months of the year the water precipitation is somewhat - er- higher than the rest of the year, which means, alas, that I am called upon to work at all kinds of odd hours, times, evenings, Sundays, Saturday mornings, etc. I never know in advance just what I will be doing, so I think I had better not give you information on how to reach me here because I can't tell you in advance where I'm going to be."

But I was much too obtuse to take a hint, and set out to meet with the Hermit of Hoddesdon.

I found his house easily enough. It was one of a long terrace of joined cottages fairly close to the centre of Hoddesdon. Alan's mother greeted me at the front door, and called out to her son to meet the tin-hatted figure I presented. He was a fairly large man, with a round face and his rolled-up sleeves suggested he'd been doing the garden awt 't' back. His handshake was firm and friendly and once he got over his surprise that I was making such an impromptu visit, he was an easy conversationalist.

We entered the house and sat in a small front-room with his mother fussing over us and insisting on some tea and sandwiches. The furniture and décor was very homely, with lace doilies on the arms of the chairs and a small table on which Mrs Dodd eventually placed a tray bearing a teapot and cups and saucers, and a plate with biscuits and little triangular sandwiches just as my maternal grandmother back home used to make them.

We chatted of the journey I'd had from NZ and how I'd settled down in London, and Alan seemed interested in the story of that 'Welcome Bruce' party that I missed, but we were soon discussing our likes and dislikes in SF and fantasy. After a while he showed me into some other part of the house where he had his collection of magazines and books and where he produced his fanzines. I recall some was stacked up the side of a stairway, with his more treasured items in a wardrobe. The visit lasted just a few hours and then I was away on my scooter, heading back to the big city.



Above; Brian & Frances Varley in their flat.

Winter was approaching and the colder weather encouraged people to gather closer for social events. I visited Brian and Frances Varley and Ethel Lindsay, at the Varley's flat and at Courage House in Surbiton. Brian was tall and very serious-looking, giving the impression of a man on the move, in his case on the move in the Civil Service (what Kiwis call the Public Service, and the Yanks might call Public Administration).

Brian's serious appearance and attitude belied a great sense of humour and very pointed and original wit. He appeared a keenly intelligent person, although I sensed he'd made many compromises in the way he seemed to control his view of the world to achieve harmony with the views he had to hold as a civil servant. It must be difficult to find the proper balance, and may explain why so many people find they have difficulty relating to public administrators: they really do have a different way of looking at things. I didn't get to know Frances very well, but Ethel described her as "her best friend" so she must have been a dependable and sympathetic person.



Above; Ethel Lindsay in her room at 'Courage House'.

For her part, Ethel was of a similar nature, very dependable and a staunch supporter of her friends – almost to a fault, since she would hear nothing nice about those who might not find her friends so agreeable. We became very close friends for some time, but drifted apart as my interests kept widening while she was well-set in her ways and the regular nature of her life. Ethel came from Inverness in Scotland, but for some years had been a nursing sister at the Royal Eye Hospital, where she led a busy life but perhaps a little lonely because she was the lady at the top, which meant she could not make close friends of the many nurses in her charge.



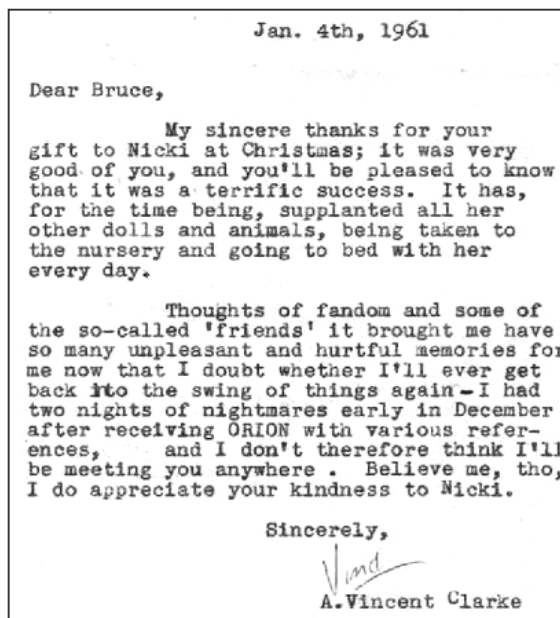
Above; Bonfire Night in Trafalgar Square, 5th November

I went to Trafalgar Square for the big Guy Fawkes Night there in early November: just a very large rather drunken crowd of mainly young people milling around letting off the occasional firecracker to a background of a small public fireworks display. Somehow I had expected more. After all, we were celebrating Guy Fawkes Night not far from the place where the celebration originated, in the basements of the Houses of Parliament.

And then Christmas was upon us. Perhaps the most poignant experience of the season was when I tried to visit Vince Clarke of Inchmery fame. After the dramatic break-up of the family and group that was Inchmery Fandom, Vince eschewed anything fannish and moved to Pepys Road in New Cross, south-east London. My scooter made the trip to a nondescript terrace house in a busy road

and Vince answered my knock on the door.

But he wouldn't let me in, and while he apologised and explained how he felt after his recent experiences, we stood awkwardly in his front doorway and talked for a while. Vince was of average height and slight build, with a full beard and what you could see of his face seemed careworn and older than I'd imagined him. He seemed embarrassed but determined to keep me out of his house; as if by no fault of my own I was tainted by the rest of the local fandom. I gave Vince a seasonal card and a little gift of a soft toy for his daughter Nicki. He wrote me a very kind letter a few days later;



That little event was to have a heart-warming and very sad counterpoint many years later when Vince was in hospital, clearly in a terminal condition. I learned of his poor health very late when Rob Hansen sent an e-mail far and wide asking fans to write letters to Vince to encourage him. I responded and Rob told me later that although Vince was fading, when he heard my short message he smiled and somehow communicated that he remembered that Christmas visit long ago. If that isn't Fans Around The World, what is?

The SFCoL had a Christmas party which was reported in Ron Bennett's *Skyrack* Newsletter:



The SFCoL party - goodness knows what Tubb is doing!

On the wall at far left is the sign reading, 'Dave Kyle Veterinarian' that Jim Linwood & Alan Rispin 'liberated' for Ella during the 1960 Whitsun minicon in Kettering.

'The Science Fiction Club of London held its Xmas party on Sunday 18th, at the home of Ella and Fred Parker. Bruce Burn brought along a gift-laden Xmas tree, George Locke got a whacking great chisel labelled 'staple remover', Brian Burgess went to sleep after imbibing a large orange juice. Bill Temple was given instruction on how to use an electric Gestetner and his evening was rounded-off by a lift home on Bruce's scooter. Present were Ethel Lindsay, Pam & Ken Bulmer, George Locke, Bill Temple, Joe Patrizio, Ted Forsyth, Syd Bounds, Bruce Burn, Jim Groves, Ted Tubb, Brian Burgess, Ken & Irene Potter, and Don Geldart.'



More Christmas Party pictures – Above; Glamorous Pam Bulmer, a very pregnant Irene Potter, Jim Groves, Syd Bounds. Below; Ken Bulmer looks delighted at the spread!



So Christmas came and went. With no family around, it was more a marking on the calendar than the usual social event. A letter from my Mother told me that my name had finally been put on the electoral roll back home, and later in 1961 I duly voted at the New Zealand Embassy in Trafalgar Square (the other blc

And on the 15th January, the SFCoL held an Annual General Meeting at the Pen, where we elected Ella as Chairman. She was not entirely willing to take on the role, and we all enjoyed making posters and slogans to convince her she should accept our nomination (see guillotine!).

Notes from letters remind me that Ron Bennett nominated me as OMPA Association Editor for the coming year (22nd Feb). Archie Mercer (23rd Feb) sent me a puzzled note to acknowledge a small donation I sent to help the BSFA – they had no usual avenue for receiving donations, but I felt I should support the organisation although I didn't want to actually become a member. And on 25th March Mervyn Barrett sent me a delightful description of his life in Melbourne, where he had moved after many months in Japan and Macau:



"I have a new pad and one I think that will be my permanent home for all the time that I will be here. This is a tiny, surprisingly quiet – considering that it's bordered on two sides by railway tracks – suburb which is about one and a half miles from the centre of Melbourne city. It's a very old suburb but not a decaying one as are some of the more ancient sections of the city. I have a two-room flat here for which I am paying 5 Australian Pounds per week. It's most cosy and one could hardly find anything more convenient or any place so pleasant so close to the city. I usually go to work by tram but if I feel like walking it takes only a half an hour. I'm surrounded by parks and gardens here and it's all madly nice. I was jolly lucky to get it.

"A few weekends ago I met Bob Smith, Alan Dodd's friend, and so we, that is Chris Denny, John Foyster, Margaret Duce, Bob and myself, had a small convention and of course published a one shot. John Foyster printed up this thing and sent me three copies and in order to get rid of them as quickly as possible, I'm going to wish one off on to you. Devilishly cunning, we ex-orientals!

"The cost of living here is very high. Food is dear and not particularly good. One has to pay a fortune for a good steak usually. I owe some money to my folks back in New Zealand and until I have that debt in hand, although there's no hurry about paying it off, I don't feel that I can live it up too much. Booze is cheap here though. Even with the fact that the Aussie Pound is not at a par with Sterling the way the NZ one was, you can still buy Scotch cheaper here than you can over there. There are a lot of good Australian wines too that are really super to drink, terrifically cheap. The beer here is too strong and in the pubs, too cold. One can't guzzle the vast quantities here the way we used to down at the Royal Oak in Wellington. I wonder if everyone still goes there?"

"A weekend or so ago we were out for a drive and we went in to the Melbourne airport to have a look around. Gee, it re-stimulated me. It made me think of the time I left New Zealand and saying goodbye to Jill at Whenuapai airport. I felt like jumping on a plane and saying "Wellington, and step on it!". I haven't any immediate plans about going home, though."

I could sympathise with Merv about the urge to go home, especially as the English winter ground on through through March.

Our little world of fandom was noticing changes too. A few weeks previously, George Locke and John Berry announced their new APA: the International Publishers' Speculative Organisation, or IPSO. I'd been privvy to the planning and design of the thing and was a keen member for a while, choosing to write stories based on the themes that were set for each mailing rather than joining in the inevitable mailing comments. The APA's tortured title came from wanting to use the well known legal phrases "ipso jure" and "ipso facto" for the Rules and the Mailing.

And a little earlier in the New Year, a rather more important birth occurred when Irene Potter delivered her daughter, Karen Elizabeth Potter into a cold and wintry world in North London. Father Ken Potter reported the details of the birth at 6am on the 19th January in Clapton of their 8lbs 10oz baby, who measured 21 inches.

For me, the infant somehow represented my own new life in a new year in a land distant from home.

- Bruce Burn, 2008

Next issue; Bruce goes to LXICon, his first convention

The Melting Pot

Bubbling and seething...
that's the way I like to see things!

