

1957

The First UK Worldcon



edited by
ROB HANSEN

1957: The First UK Worldcon

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Astounding (best American prozine), and John Victor
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Foreword

The 1957 World Science Fiction Convention was held at the King's Court Hotel*, located on the corner of Leinster Gardens and Queen's Gardens in London's Bayswater area. The hotel is still there today but is now called The Caesar. The convention took place over the weekend of Friday 6th – Monday 9th September, but as anyone who has been involved with an SF convention will appreciate, these encompass far more than just the handful of days of the event itself.

** Or Kings Court Hotel. The official stationery and publications of both the Worldcon and the hotel itself are inconsistent about this.*

Though the con did not officially start until Friday, many fans turned up the day before for a gathering in the Globe pub that evening. For most that was when it started, but for some it had begun when they first conceived the idea of bidding for a Worldcon several years earlier. Nor would it be done when the official event drew to a close. Overseas visitors were still with us, the last of whom would be here until they flew out on September 20th, and there remained matters arising from the convention that still needed to be resolved.

So why the 1957 Worldcon? Because it was a singularly significant and important event in the history of fandom. Not only was it the first Worldcon to be held outside North America, it was in many ways the first true *world* convention, pulling in as it did fans from more countries than had ever attended a single convention before. It was also the first time that UK and US fans met en masse. Yes, a handful of US and Canadian fans had been posted to the UK while serving in their armed forces during WW2, contacting local fans while over here, but these meetings had been individual and sporadic. And in terms of legacy, LONCON started the tradition of there being a British Worldcon once every calendar decade (1957, 1965, 1979, 1987, 1995, 2005, 2014, 2024). That's three in London, three in Glasgow, and two in Brighton, with the longest gap between Worldcons being fourteen years, and the shortest being eight.

As well as firsts, the 1957 Worldcon is also notable as a *last*, being the final SF convention held before the start of the Space Age: Sputnik launched a few weeks afterwards.

It's possible that North Americans visiting the UK for this convention experienced a greater culture shock than those attending later Worldcons

held over here because the 1950s as they experienced them were a world apart from how that decade was for their UK counterparts.

There is – or was – a fondly held belief among Americans that war is good for an economy. If you're selling arms to others and your homes and factories are not being bombed this is true, but if not then not so much. While the 1950s are remembered by those Americans who lived through them as a time of prosperity the same is not true for Brits. Here it was the age of Austerity, a grim, grey period of belt-tightening and “make-do-and-mend” with wartime rationing not finally ending until 1954, a full nine years after the end of WW2. The Worldcon was the first convention for 32 year-old Brian Aldiss. He later recalled the time thus:

When I began writing I had no idea there existed an active science fiction fandom... British fandom sought me out soon after my story appeared in the *Observer*. A letter arrived from a lady who worked in the picturesquely named Hanging Sword Passage. Her name was Helen Winnick and she was one of the formidable ladies who then helped to run London fandom. In no time, I was sitting in a London pub with the likes of Walter Gillings, John Brunner, Sam Youd (“John Christopher”) and such visitors as C.S. Lewis. [1]

In 1957, London was still bestrewn by ruins from the time of the Blitz. I was still trying to adjust to no longer being in the East, in the army. I loved the East and there was much about England I hated.

A distinctly post-war feeling lingered. Bomb damage was still apparent. There was no mistaking the general American recoil from the ghastliness of plumbing and food, and their amazement at the prostitutes parading along the Bayswater Road. The whores had not adjusted their make-up to the new sodium lighting, and looked as if they could offer mankind nothing better than necrophilia. [2]

Despite this Aldiss had a good time at the con, and it was here that he first met his life-long friend Harry Harrison, and also J.G. Ballard. As for bomb damage, there was still a large bombsite – then being used for car parking – just down the hill from St Paul's Cathedral when I moved to London in 1980!