So throw in another anecdote and keep the pot hot! Irresistible interjections in *italics* and [brackets] in the usual way.



Illo by Pam Yates from *Speculation-17*. Fan-artists, please submit your interpretation!

“More comment hooks than a sheet of Velcro” – Steve Green, LoC

Tony Glynn
Southport
(Tsk, still no
e-address!)



Tony at
Mancon, 1976.
Photo by Terry
Jeeves.

Dear Peter,

Ah, how apt was Bob Parkinson's observation concerning a bit of the past seceded from now! The highly enjoyable *Prolapse 12* dredged-up one fannish memory after another. Strangely, as I read Greg Pickersgill on Alan Dodd, I more than once felt the agreeable shade of my golden-hearted old fan friend Betty Kujawa, of South Bend, Indiana, at my very elbow.

I never saw any of Alan Dodd's fanzines but I knew of him from his appearances in *Yandro* and elsewhere. Betty Kujawa, with whom I corresponded for many years, was one of those who kept up a long correspondence with him and sometimes referred to him in her letters. I recall her once writing: "Alan Dodd never, ever goes anywhere". Probably because I knew Betty wrote regularly to a young man in Scotland who was a permanent invalid, I formed the notion that perhaps Dodd, too, was in some way incapacitated. In the perverse way of fixed ideas, that notion stuck with me down the years.

His was a sad tale and, I suppose that, in the end, he *was* incapacitated. Tragic though the Alan Dodd story ultimately was, Greg – and you, too, Peter – did a fine job of researching and presenting it. Incidentally, if Dodd was born in the year John Dillinger died he was slightly younger than recorded in Greg's article for it was in 1934 and not 1933 that Dillinger fell into the trap set for him as he walked out of the Biograph Theatre having seen Clark Gable and Myrna Loy in 'Manhattan Melodrama'.

That brings me to another memory of Betty Kujawa who had her own run-in with Dillinger in that very year. Dillinger is now seen as a robber of the depression-day farm boy variety, a small-timer boosted up to Public Enemy status by J Edgar Hoover's publicity. Hoover's critics claimed that the FBI chief was scared to go after the really powerful mobsters from the organised crime machine who had clout in important circles so he chased the country hicks who battered on their own poverty-stricken kind, robbing rural banks already impoverished by the hard times.

In 1934, however, Dillinger hooked-up with certain big city gunmen and they robbed a bank in South Bend's main street, Michigan Avenue, one day when the street was crowded with shoppers. As I recall the tale, a policeman was fatally shot during their getaway. There was a car chase with the South Bend police and the gangsters exchanging shots as they sped along the avenue, causing the citizenry to dive for cover. Betty, then a schoolgirl, was shopping with her mother and she told me that they managed to crawl under a parked car during the fracas. I remember her comment: "Thank, goodness, you could get *under* a car in the thirties." She also told me that a man who was their neighbour was hit by a bullet and rendered permanently lame.

I'm delighted to find Betty's shade with me again, for our long friendship began after I wrote on Buck Rogers in some long-forgotten fanzine in 1954. This brought her first letter, telling me she had studied cartooning at the Chicago Art Institute under the strip's creator, Dick Calkins, a part-time instructor there. It seems very little instructing went on, Calkins being given to regaling the students with yarns about his days as an early US Army pilot in World War One – even though he never left the US and never saw any action!

Another memory was dredged up by the references to Eric Needham whom I knew slightly through the Manchester group. Eric was considerably older than me and, if I remember aright, was in the RAF during the war. I remember him particularly because he was the first person I ever met who had actually been to a science-fiction convention – this was before my own first convention, the *Supermancon* – and I distinctly recall he said the con was held in 1937. So Bob Parkinson's reference to what might have been the first con ever, held in Leeds in January of that year, brought Eric to mind. I suspect that when fan-archaeology unearths the tablets of stone recording that event, his name will be found upon them, probably as one of the few attending from outside the Leeds area. //

[Thanks Tony, I didn't know Eric started his fannish career that far back – and more on the 1937 Leeds con next time. Meanwhile, I hope you and Frances are back from your US trip!]



Eric Needham,
creator of
Widower's
Wonderful
products,
about 1958.
Photo by Terry
Jeeves

Mike Deckinger
mike2004
@aol.com



Mike in 2008.
His photo

Dear Peter,

Greg did a splendid job unearthing Alan Dodd's elusive and enigmatic life, to which I can add a few further comments. For instance, in the early 60's a questionnaire was distributed for the purpose of compiling an inclusive fandom biography. There were standard questions: (name, address, profession) and, amusingly "rank", which caused a great deal of introspection and soul-searching among the participants. I don't think anyone believed this project would ever produce anything, but still, a large volume of questionnaires were returned and in due course quite an attractive booklet was issued. I cite this anomaly only because one of the participants was the normally private and composed Alan Dodd. As "profession", he cheekily listed "assassin".

For several years, beginning in 1960, I was employed in the printing department of the Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Company, situated in exotic Newark, NJ. In this capacity I printed all sorts of internal documents, using a Xerox camera to photograph copy onto either a paper mat, or when intricate artwork or photographs were used, a metal plate. These items were then run off-on an industrial strength multilith machine, producing truly righteous copies.

Alan sent me the pages to be included in *Camber*, in this case the Metzger strip. I photoed and subjected it to some critical reduction, transferred the visuals to the mat and printed it on my multilith. When finished the pages were then shipped back to Dodd. I completed the project in my free time and the only noticeable cost was return postage.

It's correct that Alan was a big fan of American Pro-Wrestling fare of the 60's. I had a more than passing interest as well, and occasionally attended matches in local venues as well as Madison Square Garden in New York. I always sent Alan whatever programs I could secure at these events which he dutifully collected, and I believe bound them, and much later sold them at a goodly sum. Someone else, not me, sent him films of matches in the US, thus familiarising him with the biggest US combatants of the time. He acknowledged the obvious foundation of fakery in pro-wrestling, but savoured the entertainment value.

I first encountered Dave Prosser in 1959. I had seen his artwork in another fanzine and was profoundly impressed. Dave drew demonic, Lovecraftian sequences, with great detail, intricacy, and atmosphere. He did all the stencil work himself. So I sent him a fantasy short story submitted for my fanzine and he returned half dozen stencils, copiously illustrating the most bizarre scenes he could extract from it. Even my awkward mimeography could not dilute the finished product. Dave was not a fan and had no interest in the conflicts and interchanges that constituted fandom of the era. He was just interested in having his artwork seen by as many interested parties as he could manage, and receiving whatever reasonable feedback would accrue. Dave did illustrations for a minor book but ultimately shifted his interests to naturist and airplane drawings. He died at least two decades ago without really making much impact in fandom, during his short stay.

I also maintained substantial air-letter contact with the burgeoning Swedish fan community. Sture Sedolin was one of the names with whom I exchanged correspondence. Probably the most notable was Bo Stenfors, who published *SEXY VENUS*. Stenfors was a talented artist, working in the medium of spirit duplication. He copied starlet images from movie posters and inserted them in his fanzines in alluring science fictional poses. I also met Merchant Mariner Cato Lindberg, when his ship docked in New York one cold wintry day. We had a meal, saw the sites, and traipsed through 42nd Street, which today has been Disneyfied beyond recognition. We concluded by taking in a screening of the classic-to-be *THE KILLER SHREWS*. //

[Mike, you were a busy little bee back in the sixties; I remember getting some of your fanzines but not the ones with those Prosser stencil-cut illos. Do you still have them? They would be worth seeing!]

Dear Peter,

Thanks for Number 12, great stuff as usual. Doesn't happen by accident, we know. Mind you, we people who read magazines backwards must be an editor's despair; you weave together a beautifully integrated portrait of London fandom from umpteen different sources, and we start at The Melting Pot (or, to be strictly accurate, WAHF.) The effect is that I'm so dazzled by the letters and your continued ability to resurrect names from the Deep Past that I don't always appreciate the articles properly at first. (We also read SF mags for the chatty departments and hardly bother with the fiction – if only Spinrad had realised this when writing *THE IRON DREAM...*) Which at 11.00 pm is far too prolix a way of saying I came backwards to Greg's piece on Alan Dodd, was enormously impressed and read it from the beginning and was impressed all over again. Great stuff in the very best fannish tradition, a standout in the already excellent 'Forgotten Fans' series. (For a shorter entry, Ivor Latto some time?)

My own contact with Alan was brief and limited to correspondence (of course), the only point still of interest stemming from the late return of rejected mss by the editor of *Science Fantasy*, Kyril Bonfliglioli. What chiefly annoyed Alan – and something of his personality does show through here – was that he had submitted the story on behalf of a friend, and I'm sure he would have been less upset had the story been one of his own. (Aside: there have been worse editors than Bon, who published first stories by Platt, Priest, Stableford, etc, and had interestingly off-beat ideas such as reprinting Dikk Richardson's story 'Grinnell' from a Graham Hall fanzine – how did a well-brought-up Oxford art historian pick up that?)

Back to Alan: Mike Deckinger mentions the photographic cruises. These basically provided photogenic backgrounds and photogenic young ladies who weren't too concerned about keeping their



Detail from
Prosser's cover
for *Camber* #12

David Redd
dave_redd@hotmail.com



David at
Cytricon V;
photo by Rob
Hansen



'We know how to deal with people like you' says the Alan Dodd character, in a detail from *Tarzan Adventures*

clothes on; one such cruise was written-up in a weekend colour supplement which gave Alan a name-check. Another item from Alan's 'glamour' interest, the John Rackham fanzine evidently recapturing the spirit of certain *Lilliput* photos from his youth, was totally new to me. On meeting John I had trouble relating the 'John Rackham' I'd read to the John Phillifent I'd now met and also read ('Ethical Quotient' in *ASF*, etc.) and now I have even more trouble fitting them together – a divided self maybe?

Saw Alan and others in the Tuckerised *Tarzan* at the time. I recall seeing a meeting with 'Dean Grennell – a gun runner' and the dialogue "This is your doing, Ingvi you louse!" Unfortunately I can't check my memory on this, because I sold all my *Tarzan* to Ron Bennett, who was then trying to buy up and destroy all copies of the issue containing his story 'Regallian Interlude', for which he'd wisely borrowed the Bob Lumley pseudonym. Anyway, glad to find out that Alan really appreciated his appearance with "We know how to deal with people like you!" Discoveries like this make *Prolapse* not just a reminder of our pasts but an enrichment of them.

There's good writing here, as we who know the cast can attest; Bruce Burn referring to Ron as "glasses opaque," or Greg's "Peter prevailed upon me, in that regretful but firm tone he takes with people he perceives as 'staff'" – the latter quote doubly interesting for its contrast with Roy Kettle's different but equally high-quality take on the same editorial technique. Sandra's valid point about John Brunner being "an unusual and fascinating person" remains valid despite you still soliciting Brunner stories (from John Clute no less) because there's still more to be said about the man.

For instance, as the author of *SHOCKWAVE RIDER* and the 'Max Curfew' thrillers he was ideally placed to invent cyberpunk years before *NEUROMANCER*, but instead went off to write *STEAMBOATS ON THE RIVER*, and in a sense never came back. Also to Sandra: you surely have the rest of that Heinlein *ASF* serial by now (shout if you haven't) – but you won't find any more UK fan letters in the *BRE*. At least I couldn't years ago. In that as elsewhere, Beryl Henley/Mercer seems to have been a one-off.

Oh, "pomes" may not have been just Vince's coinage. This memory of mine flashes up some *SS* or *TWS* lettercol mentioning that Sam Merwin "wrote the most delightful pomes." Either this was a then-current fannish term for doggerel or Vince saw the mention and made it his own. Who now knows? //

Jim Linwood
JLinwood@aol.com



Jim at Cytricon V.
Photo by Mike Meara

Dear Peter,

In the period 1958-60 covered by the accounts of London fandom I was an occasional visitor to the *Globe*, Inchmery (New Cross) and the Parker Penitentiary. I was never aware of all these internal struggles and everybody seemed to be friends. On my first visit to the *Globe* in 1958, Ella, the Bulmers, the Buckmasters, Inchmery fandom, the Rattigans, Sandy Sandfield, Alan Bale, Ivor Mayne, Ted Tubb, Frank Arnold were all welcoming and Mike Moorcock took me outside to show me the office where he worked editing *Tarzan Adventures* and even bought me fish and chips. "What a great crowd and a wonderful evening", I thought as I left the pub, chatting to Barry Bayley who lived near my hotel in Bayswater. Why did they find it so difficult to organise pub or clubhouse meetings like the rest of Anglo-fandom? There is the old story about two London fans being marooned on a desert island and the first thing they did was form a committee...

I knew most of them through OMPA and I'd corresponded with Mike for some time. Mike, Ivor, Alan and Barry were in the same age group, slightly older than me but much younger than the rest of the crowd. I got to know Ella better later, as she was still a shy-neo at this stage. I sat alone by the door – the others were in the back room – until Vince arrived and I introduced myself, then he told me who everybody was and Frank got me to sign the Book. Had I not known what Vince looked like things might have been different. I heard Ella 'whisper' to someone, "I told you he looked like one of us."

[As I said, Jim, you were lucky to be welcomed straight into the inner circle. This didn't happen to everyone, as Sandy showed in his first piece in the lastish, and I spotted a passage in Tony Thorne's 1954 Medway Journal which described how a couple of members of their local group were given the cold-shoulder. Ken Bulmer revealed that it nearly happened to Ella – and did I mention that I'd tracked-down Daphne Buckmaster and was trying to get her to write about the London Circle?]

I tend to lump the Bulmers at 'Tresco' (Wellmeadow Rd) with the original Inchmery Road house – both in Catford – there must have been some interaction. Also, Vince brought Ron Buckmaster into fandom when he sat next to him on a bus in 1947 and noticed he was reading SF. Daphne's alternate take on the London Circle would make interesting reading – Ella was very intelligent but had only had a rudimentary education and seemed dumb, loud and vulgar at times. Tubb got sloshed at cons but was perfectly sober at Ella's meetings. She told me that Ted rarely left London because he was afraid of travelling alone on public transport and needed to have a companion – I've always wondered if he does suffer from agoraphobia or if it was just a misunderstanding on Ella's part.

Bruce was obviously asleep in his bunk when Ron Bennett marched along the quay at Southampton and shouted "BRUCE BURN!" at the bow of the *Castel Felice*. The rest of us stood behind Ron carrying placards which read "BAN THE BURN" and "GO HOME BRUCE". Ron asked what Bruce looked like and, recalling a photo in his OMPA-zine (probably the same one on page 13), I said he looked like Kirk Douglas with a similar chin-dimple.

Bruce's recollections of the *Globe* in the early 60's are spot-on and both his items in the issue are excellent pieces of writing. When Bruce and Dick Ellingsworth lived in the Kingdon Road slan-shack, their adjoining bed-sits were known as the 'Bat Cave' because of their first names – although I never saw them slide down a bat pole on their way to work! //



Bruce's youthful ward? – Dick Ellingsworth in 1961, a picture recently found by Bruce at the bottom of a box in New Zealand!

[As a prelude to the next letter, I'll quote Greg Pickersgill, who said, "Next time you're e-mailing Bruce Burn mention that I think his piece is some of the best writing – anywhere, not just in a fanzine – that I have read for a long time. Particularly the '2008' section, which is a quite brilliant, vivid, fluent narrative that gives depth of character to the people mentioned with remarkably few words. That's a stunning piece of work. Anyone reading my piece right after that is going to be sorely let down!"]

Bruce Burn
bburn@xtra.
co.nz



*Bruce in 2008.
His photo.*

Hello Peter,

As for *Prolapse 12*, you outdid yourself there. What a fanzine! Engrossing from cover to cover, with the absorbing details of the Elsie Horde's demise, the rise of SFCoL, all the in-fighting I didn't know about and the little I did, the magnificent detective work in the Alan Dodd article, and the fascinating Melting Pot! What a fanzine: magnificent. I feel very privileged to have my little effort included. Speaking of which, I disagree with Greg's comments: it's really rather an academic piece compared to the delight expressed in some of the letters, and it is I who should congratulate Greg on his excellent article. It may have been a bit 'bitsy' to his mind, but it is a growing revelation of an article which gradually fleshes-out the story about that lonely, pudgy man in Hoddesdon. By the way, I found a scrap of a letter I received from Alan back when I lived in London, and in it he mentioned working for the Hoddesdon equivalent to a River Catchment Board. His letter explained that the work involved being on call at odd times which was his excuse to put off visiting me in London, and I suppose a warning that if I got to Stanstead Road I might not find him home.

[An interjection; Bruce sent the letter to Jim Linwood who knows something about this subject, and who commented; "He seemed to have worked on the flood defence side in the old Lee Conservancy Board which we took over to become part of Thames Water, then the National Rivers Authority and eventually, the Environment Agency. Rather than men in huts we went in for river gauging, satellites and aerial photography from planes and helicopters. I think he didst protest too much as there were only a handful of call-outs a year – mostly in Autumn/Sept. for floods caused by short duration, high-intensity, convective thunderstorms. In winter, flooding is caused by prolonged low-intensity rainfall. - PW]



*Above; London fan
Ian Peters visits
Arthur at his flat,
#17 Brockham
House,
Wandsworth.
c.1962.*

*Photos by Bruce
Burn*

*Below; "the lonely,
pudgy man in
Hoddesdon," 1960.*



Arthur Thomson's piece about searching for clubrooms was very enjoyable. He was a much better writer than he ever admitted, and his cartoons are a wonderful record of work. To think he had to spend all his working hours at Triang Toys factory in south London! What a waste of time, when he could have been producing the sort of work we all know he could do. And more: he had one of the most fertile imaginations for both word and cartoon.

Of course, Olive, his wife, couldn't understand the adulation we young fans showed Arthur, and I imagine it was awkward for him to relate his private life to his fannish existence. They lived in a typical purpose-built block of flats in south London, up a couple of floors and along an open balcony. All concrete. You see such places now on TV-shows when the cops chase the baddies to some run-down several-storeys high heartless building. I know the pressure is on to find enough space to house everyone, but those places were ghastly. Ella of course lived in another one, which certainly was cleaner and tidier than what it replaced, but when they designed and built those megaliths they left the hearts out: they still build them today and to me they still look heartless. No wonder the families break up and the kids go wild. Sorry. A hobbyhorse of mine!

I was delighted to see the old *Steam* colophon from Bulmer's Aqueous Vapour Company. Still have some copies of some issues in my 'library', from my early OMPA days and from a pile of fanzines I bought from Walt Willis in the mid-fifties. But none of them had photos of course, and the photos you included in the account of the Elsie Horde were great, capturing the times if not the frictions that your story covered. I really can't believe what a pompous prig Sandersod appears to have been, judging from his own words. When I was a young bloke I couldn't comprehend how the tensions in the Inchmery trio tore them apart and affected them and London fandom so severely.

Part of growing older is realising how often such tensions rip lives apart, but it doesn't make it any easier on the people involved and it doesn't make it right at all. There is sense to a person taking a strong moral stand for or against issues and relationships, but it's hard to see sense in bitter arguments that divide people. But, it happens, and we all get carried away by temporary passions this way, as the long and acrimonious history of fan-feuds shows. I guess some perverse side to human nature causes us to fall into the trap of forgetting tact when we attack each other: heat can become hate so easily.

After reading all the material you had about the Elsie Horde, etc, it was a bit of a comedown to read my rather pedestrian piece, but I suppose it fills a few gaps for others and I thank you for publishing it. A word about the photos: would people be interested to know that the 'Welcome to England' pic is a small portion (perhaps an eighth) of a tiny 35mm colour slide, and the Ken Potter pic is similarly a similarly small part of a b&w contact print from a 35mm negative? With our modern digital cameras it's hard sometimes to appreciate the difficulties surmounted by the older technologies.

I especially delighted in the Alan Dodd article, as I said before. Greg shared his experience with the reader so we discovered as he did all the surprises and twists and confirmations in this story. Your illustrations, especially the *Camber* covers, set the piece off perfectly. I remember those fanzines, having considered them terrific productions when they were new. I thought of Dodd as a BNF in English fandom because I was completely ignorant of the animosity shown to him by some of his countrymen. He corresponded with friends of mine in New Zealand, and it was mainly at their request that I made the trip to Hoddesdon to meet him.

The Melting Pot was a wonderful cavalcade of memories, opinions, observations, and comment, and I feel I must have missed something in my life because I've rarely been a hunter of bookshops like most of your correspondents. Oh, I've done my share of browsing, of course, but I've never been on a book-buying expedition as so many of the writers have, so I feel a little out of it. However, when in London I certainly made a few journeys to Foyles, and I do remember an amazing place in Belfast where the entire inner courtyard behind a large block of businesses and flats was taken up with an astonishing array of trestle tables loaded with an impossibly wide range of books. It was so huge, so tempting, that I retreated from it with a feeling of panic: I had just one small haversack and was hitch-hiking my way to Dublin the next day! //

[Thanks Bruce. This gives me chance to plug George Locke's account next time of his book-hunting expedition all over the West of England. Wonder if he ever heard about that Belfast Bonanza!]

Ian Peters

MoggsandCo
@aol.com



Ian in 2009. His photo.

Hi, Pete,

I enjoyed *Prolapse 12*. Really took me back a piece, though I have to admit that I have reached the point in my life when my memory is playing me up.