Prozine editor John W. Campbell was the convention's Guest of Honour and it's pretty obvious that the Committee waited to see who was coming to the convention before nominating a GoH, because while that

guest would get a free room convention finances could not stretch to covering air fare. At the next UK Worldcon, held in London in 1965, Mike Moorcock and his New Wave crew would give Campbell a hard time, but in 1957 he was still a revered figure in the field, as witness Eric Frank Russell's glowing profile of him in the Programme Book, which concluded thus:

In given and very special circumstances John Campbell can become the victim of his own delusions just like any other human being. I'd make a large bet that he is suffering from one right now. He thinks we are honouring him by having him as Top Guest.

Not so!

He is honouring us.

In his 2010 biography of Russell, John Ingham (*not* the punk-era music journalist) noted that:

Just as in January 1937, when the first British Science Fiction Conference in Leeds had been overshadowed by a flu epidemic, so too in 1957 the relatively mild but still debilitating Asian flu was sweeping the country. Those attending the Londoncon proved to be as susceptible as anyone, with more than a few returning home afterwards nursing a high temperature and a general sense of malaise, John Campbell among them. But despite this minor irritation, Campbell and his wife ("Peg" as she was called) thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Apart from anything else, they met Russell for the first time in 18 years and took dozens of photographs, including several colour shots of Russell and his wife Ellen outside the King's Court Hotel – "Peg and I have been debating," Campbell wrote afterwards to Russell, "whether that was King Arthur's Court, or King Tutankhamen's. I favour the Egyptian theory because of the sarcophagus style bathtub." [3]

In 1989, in response to my sending him the second instalment of *Then's* original fanzine partwork version, Sam Moskowitz wrote me a letter in which he said:

I know that you have to limit the amount of space given any special subject, but I think the 1957 World Science Fiction Convention in London was so pivotally important that it should

have been an exception to the rule. Here was the first Worldcon to be held in Europe. The problems were somewhat different than those in the United States, and there was the unusual aspect that the president of the convention committee, John Wyndham, and the chairman of the committee, John Carnell, were full-time professional writers and editors, something rare even to the present in the United States when it comes to a world convention.

This then is the full story of the first UK Worldcon, from the international convention in 1951 that probably planted the seed, through the event itself, and on to the schisming of London fandom. Along the way you'll learn of our now mostly forgotten previous Worldcon bid, the friction between committee members in the North and those in the South, the Hugo trophies that were repurposed from another award, and even encounter famed TV interviewer Alan Whicker. If SaM was still with us I hope he'd consider this the coverage the convention deserves.

All the pieces collected herein have been lightly edited, most have been retitled, and many are only partial reprints. In chapters by me where text by others is quoted that text will be indented. The opposite is the case in those chapters – a majority – composed mainly of text by others. In those cases any text by me will be indented. Whenever my comments, corrections, or other notes appear at points in this volume where they could be confused with surrounding text by others they have been italicised to prevent this.

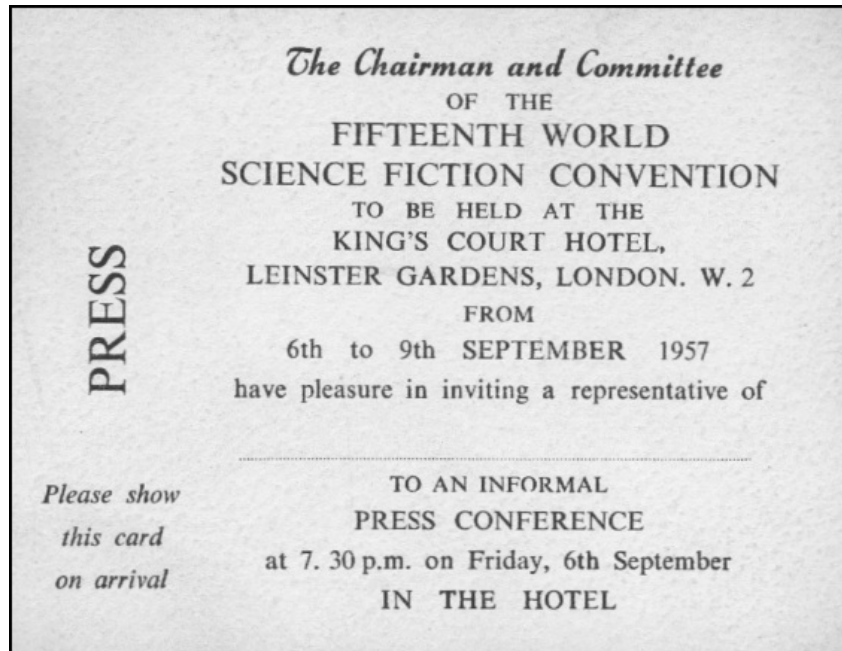
As always my thanks go to Dave Langford for turning the files I send him into an actual book, for the usual editorial suggestions, and for locating additional pieces I'd missed; to Pat Charnock for heroic proofreading and Sandra Bond for further corrections; to Greg Pickersgill for his Memory Hole archive and for scanning source material; to Robert Silverberg for permission to reprint his article "Two Worldcons, Worlds Apart" (*Asimov's*, July 2005) as Appendix 3; to Bill Burns for Les Flood's 2002 letter about the International Fantasy Award; to Alison Scott for Photoshop help; and to all those who contributed to the indispensable online collection of old fanzines that is Fanac.org.