I was in OMPA and produced, I think nine issues of a fanzine called *Haggis* (being a Scotsman, what else!). I have only been able to find #2 (which I actually found quite interesting). I had hoped that it would stimulate my memory but no luck there. I did however find that I was introduced to SF fandom by Alan Burns, of Newcastle-on-Tyne. I worked as a vet for eighteen months in Hexham, Northumberland, so that explains the connection though I cannot recall any details nor do I have a picture of him in my mind. Apparently we had some 'fine evenings of conversation'.

This issue of *Haggis* is dated Dec '64 so I must have been part of the Science Fiction Club of London from about 1962 onwards. The Club met in Courage House, the nurses' building of the local hospital. We had a large, comfortable room on Sunday afternoons for meetings which were never very formal, more gab-fests but which ranged over a wide range of topics, even including SF! I remember Ted Forsyth very well. I think we must have had the gang over to our place because Ted was astonished to find that many books in my collection were second-hand or even ex-library books. Certainly many came from Fantast (Medway) and Popular Book Centres.

When we moved to Catford I had a wide range of second-hand bookshops to visit which I still miss, being down here in rural Kent. Wee Ethel and Ella – what can I say? They were great. Jimmy Groves was a very steady, interesting chap, who went to the US of A. Atom and Ted Tubb were always the life and soul of any party, great company and great fun always, especially when drink taken. At one party Ted ran off for a weekend with a rather lovely red-haired fan, much to the annoyance of Iris and the girl's mother. I do not think this was the first such episode for either.

Later, Chris Priest, Mike Moorcock and John Brunner appeared occasionally. I remember listening to Brunner, leaning on the mantelpiece, discussing some obscure subject. Bill Temple did not appear very often in my time but I remember discussing the relative niceties of Glayva as against Drambuie. I think he liked his tippie. John Eggeing sold me Lovecraft's AT THE MOUNTAINS OF MADNESS, Gollancz edition, for 50p which I still have. I have to say that I have always been more interested in books than in fandom but my then-wife and I had some memorable times with the Science Fiction Club of London.

Archie Mercer was a good friend until his untimely death. Then there was Pete Mabey, very intellectual, and Brian Burgess, the opposite. I feel I should know George Locke but I cannot quite bring him to mind. I was trying to recall the randy New Zealander who turned up and lo and behold there he was in *Prolapse*, the man himself, Bruce Burn! But I'm afraid I cannot recall Don Geldart or Pat Kearney. I have been up to see Ted Tubb several times this year. He still lives in the same house which looks just the same, but he is really in somewhat straightened circumstances. I gave him our old computer and printer which his daughter set up for him. I thought it would be one way of keeping in touch with SF since all the US writers, living and dead, have web-sites.

My son Euan had to spend his Sundays with the Club, we having no babysitters, but the fans were very good with him. Something may have rubbed-off on him since he spent five years with Marvel in London colouring, editing and writing for their stable of comics. When everyone was made redundant he went back to his real job as an animal technician where he still works (for Novartis).

When I sold my practice in Catford, twenty years ago next year and moved down to Kent full-time, I thought I would start up as a book dealer. However it did not take off and I was eventually just really acting as a book-finder so I chucked it. Since I'm only working part-time, last year I joined the Hospice in the Weald as a volunteer. At first I was working on the van, loading furniture that had been gift-aided to the Hospice but when they started a bookshop I got a job there. I really enjoy sorting-out and pricing-up the vast number of books that come to us. And of course I am always buying something and at very low prices. What more can a man ask? //

[What indeed, Ian! And I'm sure we can get you those other issues of *Haggis*, if you'd like them. But I have to advise that Ted hasn't made much use of your computer – last time I visited he hadn't even switched it on!]

Below: Rob Hansen found this remarkable picture, dated Feb. 67 and presumed to be some sort of costume scene from the SFCoL New Year's Party. Ian is at top right, with Peter Mabey in mustachios. Ted Forsyth is bottom left, with Betty Peters. The other two are unknown.



Arthur
Cruttenden
[halfratic@ntl
world.com](mailto:halfratic@ntlworld.com)



Arthur at
Novacon 34.
Photo by PW.

Peter,

My first visit to the *Globe* was just after *Loncon II*. I finally got around to attending a First Thursday as a result of the Worldcon, having now got some idea of what I'd been missing during all those years of reading Walt Willis' 'Electric Fan' column in *Nebula* and the occasional mention in *New Worlds* and the BRE's.

Short hiatus whilst I once again indulge in vain regrets. Having been a reader of *NW* and *Nebula* for many years I knew of *Loncon I* well before it happened, was living in London in 1957 (well sort of living as it was South Of The River – where you don't really live, more barely exist) and had, for two or three years lived just round the corner from the King's Court Hotel, site of the con, even had the 15/- fees – and I didn't go! Well, nobody could ever accuse me of being brilliant!!

Second hiatus to dig out *New Worlds* #63, Sept.'57, with the Terry cover of the Alien addressing the Con, Ted Carnell' editorial 'Final Convention News' and the ad on p125 for the con. From which I got the info noted above.

On arriving at the *Globe* I again met various people first seen at the con – found that they were still likeable and interesting and that it wasn't just alcohol and lack of sleep that made them seem so – and have stayed around. I rarely miss a meeting. But I should explain that about alcohol and sleep. I got up at 09.00 on the Saturday, arrived at the Mount Royal at 13.30, crashed on a fan's hotel room floor at 05.30 on Tuesday for four hours. No sleep and a lot of alcohol, chat, programme items and room parties in between. Total and absolute sensawunda. Only way to explain it. I then spent Tuesday afternoon showing the U.S. fan Marty Massoglia round some of the central London bookshops, including Newport Books. Last time I heard of him it was in an *Analog* lettercol. He was then a Colonel in the USAF.

On page 127 of that issue of *New Worlds* (#63) is an advertisement for A.M.BAIN, 31 John Adam Street, London, WC1, (nr. Charing Cross Road) for 'Science Fiction – Popular Astronomy – Astrology'. If I hadn't re-read George's and Stan's articles in *Prolapse #11* I wouldn't have noticed that. Wonder who he was, and is there such a thing as 'Unpopular Astronomy'?

I managed to get to one or two meetings at William Dunbar House. One memory is of Charles Platt jumping on the sofa – don't know why. I think that may have been one of the very last meetings there. Pity. It was good to meet fans somewhere other than a pub or a con.

In response to Sandra Bond and various others I cheerfully admit that I liked Bram Stokes and got on well with him, at cons and in his shops. I have a lovely memory of the Berwick Market DTWAGE, which had a BIG notice on the door: 'WE DO NOT SELL PORN'. Bloody unusual in that area!

Another memory brought on by Sandra. – DOUBLE STAR appeared in *Astounding* in three-parts and I didn't read it until 1969 because it took me until then to get all three issues and I wouldn't start a serial until I had it complete. No cheating by buying the PB. There were a number of other serials on my list waiting for completions. I've given that up now – life may be too short. //



Arthur with Phil Rogers, Bill Burns, Doreen Parker at the
Galactic Fair, 1969. Photo; Norman Shorrock

Greg
Benford
California

Peter,

I find *Prolapse* fascinating, for it intersects my teenage years when Brit fandom was nearby, as I lived in Frankfurt when publishing, with my brother Jim, *Voids* issues 1 to 10 (I think!). To climax our Euro-fandom phase we went to London in spring 1957, before returning to the US in October. (We learned of Sputnik on the ship's newspaper going back, which changed my life. Dreams grew thereafter.)

We met Arthur Thomson and Ethel Lindsay then, but no other London fans. They struck Jim and me, age 16, as sophisticated, witty, generous -- and so they were again when I met them in London in 1969. Jim married a woman from Caterham he met in California; they just celebrated their 40th anniversary. Jim and I still belong to a monthly apa (*Lilapa*) and go to cons.

Brit fandom of the 1950s-60s still impresses me with its graceful lunacy, humour and insight. What a delight to see Eric Frank Russell letters in *Hyphen*! To my teenage self the Brits were the most advanced of all fandoms. Still are, perhaps.

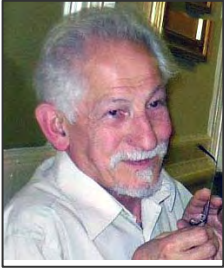
I spent a year at Cambridge as a visiting fellow, Institute of Astronomy, and found that people I worked with like Stephen Hawking and Martin Rees were SF fans, as well. Science fiction has produced a subculture of great power in the world. Asimov told me once he had asked hundreds of scientists, asked them if they read SF as adolescents, and discovered that about half had.

I got the same numbers from my questions -- especially among Brit scientists. I put a hint of this in my novel *TIMESCAPE*, and still think it's true. //



Top fans together at *Loncon I, 1957* – in centre are Ken Bulmer, EFR, Walt Willis and Leslie Flood. Forry Ackerman at left, behind Alan Burns, while TAFF-man Bob Madle is at far right. Photo by Wally Weber.

Joe Patrizio
joepatrizio@blueyonder.co.uk



Joe at *Cytricon V*.
Photo by Keith
Freeman.

Hi Peter,

It's amazing how Sandy Sanderson can antagonize people at such a temporal distance. Did you ever meet him (or cross swords with him)? I met him just the once (no more that I can remember) at their place in New Cross, and Sandy didn't come across as evil personified; he was pretty subdued as far as I remember. Ella took me there to meet Vince, Joy and Sandy, and Frank and Belle Dietz were there as it happened. But maybe I've told you all this before, and anyway I wrote a lot of it up for *Orion*. It wasn't long after, that Sandy and Joy went off together leaving Vince literally holding the baby. I was shocked, at the time, but felt that Vince didn't do himself any good by lashing out at virtually everybody – understandable, of course.

Greatly enjoyed Bruce's reminiscences, and the photos were real memory joggers. Not much else to say about it, though. And there he is again in the Alan Dodd piece – but it was Clapham that we had the flat, Bruce, not Balham (no wonder he kept on coming in late). Talking about the Alan Dodd article, this was, for me, the best thing in the issue (and that's saying something). Interesting and thoroughly enjoyable. Funnily, I'd recently found six of Alan's letters to Bill but, surprisingly, not Bill's replies. The first is dated 10 October 1975 and the last Xmas Day 1984. Mainly chat about films, SF, fans and how hard life is. //

[Thanks for bringing your correspondence folders along to Kettering, Joe (as did George Locke with his Dodd letters). I don't know if Greg made any notes for a follow-up. No, I never met Sanderson, he'd gone before I appeared. One of the few to know anything about his later years is Bill Burns.]

Bill Burns

billb@ftldesign.com



Photo by Rob
Hansen, 2008

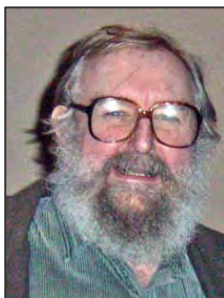
Peter,

I've just finished reading all the way through *P-12*; another excellent issue. I can't believe how much material Greg tracked down on Alan Dodd – a brilliant piece of research. I'm pretty sure that Harry Nadler met Dodd at least once, perhaps at the National Film Theatre. I was never very interested in the film-watching side of the Salford group, but I remember Harry mentioning Alan fairly regularly. Too late to ask him about it, sadly.

One note on Joy Clarke's photo album – its preservation must be credited to Moshe Feder. Joy and Sandy lived on Long Island for many years, although we didn't know them. Moshe put us in touch and we invited them to one of our parties (sometime in the 1990s), but that was the only time we saw them. When Sandy died I believe Joy was left in precarious financial circumstances, and ended up having to sell the house in 2002. Moshe gave Joy a lot of help when she was having problems making ends meet (not financially, but he took the train out to visit her quite often and dealt with various problems, and, I believe, helped with selling some of Sandy's SF stuff). At some point he came across the album and she entrusted it to him; he loaned it to me to make scans and I've now returned it to him. Last I heard from Moshe he'd lost touch with Joy. //

[Bill, I've always wondered what they did they do to earn a living, once they arrived in the USA? Were work permits necessary in 1960? – And apparently in the UK Sandy was in government service (the War Department?) which might not exactly have been a transferable skill over there.]

Mike Moorcock
Texas



Mike at *Corflu*,
2007. PW Photo

Hi Pete,

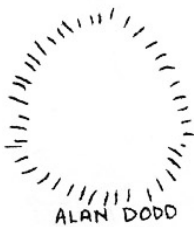
I have to say that I feel strangely depressed by some of the stuff relating to the London Circle and this could be because I felt so sorry for Vince Clarke who, it seemed to me, was cruelly treated by Joy and Sandy. Vince was a great friend to me, helping me with some of my early fiction, commenting on my fanzines, giving me advice on production and so on. With Arthur Thomson, Ethel Lindsay and others he went out of his way to help and to contribute. I never much liked Joy or Sandy, especially after they ran off, leaving Vince literally holding the baby.

I wasn't directly involved in trying to form the London Circle of the 50s, perhaps because so many of my friends were in the Midlands and North. Only later, when we were talking about a permanent London Club House, did I get involved. Lang Jones and I found suitable premises in the Notting Hill area. There was a short-lease building which we could have had for about ten years and I remember meetings at Ella's where some members (not Ella or newer fans) seemed to take against the idea, mainly, we thought, because the place had not been found by them. So Lang and I gave up trying to help in any significant way.

We never got involved in any of the feuding and by and large I was willing to help, give any professional advice I could. I was at the time more involved in NUJ activity at Fleetway. I remember vaguely that Ella, Joy, Atom and others had also looked for premises in south London, which suggests to me that we weren't very well co-ordinated. Again, I remember a certain amount of depression, perhaps because we seemed to be wasting time. Since nobody else mentions our proposal, that suggests to me either that we weren't well organised or that people didn't like to say 'no' and it seems to me that we were badly co-ordinated, at very least. Clearly, I wasn't that much involved in a lot of the events at that time.

Neither do I remember Bruce Burns' arrival, though we became friends later, knocking about quite a bit. I was surprised by his first impressions of me but I guess he changed them later, after listening to a few drunken verses of 'Home in Siberia' or 'Moscow Latrine'. Probably by the time he'd caught up on pints he came to realise that, far from being subtle or snotty, our conversation was merely rambling and half-cut. We used to travel home on the Northern Line to Balham after pretty much every Globe meeting. I think that could be why I thought his references to Ella were rude and he was so surprised by my response. A shame our friendship should have become so confused.

Alan Dodd had also been very kind to me, including offering to help dupe fanzines of mine, but tended to avoid any attempt I made to visit him. Greg Pickersgill's piece was very helpful to me in



Atom's depiction of the Alan Dodd BEM!

understanding Alan and his psychology, which, after all, wasn't that different to many people who prefer to live their lives by correspondence and through books. I think Ron Bennett was the only person I knew who had visited Alan and reported on the state of his house but we knew less about eccentricity in those days (these were, after all, the years when Mervyn Peake was subjected to the infamous 'ice pick' operation, destroying his frontal lobes in an effort to rid him of his tremors). I have relatives not too different. I did my best to get on with John Rackham but I have to admit he could be a bit overbearing. He tended to be a bit of a recluse himself, living as I recall with his mother and tending a boiler in a block of flats somewhere near Olympia.

Greg's observations were particularly acute, I thought, and a lot more interesting, to me at least, than the material about looking for club houses and so on. This could be because I knew the likes of Atom and Vince very well but my relationship with Alan was entirely by mail. It was so good to read about him and have a few mysteries cleared up or rumours confirmed. Most of my information, such as it was, had come via Ron Bennett, who himself had a tendency to be a bit reclusive on occasions. Maybe it's banal to suggest that hermits don't make great mixers and therefore have to find excuses to avoid one another. I thought there was enmity between Ron and Eric Bentcliffe at some stage, but again Ron, with whom I stayed in touch pretty much to the time he died, never said anything to me. Ron seemed to take offence pretty easily the longer time passed. I always found him funny, both as a writer and personally.

I think I made friendships with individual fans increasingly as I stopped attending conventions. As those friends have died (my closest friendship was with Barry Bayley, of course, whose death from complications following a bowel cancer operation came as a surprising blow recently) I find myself seeking out other friends, and in this *Prolapse* has been an enormous help. George Locke and I, for instance, are in regular touch and talking about potential, somewhat fannish, projects we can do together.

I have always admired George as a bibliographer and researcher and strongly recommend his bibliography of *Tarzan Adventures* which helped date a lot of my and others' activities, and represents a true piece of fannish history because the issues I edited were virtually an extension of our fanzine activities. George has a huge amount of goodwill in the second-hand book trade. Friends of mine like Iain Sinclair and Martin Stone applaud his sheer determination in opening a shop in Cecil Court against all received wisdom and filling it with admittedly pricey items, but what a treasure trove! As soon as I can get rid of this wound I'm off to the Court (where another friend of mine also has a great shop) to see George and spend a few hours looking through his stock. I love people who determinedly challenge the received wisdom. Maybe some of us actually look for new margins we can inhabit, refusing to be drawn into the centre, the norm?

Interesting to see that Panther cover of the Asimov CAVES OF STEEL in the lettercol and to be reminded how influential Charles Platt was on book design, beginning with *New Worlds*. Design of that kind hadn't existed before Charles. I also never found Bram Stokes anything but pleasant. If anything, I was rude to him. He was set up, went to jail in Lancaster for possession of pot. When I saw him in Lancaster soon after his release I told him how sorry I was. He grinned. "No sweat at all, Mike," he said, "I had a great time. There's more pot inside prison than there is out of it!"

I suppose Beryl was likely to be defensive of Archie after he died, but the fact is some people who weren't fans did find him a bit anti-social. And it wasn't just his horrible and sometimes mysterious puns. He attended the wedding of Peter West and Sandra Hall, I remember, and Sandra's grandmother (who had looked after Sandra and Tikki when their various parents had died or abandoned them) took exception to Archie's appearance and distinctive smell. I defended him, but I couldn't deny the actuality. Again, reclusive people tend to be a bit unaware of their somewhat lax personal habits. I have friends who are almost obsessively the opposite, bathing several times a day, changing clothes often several times, hating the thought of turning into smelly old men. Graham Hall was like that, for instance. He had reclusive habits, which came and went, and was constantly taking showers. He explained it as having been one of several siblings in Aston and being usually the last into the bathwater.

Mike Deckinger mentions Arthur Sellings and reminds me how helpful he could be when you were in the grip of obsession. I can't help wondering if he ever helped get Pat Kearney started on HIS obsession with Olympia Press, on which he's now the world's acknowledged expert! Arthur had a wide variety of friends outside fandom and was a great catalyst.

I guess only John Clute could compare *Prolapse* with Proust.

Those memories of Kettering, so powerful and yet so tenuous, represent, I suppose, what is the only identity I can nowadays claim with any authority. Suddenly I can smell again those wonderful meat pies and am taken back to the bar of a convention hotel and those poignant moments spent bargaining with Burgess for the last Melton Mowbray in his little paper sack. And was that Ella who, slipping past me, pressed a shilling into his hand and, her eyes lifted to mine in a kind of challenge, sank her pretty teeth into that exquisite crust? //

[George sent me a copy of his splendid bibliography, Mike, which I think originally grew out of Dick Ellingsworth's comments on *TA* in *Prolapse* #9, and picked up speed last March when he finally found the box containing his collection of the magazine! Only 30 copies were printed, at £28.00 each from George at the usual address. Regarding the club-house business, your project came along about five years after the earlier LC searches. In *Skyrack* #72 (27/11/64 it says, 'LONDON FANDOM is clubbing together to buy a club house. Financial details are not known but shares in the project may be obtained at £1 minimum from Michael Moorcock, 8 Colville Terrace, London W11.' But in issue #74, 31/1/65 it merely notes the project had been dropped 'for lack of interest'.]



Barry & Mike in the *Globe*, early sixties. Photo by Bruce Burn.



Sandra Hall, 1958. Photo from Joy Clarke album.

George Locke
george_locke@hotmail.com



George at *Cytricon V*.
Photo by John Dalman.



Bill Temple, at
Loncon II, 1965.
Photo by Ted Forsyth.



George Hay at
Tynecon, 1974.
Photo by Lars-Olov Strandberg

Dear Peter,

For me the highlight – one of the finest pieces you've printed so far – was Bruce Burn's evocative pen-portrait of the *Globe*. Loved every word of it. But you know, I do wish somebody would write a little more about the place itself. I remember that, like most British pubs, it was divided into two or three bars. The fans gathered in the largest bar at the back and rarely, if ever, ventured to the others; perhaps Lou Mordecai would have required they show passports or something! But there was one other part of the *Globe* which I don't think I've seen mentioned in *Prolapse* – the basement and its snooker table. The king of the basement was Charlie Duncombe who, I believe, rarely left it. He taught me the rudiments of snooker and I seem to recall that a great deal of fannish chat took place down there, between folk waiting their turns at the table. Maybe the Elsie Horde held committee meetings there. I remember Arthur Sellings once saying, "I made occasional strokes of genius – others call it luck!"

The Alan Dodd biography made fascinating reading. I've no idea, today, whether Alan and I had any contact. I imagine that I sent him *Smoke* in exchange for *Camber*; maybe letters passed between us, I just don't know. But in my capacity as a bookseller at the tail end of the last millennium, I bought the residual library and archive of Bill Temple from his widow Joan, prior to her move to Edinburgh. Most of the archival material had been taken many years earlier by an American dealer, but my haul included several files of correspondence of the 1960s and later. Bill was a voluminous letter-writer and when corresponding with someone similarly loquacious the files achieved book-length status. And Bill kept carbon copies, so one was in the position of having the whole written dialogue, instead of only one half.