– Rob Hansen, May 2022

[1] *Bury My Heart at W.H. Smith's* by Brian Aldiss (Hodder & Stoughton, 1990)

[2] *Relapse* #21 (Spring 2013, ed. Peter Weston)

[3] *Into Your Tent: The Life, Work and Family Background of Eric Frank Russell* by John Ingham (Plantech [U.K.], 2010)



Before Loncon

LONDON
CONVENTIONS
*The City with the
WORLD record
for conventions*

1938
Necronomicon

1941
Bombcon

1948
Loncon

1949
Ragcon

1951
1st International Con

1952
Loncon

1953
Coroncon

1957
WORLD CON ●
The American Dream Con

Ad in NyCon II programme book, 1956

May 1951

The First International Science Fiction Convention

Though the 1957 Worldcon was the first to be held in this country it wasn't the first international convention. Named for the Festival of Britain, the 1951 International Science-Fiction Festival Convention, or FESTIVENTION as it's better known, was held in London primarily at the Royal Hotel, Russell Square (located a hundred yards or so from Russell Square Underground station) over the weekend of Thursday 10th May to Sunday 13th May. It was not a residential convention, attendees leaving at the end of each day for their homes and lodgings. The Royal Hotel would also be the venue for the 1952 and 1970 UK national conventions. It has since been demolished and on the site now stands the Royal National Hotel.

There had been small UK national science fiction conventions held in rooms above pubs in 1948 and 1949, but none was held in 1950. The 1951 event was never intended to be a purely national convention however. From the start it was planned as an international SF convention, possibly the first true one in the world – Worldcons still being primarily North American affairs at this point. It was a proto-Eurocon from the start, as Ken Slater's editorial in his *Operation Fantast* #5 (June 1950) makes clear:

...good news for European fandom is word from Ted Carnell (editor of fan-produced professional magazine *New Worlds*) that a European convention will be organised in London for 1951, to coincide with the Festival of Britain. Probable dates will be around Whitsun, but more definite information will come later. Guest of honour will be American author L. SPRAGUE de CAMP [in the event, it wasn't]; and many of those lonely souls, the continental fans, will be attending.

This event, given proper publicity, will be a major advance for "Science Fiction" in Britain. The publicity must, however, be "proper". Let us avoid all suggestion that we are "Super-man" enthusiasts flashing toy ray-guns and riding comets. We must at the same time avoid any impression that we are swollen-headed

little bigots, self-appointed saviours of civilisation. We are, more or less, seriously interested in the advance of science and mankind, and although we read our form of literature for enjoyment and “escape”, there is much in it that gives us to think. Let us try to put that angle over to any reporters or other enquirers who may approach us.

Thanks are due to Mr. Carnell for this venture. Mr. Carnell has long been one of Britain’s pioneers in the field, and *Operation Fantast* hopes that all fans will give the convention the same enthusiastic support that they gave to the scheme to revive *New Worlds*. Don’t forget that there are many “odd jobs” connected with conventions, and we are sure that Mr. Carnell will welcome offers of concrete assistance – apart from the fact that every British fan who can attend the ’vention MUST!