I've mentioned the file I have kept of his correspondence with Arthur Sellings. Another file was correspondence between Bill and the writer Lloyd Biggle Jr, and a third file was between him and Alan Dodd. The main reason for their correspondence was their shared enthusiasm for vintage movies – Alan and Bill were very active in the 'fandom' surrounding that subject. But the letters – about fifty in all, some very long indeed – also discussed the SF world of the day and, from time to time, touched upon fandom. I've not read all the letters in detail but one in particular fills-in some of Alan's background in later life, giving a hint of what it must have been like for a man who had lived all his life with his parents, being suddenly deprived of them. I'll take that file along to Kettering.

I read the stuff about the LC and SFCoL with interest rather than enjoyment; it's good to have it all on record, and to present the opposing points of view. But I found it a bit of a grind. The conflicts between the various factions never really interested me – and in fact probably helped me to ease into gafia. But Arthur Thomson's description of the freezing cold hunt for a club house evoked a memory which the ends of my toes and fingers would have probably preferred to forget. I suppose my own (perhaps misguided) sympathies in the whole sordid affair were probably largely on the side of Inchmery, if only because they encouraged my entry into fanzine fandom and in fact produced early numbers of my fanzine *Smoke* before I got myself a duplicator. Peter, it seems to me that London fandom in the late 50s and early 60s resembled nothing so much as a sequence of episodes in *East-Enders*!

It's amazing the memories that are getting stirred up, especially by your correspondents, and by the names which never seem to pop up like George Hay, surely an eccentric among our asylum of eccentrics! And the several references to that collection of *Weird Tales* that Alastair Durie seems to have bought. I certainly didn't know about that *WT* collection and wouldn't have been that het up about it. They weren't all that uncommon in those days. But I once went into 'Bookends' to see in a heap on the floor a huge collection of the *Hutchinson Mystery/Adventure* magazines series, a British pulp of the 1920s which featured a lot of SF and fantasy. My jaw dropped when I saw them – but I was too late; the collection had already been bought – I think possibly by Billy Pettit (he was an American living in this country, collecting paperbacks and that sort of thing and pretty keen as well as not being short of a bob or two. Rita and I knew him fairly well for a time; we went to his wedding, I recall). Anyway, that magazine is fearsomely rare; I've only ever had a handful of copies through my hands.

And I completely forget to mention in my article another short-lived SF specialty bookshop in London in the 1970s, probably because my memories of it were unhappy, to say the least. It was called 'The Einstein Intersection', and antiquarian bookseller Paul Minet has written a few words about it in his book of reminiscences, *LATE BOOKING*. I think George Hay had introduced Paul to Brian Ouzman, the owner. His business failed because he was tucked away in the rear basement of Paul's big second-hand bookshop in Sackville Street ('World of Books'), and was selling new books. No passing trade, little publicity; a recipe for disaster. I had some books there, as did John Eggeling, and when the time came to discuss whence? and whither? I remember a meeting between Paul, George Hay, Michel Parry and myself. Parry had some plans but when I asked in all innocence (as a potential participant in the new enterprise) how he thought it would work, or words to that effect, he told me bluntly that it was none of my business. At that point I lost interest, and nothing ever came of the scheme. Instead, Paul offered me the front basement of the shop and I resided there for several years in the 70s.

And there was another source of old stuff which several of us dealers found to be worth a visit. Who remembers Mr Bigg, an elderly man who lived in a cold and dank farmhouse on the northern side of the Blackdown Hills in Somerset (the kind of place where the sun never shines)? He had been the owner of a rental library before the war, and for some reason had made a point of collecting new copies of numerous American pulp magazines. I bought quite a bit of material from him for a short period of time. The highlights were a set of *Scoops* (which went straight into my collection) and a complete set of the rare pulp *The Spider*. (That set went en piece to Ron Graham in Australia). I've no idea what my confreres in the trade acquired, but I'm sure they were equally appetising. //



Andy Richards at
Cytricon V. Photo by
John Dalman

[Now it gets complicated. Back last summer I was trying to persuade Andy Richards of the ever-reliable 'Cold Tonnage Books' (adv.) to comment on George Locke's 'bookshop' article in #11. I was wasting my time, of course, but under questioning Andy admitted that some years earlier he'd published an item in his catalogue by Stan Nicholls about the origins of the modern 'Fantasy Centre'. Quick as a flash I contacted Stan who said that it was written to mark Dave Gibson's retirement, and added, "I'm not sure if I've still got it. That was several house-moves and a number of computer crashes ago." Two weeks later I alerted **Greg Pickersgill** who swung smoothly into action on the wegenheim e-list:-]

How many of you keep Andy Richards' 'Cold Tonnage' catalogues? Oh, come on, with the prevalence of OCD in fandom there has to be SOMEONE... why, even I have a couple of old 'Operation Fantast' booklists (on foolscap paper, the real thing indeed) squirreled about the place, even though I did just the other day bin some surprisingly ancient 'Andomeda' catalogues.

Anyway, this isn't a test, we actually need something. Some time well outside of five years but possibly less than ten years ago, Andy ran a short article by Stan Nicholls in one of his catalogues. It was a piece about Dave Gibson, one-time partner with Ted Ball in London's 'Fantasy Centre' bookshop. By some amazing mischance and coincidence the like of which only happens in scientifiction movies, neither the author nor the publisher have copies of this valuable text, which is now Urgently Required. All of which is as good an advertisement for effective back-up as one might need.

And related to this in a Bizarro-world sense, here's a blanket appeal for memories, information, and even hard facts about the outlandish EINSTEIN INTERSECTION bookshop which flourished (no that can't be the right word surely...) in London in the late 1970s and perhaps slightly beyond. Was George Hay involved, was there a man called Brian Ouzman? Did anyone actually ever go there?

[Well, we've had no luck so far in tracing Stan's article but Greg did get a response to the second half of his plea from none other than **Malcolm Edwards**:-]



Malcolm
Edwards, 2005.
Photo by PW

Well, there are names from the past which come up and elicit warm, nostalgic memories. Then there are names which come up which make you think, well, that was a completely useless tosser. Brian Ouzman definitely falls in the latter category.

The shop – which was called 'The Einstein Inter-Sexion' (for no reason I could ever fathom apart from Ouzman's rather tentative acquaintanceship with the English language) wasn't a separate shop at all, but the basement of one of those big old general second-hand bookshops which used to exist in central London, called 'World of Books' in Sackville Street. George Hay had somehow persuaded the owner/leaseholder that a specialist SF shop in the basement was a good thing, and set it up for Brian (who I can only vaguely call to mind as a spidery, unhealthy-looking man with greasy long hair, kind of like an unprepossessing version of Gamma). But Ouzman made Bram Stokes look like a bookselling genius by comparison, and his shop was a disaster area of ill-chosen and poorly arranged stock.

What made it worth visiting was that George Locke sublet half of the basement for – I think -- the first central London premises that Ferret Fantasy ever occupied. I used to visit quite often when I worked at Gollancz (a short walk away), which suggests that it was there either in 1976-77 or sometime from 1982 onwards, because between 1978 and 1981 I was either working at the Science Fiction Foundation out in Barking, or playing pool with Rob Holdstock (aka 'freelancing'). I would have said it was the latter period, because I visited it to trade Gollancz stuff (proofs mostly) with George for pulp magazines, which didn't really become a passion till the 1980s. I also acquired many of Dave Piper's US fanzines from George (some of which, like XERO, I still have), and met Dave there a couple of times.

Some ill-defined scrap of memory suggests that Ouzman was later involved in some way with that bookshop down at the lower end of Charing Cross Road (just up from the National Portrait Gallery) which sold SF and held SF events in the 1980s, about which all I can really remember is meeting Kathy Acker and John Brosnan's father there, though not at the same time. It was gutted by fire later.

[Which sparked yet further revelations in this saga from **Nigel Rowe**:-]



Nigel, 2008 –
his photo

Ahh, that would be 'The Fantasy Inn.' I too held some fond memories of this place. I turned up there one morning in April 1992 after arriving from New Zealand a day earlier, looking for suitable employment. The owner (I forget his name) was standing amongst the still-wet ruins of his burnt-out stock, and I foolishly enquired if this meant he wasn't hiring. Turns out that there were many insurance questions later asked about arson, as the shop hadn't been doing so well. No matter, I went up the road and an hour later was gainfully employed at 'Murder One' Books.

Quite a lot of smoky-smelling books turned up in various places for some time afterwards. I vaguely remember some SF readings and other things there in the late 80's, back when 'Forbidden Planet' was still a small shop in Denmark Street. Those were good times in London bookselling.

[And as usual the last word comes from **Dave Langford**:-]

I'd assumed that nothing of this ghastly enterprise had survived, but guess what? Sorting through a folder of ancient fan art, I found a 1977 D. West cartoon drawn on the back of a circular from Brian Ouzman Himself. With weird capitalization -- 'THE EINSTEIN INTER-Sexion' in quotes -- and authentic crappy-photocopier speckling! Go to: <http://ansible.co.uk/misc/ouzman.pdf>

[Which ends the story for now. It sounds like Brian Ouzman was a totally impractical individual who actually took a George Hay Project seriously. What a combination! – PW]

Brian Aldiss
Oxford



*Respectable
picture from
Brian's web-site!*

Dear Pete,

The topic in *Prolapse 11* seems to have drifted slightly to bookshops. I read rather hastily, but I did not spot a mention of Les Flood's bookshop in Sicilian Avenue, in the heart of London. Les was very amiable, and after you had been there once or twice you were allowed to go down into the basement, where treasures were stored. When I first went down there, another chap was examining large-size *Amazings* (Were there really such things? Don't tell me – this is fifty years ago.)

He showed me a particularly fine cover and said, "This was Paul in his Pink Period". You never forget a statement like that. The speaker was Robert Conquest, a great fan at that time and friend of Kingsley Amis. He wrote an SF novel entitled *A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE* (1955). It contained one prediction which remarkably proved true, odd though it seemed at the time: Arthur Clarke got a knighthood!

We then occasionally went round the corner to have a formal, if not actually prissy, coffee at a round table with Ted Carnell, John Wyndham, Sam Youd, Les Flood, and someone else. Possibly Jesus Christ. Les eventually packed it in and inherited Ted Carnell's job as literary agent. That agency in its turn was taken over by the adored Maggie Noach.

Someone mentions in your columns that it was false-matey to call Golding 'Bill'. This statement is itself false. Bill and I joined Faber's list at about the same time. With skilful editing by the great Charles Monteith, *LORD OF THE FLIES* became an immediate best-seller. Charles introduced Golding, saying, "This is Bill". Bill Golding was conscious of his rather humble origins and, I would imagine, felt more comfortable with Bill than with William. "False-matey"? – Pathetic!

We were with various SF fans and writers in the town of Niagara Falls, which may be called Niagara Falls City – or 'Bill' for short – because H.G. 'Bert' Wells had been there, declaring that the falls should be harnessed to provide the city with electricity. We went to a restaurant for lunch, where we sat at various tables. I could see Bill at a nearby table, looking as if he hoped steam would come out of his ears, if not from elsewhere. Afterwards, he came over and asked me if I knew of a man who had been boring his table, called L. Sprague de Camp.

I said that, yes, I did know Sprague de Camp. "Kill him, will you?" Bill said.

Sadly, my attempts to oblige Bill came to nothing. But Bill went on to christen the Gaia hypothesis, the theory that the globe's biomass keeps the climate steady. Or something. In any case, a pretty SF-ish thing to hypothesise... Keep up the good work! //

Simone Restall
[therestalls2@
btinternet.com](mailto:therestalls2@btinternet.com)



*Simone in 2008.
Her photo.*

Hello Peter,

I didn't find the subject matter so enthralling in #11, because I can't get too thrilled about rediscovering bookshops! Although, there was one memorable occasion when Greg and I went ferreting (hello George!) for books around Islington way and we discovered a huge cardboard box of *New Worlds* I think Greg thought he would weep in front of the seller, so I was sent back in to act nonchalant and negotiated a deal for the whole box. I think the dealer was glad to get rid of them. They were the new *New Worlds*. I have a manuscript somewhere of an edition of the old *New Worlds* – there's a John Brunner story, a Ted Tubb and, I think, even a Brian Aldiss. Tony gave it to me, I think I should hand it on to Sarah since she is the aspiring author in the family. I have always loved the picture of Tony that you printed in *The Melting Pot*, no wonder I succumbed to his charms!

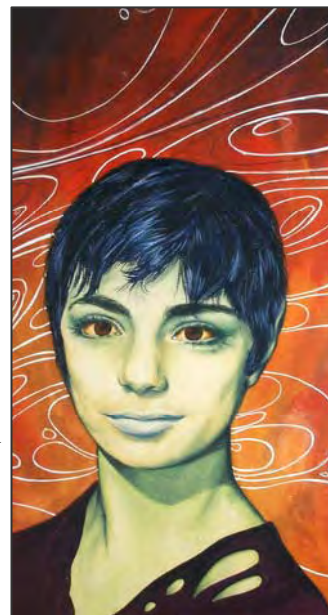
The Pot was the part of the fanzine that really had me smiling and sighing. Darroll Pardoe talking about Archie grumbling about things reminded me of his major grumble about not being able to understand the words of Bob Dylan's 'Mr Tambourine Man'! And Peter Roberts at Kew – was he the man who answered by letter about this seed pod that appeared on my Hoyea? A peculiar plant because none of the flowers produced seeds. And Chris Priest – it's his fault I met Graham Hall. Before then I thought it was just somewhere Midland fans met.

Malcolm Edwards – I have such fond memories of him, Roy Kettle and the Charnox too. I expect Malcolm is all serious now. And John Hall – I have such vivid memories of him – it's like it was only Yesterday he was telling tales of his exploits! I would have thought that D. West's appearance would be unaltered by time, like some wizard, but no, he's like one of us after all.

Champagne lunches at conventions Peter, bloody hell – things have changed! I suppose if Gerry Webb was involved it's not so surprising – he was dealing in property before Phil Spencer and Kirsty Allsop were born! Jim Linwood looks very debonair these days – the photos with the letters are great for someone like me who has been in another world for years, it seems. But what on earth is Mike Moorcock doing in Texas? – I thought he was Notting Hill through and through!

We (Brian and I) have a picture that Eddie Jones painted of an alien lady based on Keith Freeman's wife Wendy. I think Eddie had a secret crush on her. He let Tony choose the painting – perhaps Tony did too! //

[Simone, I wrote-up last Easter's champagne lunch-party for Earl Kemp's eJ, issue #41 (on the efanzines site), complete with pictures of Gerry & Mali and an account of my new psi-power. Here's your painting (it's better in colour); Keith thought it didn't look much like Wendy!]



Tony Thorne
www.tonythorne.co.uk/



Tony in 2008,
from his web-site
– well worth a
visit!

Dear Peter,

Here are a few memories which may be of interest, in no particular order, dragged out from the depths of my murky old mind and inspired after reading through everything in the (numbers 3 to 11) downloaded issues of *Prolapse* ... in two long sittings last week!

1. At the London *Coroncon* Ted Carnell, after an inspiring talk, asked for any questions from the audience ... I, as an incorrigible young fan, cheekily asked him why had he named his magazine after a maker of gas cookers? I can't recall his reply but it did get a few chuckles from the audience!

2. I compiled a few (SF-themed) crossword puzzles back in the 50's which I sold to Peter Hamilton to go in his *Nebula* magazine. One clue I recall was 'Scrap Metal' (5 letters). The answer, printed later, being 'swarf' I soon received an indignant letter from Archie Mercer saying he'd never heard of the word, and couldn't find it in his dictionary. I wrote back and assured him that's what waste metal (turnings) from a lathe, or cut by a milling machine are called. I'm not sure if I convinced him!

3. At one London con I went to the Masquerade Ball as a cloaked and over-fanged Count Dracula. In a dark corridor I managed to confront Arthur Clarke with a bloodthirsty hiss. His startled reaction was "Ye Gods!" I can still see him now, recoiling in mock horror. I met him at the *White Horse*, and later the *Globe*, he was always kind and willing to chat; Frank Arnold and John Brunner too, always ready with a friendly welcome, same with Vinç Clarke and the Buckmasters. I remember them all so vividly.

4. In the early fifties my first wife and I lived for a few years in London while I was studying Design Engineering at the S.E. London College of Technology, as it was called back then. We soon became (occasional) members of the London Circle until we moved down to the Medway Towns area and started our own club there.

5. My fannish/SF days originally began with the weekly boys' magazine *Adventure* before I was even a teenager. It often contained SF and fantasy yarns. One I recall was about an alien invasion with human-looking aliens bombing around in flying ships like oversized artillery shells with lookout windows. Then I discovered my first copy of the American magazine *Thrilling Wonder Stories* in a second-hand bookshop in mint condition, and I've been hooked ever since.

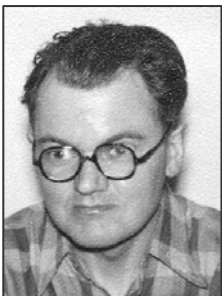
6. How did the word Medway get into Ken Slater's 'Fantast (Medway) Ltd'? Well, I was the one who set it up for him and the local lawyer I used in Chatham discovered there already was a 'Fantast Ltd' somewhere in the UK, (not that we ever found it what it did). Ken and I had been having discussions, by snail-mail of course, about combining our operations in some way as I already had a shop specialising in the genre. (See my website www.tonythorne.co.uk) Being registered in the Medway towns, the lawyer decided to add the (Medway) bit. Soon afterwards Ken was demobbed, he and I visited the lawyer and duly signed-up as the first two directors.

7. However, not very long after that I was unexpectedly promoted at work and asked to set-up and run a new Design and Development Consultancy company, which got me heavily into Nuclear Engineering. We had a running contract with Harwell, then most of the other Atomic Research Centres. The company took off very fast and soon got into exporting worldwide. As its MD and Chief Designer I had to work very long hours and also start travelling to appoint marketing agents, and write technical papers for international conferences. It eventually led to another offer I couldn't refuse, being brain-drained to an American company which entailed emigrating to Switzerland and setting up several European companies and technical agencies for them. It was an exhilarating time, and the rewards were satisfying, but my home life suffered badly.

9. Naturally my early SF-writing career, the shop, and the Medway Club meetings at my house all had to cease, and my association with Ken and my fannish activities too, although whenever in London I did try to look in on the *Globe*. Ken, of course, had always planned to take up his residence in Wisbech on leaving the army, so the possible two branch-locations of the company we'd thought about became only the one, and I ceased being a director. I never saw Ken again in person, but just once on television by sheer chance years later when I was in a hotel. I switched the TV on in my room and found the BBC were covering a con somewhere, and there was dear old Ken explaining what the Masquerade costumes were all about. After I retired we got in touch via the Internet and started writing again, and he very kindly sent me an invitation to his 90th birthday. I wish I could have attended, but I was tied-up in Tenerife, where I always spend the winters; it's a lot warmer than in Austria where I live during the rest of the year with my Viennese wife Eva!

Thank you so much for those pictures you sent, but forgive me if the ink is wet because I shed a few tears over that group shot. The lovely lady on the lower right is my first dear wife who died in 1984. I'm directly above her. The others are Brian Lewis, (directly above the tape-recorder) our super cartoonist who went on to become a drummer in a band, then came back to the Medway area and worked for me in my company, Spembly Technical Products. Later, he apparently went on to work on animation films, including 'The Yellow Submarine'.

On the extreme left is Stuart Conley. I can't recall their names of the next two, but then we have Tom Batho, our electronics expert, who went on to work as a camera-man for the BBC. The chap above me is Jim Guy, who was a teacher at a local school in the Medway Towns. I forget the names of the others. //



Ken in 1952.
Photo from Susie
Haynes.



Tony's Medway group in 1952-53, as identified
in his letter. Photo from Eric Bentcliffe's album.

Ian Maule
ian@nabu.net



Ian at Orbital, 2008. Photo by Rob Hansen

Hi Peter,

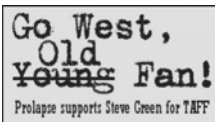
It would have been a day in the mid-sixties when my father came home and told me of a pile of old science fiction magazines he'd discovered going cheap in an old junk shop in the Byker district of Newcastle. Up until then I'd been borrowing books from the local library. From reading story collections I *knew* of science fiction magazines like *Astounding*, *Galaxy*, and *If* but had never actually seen any in the flesh. When I got to the shop on the following Saturday afternoon the pile of magazines was still there, about two feet high. There were issues of *ASF* and *Galaxy* from the early to late fifties and more esoteric titles I'd never heard of like *Super Science Stories*, *Startling Stories*, and *Planet Stories*, all British editions. Quite a few of the magazines were in a very poor condition with no covers, missing pages and generally showing heavy wear.

A couple of years later I started work and one day a week my employee sent me in to Newcastle to attend day-release education classes at the technical college. It was during this time that I discovered Robinson's bookshop in the Grainger Market in central Newcastle. Robinson's was where I managed to pick up a stack of original U.S. editions of *Astounding* for nine old pence each. I'd gone as usual during my lunch break and spotted a box underneath the desk with the magazines still waiting to be priced. The assistant I always spoke to about the second-hand stuff told me to come back in an hour, by which time the owner would have put the prices on. SF was more interesting than the course I was attending, so I missed the afternoon session and went back to the bookshop. The salesman was very apologetic, the owner hadn't come back yet, but seeing as I was desperate to get the magazines he let me have them cheap. I probably picked up about twenty or thirty that day.

That must have been some time in 1969, more-or-less the same time that I discovered (don't ask me how, I can't remember) Lewis Books in North Shields. They were more of a junk shop than a bookshop but did have a remarkable ability to get used U.S. editions of *Galaxy* and *If*. As North Shields is a port they probably got them off passing seamen. I was very upset one day to travel all the way there only to discover they'd closed, never to re-open.

One day in Robinson's I was rooting around in their selection of used magazines and discovered a copy of the first issue of *Vision of Tomorrow*; a magazine I'd never heard of, and was surprised to see was published only a few miles from where I lived. Inside the back cover was an advert for *Speculation*, edited by a certain P.R. Weston. And the rest, as they say, is history.

[Finding all those magazines... U.S. issues!!...modern kids have it too easy.... moan, grumble...]



Steve Green
ghostwords@yahoo.co.uk



Steve at Cytricon V. Photo by Mike Meara.

Hi Peter,

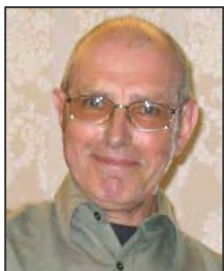
The latest *Prolapse* resembles a sheet of Velcro: plenty of hooks, not least the on-going discussion of memorable specialist bookshops (not always memorable for the right reasons, of course). No mention yet of 'Dungeons & Starships', I note, the ill-fated role-playing-games outlet which Lawrence and Jackie Miller launched a few doors up from Andromeda's then-premises on Summer Row (they'd previously operated from Andromeda's basement).

The shop eventually passed into the hands of Pete Lennon, a Midlands comics dealer with the morals of an underfed rattlesnake and the business sense of a comatose baboon (he once tried to explain to me that his turnover was 100% profit because he'd already paid for the stock). Lennon specifically chose the location to bushwhack the longstanding gentleman's agreement between Phil Clarke ('Nostalgia & Comics') and Rog Peyton ('Andromeda'), whereby Rog would send anyone seeking comics in Phil's direction and Phil would reciprocate for those after SF books; however, one of the many things he didn't know was that Rog and partner Rod Milner had already decided to move down to the Queensway, leaving Lennon's shop isolated and rapidly forgotten.

It will be interesting to chart what effect, if any, the on-line re-launch of *Matrix* has upon the BSFA's 'churn'. After all, if you're not into *Vector*'s particular brand of SF lit-crit or have no interest in *Focus*'s advice to would-be authors, there's arguably no longer much incentive to cough up your annual £26. According to the BSFA's own website, it's 'the place to turn if you want to keep in touch with what's happening in SF and in the wider world of fandom'; were the second half of that statement true, I doubt Martin Tudor and I would be planning to resurrect *Critical Wave*.

Hi Peter,

Dave Hardy
Dave@astroart.org



Dave Hardy at the BSFG, 2003. Photo by PW

I've been at the SECC in Glasgow where the International Association of Astronomical Artists had an exhibition of space art, organised by the British Interplanetary Society. One of the organisers, both of our gallery and of the whole IAC event, which was attended by some 3000 people, mainly from the space industry worldwide, was Dr Bob Parkinson – who just happens to be an artist too (and a member of the IAAA), and I've known him for years. In fact my first cover for *Analog*, June 22, 1981, was for an article by Bob entitled 'Mars in 1995'. Yes, really! The idea was to use a lot of existing NASA and ESA hardware, like NASA's Heavy Lift Stage, with ESA's Spacelab for living quarters.

Anyway, Bob is now President of the BIS, but my reason for writing is that near the end of *Prolapse* #12 is a letter from someone called 'Bob Parkinson'. When I first saw it I thought "Nah -- it couldn't be". And the photo doesn't look much like Bob either (for one thing the glasses are missing). But of course it was. For some reason we had never really talked about SF, and I just knew him as a scientist, engineer (he says there is at least one satellite up there which he can claim as his own, and he was responsible for the propulsion system on every Astrium comsat), writer and amateur artist. You can see his work at the IAC at the link below. It's the frame at the very centre, and you can also have the joy (well we did, so why shouldn't you?) of seeing Bob in a kilt!

<http://davehardy.jalbum.net/IAAA%20Gallery/index.html>

WE ALSO HEARD FROM;

Alistair Durie, apropos his letter last time about OUSFG, advises that he has “checked with a friend who was involved and he tells me that my memory was at fault”. [It’s called ‘False Memory Syndrome’ Alastair!] Not so **John Berry** who remembers that Eric Bentcliffe stayed at his house, ‘Mon Debris’ a couple of weeks in the sixties. “We travelled to Eire, hence my contemporary article ‘One more Reefer to Cross’.” [Ouch!] While **David Bratman** says, “Greg brings Alan Dodd to life. Perhaps what makes the tale so emotionally compelling is that it's complete. It doesn't end, as so many accounts of former fans do, with the subject just drifting off somewhere, but reveals him again at the end of his life. It's rather sad, this man living in a house without plumbing, surrounded by books and papers he no longer has any use for or even access to.” **Bruce Burn** remembered Ella Parker, “Oh, she could dress up well, and did on her U.S. trip. Most of the time she didn't bother, though. Finding Mr Right? I don't know that was important to her, although like anyone she'd no doubt have preferred to have found a companion. Several blokes were drawn to her – she had a very strong character, and her clear skin and firm features were not unattractive.” And **Malcolm Edwards** marked my 65th birthday with a cruel gibe, “What I find most alarming is that the first time I met you I derided your trousers (from my position of velvet-draped superiority), and now – judging from some of the *Cytricon* photos -- we are wearing exactly the same clothes. I'm assuming this means your dress sense has improved in the last 38 or so years. The alternative is too dreadful to contemplate.” [Ah but, Malcolm, in those days you were just a young student with funny ideas while I was a Young Executive who had to be Sensible. Now the roles are reversed.....as a Top Man you have to Look Respectable, whereas no-one cares what a silly old pensioner is wearing!]

More seriously, **Ted Forsyth** recalled his experiences with early computers in the early sixties, and adds, “I agree with Bob Parkinson's comments about memory size. When we started getting personal computers such as the PET they had 4kB or 8kB memory. We got very excited when this was increased to 16kB and when it reached 32kB we thought we were in heaven. I still cannot believe that we now have on our desks small computers which have memories a million times larger and which run at speeds a million times faster.” Right on-cue, **Chris Garcia** (curator at the San Jose Computer Museum), chips in about something else entirely, “I don't believe there has even been a more perfect photo of a writer at work than the one of Michael Moorcock on page 18. I mean it's got a typewriter, a cigar, and he just looks like the stereotype of a writer writing, which is exactly what he was doing!” [Ah, but no goatee and velvet jacket, Chris!] Also on-cue is **John Hall**, who said “#12 arrived before I had a chance to LoC #11 and then what I had thought of saying about the bookshops issue (mostly about Bram Stokes girlfriend, Diane) seemed both out of date and irrelevant. [Oh, I'm sure it's not, John. Not from you!]

Susie Haynes mused; “I find it strange to say I am an outsider, having been involved in SF for so long, but that is how I feel – I have never quite ‘got it’ and have always been on the outside edge looking in. I enjoy attending conventions and the company of the fans and can appreciate the freedom of lifestyle I feel fandom gives people to be themselves and enjoy SF *et al* as they choose. Or is that the naive view of the outsider? I wonder if people inside fandom are critical of each other and I just don't see it, as I don't ‘belong’? Of course in *Prolapse* I already know so many of the names and faces, and the comments on Archie Mercer prompted me to re-read the whole article in the February issue. From a ten-year-old child's viewpoint I recall him as a great big bear of a man! I think it was the beard that did it. He must have been kind to me and not scary, as I do remember him with fondness.” **Steve Jeffery** wrote, “I felt rather sorry for Bruce, having come all that way and been delayed on the journey, to get what must have felt like a dismissive cold shoulder from Ella on arriving at her flat.” And **Pat Kearney** wondered if “Ted Forsyth remembers me bugging-up the electronic flashgun that he generously loaned me? The first time I went to use it – nothing. It must have been one of the first ever made, too, a huge thing about three times the size of my camera. Called a Megablitz, I think, which is a tasteless sort of name for a German product.”

Jerry Kaufman recalled, “Rich Coad's remarks about the N3F reminded me that some of my first contacts with fannish institutions and people came through my membership in that organization.” **Robert Lichtman** remembers “the ‘Dodderings’ column in *Yandro* in which he confessed to avoiding paying for a TV license by hiding his antenna, but my recollection of what I thought at the time was that Dodd was, on this point at least, strikingly anti-establishment.” **Darroll Pardoe** agrees, “I never met the man. It sounds as though he suffered from the all-too-common ‘hoarding syndrome’ and was constitutionally unwilling to throw anything at all away. My Dad suffered from it to a lesser extent – the cellar under his house contained about 20 years-worth of old newspapers when he moved out in 1983. Not that he ever looked at them, you understand, he just wanted to have them around.” **Lloyd Penney** said, “Pick, pick...the cover to *Camber 3* is reversed on Page 22. Still, doesn't detract from the article.” [No it isn't, Lloyd. Look closely, or at the web-version!]

Young **Mark Plummer** sent a 600-word research paper on Alastair Durie's account of the OUSFG last time which it's a crime not to use here, while **John Purcell** is obviously working too hard; “reading *Prolapse* is like taking a Fannish University upper-level course in Britfandom – and hoping for the best when I take the exam.” **Bob Silverberg** sighed, “Ah....fifty years ago! Pam Bulmer a young and pretty girl! And all those grey whiskers in the letter-column photos.... I wept, Peter. I wept.” And **Fred Smith** noted the mention of the Millcross Book Service “which I used quite a bit before becoming beholden to the mighty Fantast (Medway) empire! Rather a shock of course when I visited Ken's tiny shop with all the SF hidden away upstairs!” **Fay Symes** sent one of her ‘diary’ extracts on past cons and **D. West** sent a massive 2000 words, impossible to cut, both of which I'll try to use next time. **Other comments** came in from Chuck Connor, Murray Moore, Ron Salomon, Andy Sawyer, Lisa Tuttle, Ian Whates, & Ian Williams. Do keep those stories coming, please fans!

WHY ARE YOU RECEIVING A PAPER COPY? (Only 100 printed):-

- Mighty Ming, I offer you my sacrifice (this one is mostly for D. Langford, and a very few others)
- You've helped. Please keep on doing whatever it was you've been doing so far!
- Somewhere inside you'll find your name.... now, you're not going to just *sit* there without replying, are you!
- This is a sample issue and you really need to respond if you want another.
- Alas, lost soul, the coyotes are howling and you're about to be cast out. You must Do Something RSN (but see below)

I know it's hard to stay in credit and there IS an alternative; I'll gladly e-mail the pdf version (with colour) as published, my preferred option for overseas readers. And this issue will go onto the eFanzines web-site some four weeks later. Remember, I'm always looking for **Response** to **Relapse**; the fanzine is nothing at all without **your** memories of fannish times past!