We also hope that many U.S.A. fans may find the means to attend, possibly as representatives of their firms to the Festival of Britain.

As a final note, may we suggest “EUCON” as a code name for this convention.

By the following issue, dated September 1950, things had developed further. Here’s Ken Slater again in his editorial for the issue:

After several disconcerting letters, which informed me that the vision of a 1951 Convention was getting dimmer and dimmer, I was pleased to receive a letter from Ted Carnell, just before going to print, which contained the following “information”: –

“Dates for the Convention will be May 12th, 13th, and 14th, 1951. The venue is not yet settled, but will probably be in Bloomsbury, London. The title is not yet finally decided, but provisionally it will be called the EUROPEAN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION. The committee was quoted by Ted, but the best I can do is reprint from his letter. You may understand!

“Committee: Ted Carnell, Chairman; Walter Gillings, Publicity; Ken Chapman and Miss Audrey Lovett, Reception; Vincent Clarke, John Newman, Frank Cooper. Les Flood, Secretary and Liaison.”

“Prior to the actual Convention, Thursday. May 10th. will see a big get-together at the White Horse to complete planning; Friday, the 11th, there will be an inaugural evening, also at the

White Horse; Saturday, the first day of the Convention proper (apart from being a hangover), and Sunday will see the usual meetings, auctions, talks, and general business, details to be announced later. The third day (Monday) will end up with a tour of the Festival and/or a river trip. The Banquet will be held on Saturday or Sunday. I agree at this stage plans must be fluid, and so this rather confusing statement is all I can issue... but watch the pages of *New Worlds* and *Science Fantasy* for further big news!”

Total attendance at the convention was around the 200 mark. Some people only attended the Thursday and/or Friday sessions at the White Horse while some only attended the Saturday and Sunday sessions at the Royal Hotel. Nevertheless, UK fans had now got their first taste of international conventions. They would soon want more.

Summer 1955

London in 1956!

Walt Willis:

Plans are being made to have the 1956 World Convention in London. A bid for London will, it is hoped, be entered at the Cleveland Convention this September by the British fan sent there under the Transfanfund [TAFF – see TAFF Troubles]. Some US big names, including Doc Smith and E.E. Evans, have already said they will come over if London gets the nomination: it's also hoped to bring over a prominent US fan under the Transfanfund. Other contenders for the 1956 Convention site will be New York, Washington, and Atlanta.

The Cleveland Convention Committee has offered five days free lodging in Cleveland to the winner of the Transfanfund election. Don Ford is also trying to arrange transportation from New York to Cleveland. I have been trying since early February to book a berth to New York. I'm not really worried yet, but if any fan happens to own a transatlantic liner I wish they'd get in touch with me. [1]

Pete Royle:

Bellefontaine was a quiet little romp this year: only a hundred or so attended, which meant we could all squeeze easily into anyone's room. And frequently did.

One of the highlights of the programme was Ted Carnell's tape message, and a surprising number of those present later spoke wistfully of attending a London Convention. Plans ranged from chartering a plane and flying over en masse to (and this seemed a bit more practical) getting up a collection of boards and building a boat... a sort of a Fan Ark. Not quite an Ark perhaps, because where are you going to get two of a kind? Two Tuckers, for example?

Actually there is a great and growing sentiment in favour of an English World Con-Site, but the financial problem, as we all know, seems insuperable. It would please and delight you all, I think, if you realised just how close are the ties which join us: name-dropping at Bellefontaine gave ample evidence of that, since absent English fans were mentioned in conversation as frequently as absent Americans. [2]

In 1955 the Eastercon, UK fandom's national convention, was

held at the George Hotel in Kettering over the weekend of 8-11th April. Called CYTRICON, it was the first in a sequence of four Cytricons to be held at the George in consecutive years.

Don Allen:

When I returned to the hotel at one thirty [Sunday afternoon] I went into the con hall and wandered around talking to pro and fan alike until two twenty when Ted Carnell opened up the day's programme by talking about the 1956 World Convention, and LONDON hopes to get the vote, but if not, then it's Kettering again in '56. When it came to a show of hands everyone present wanted London to be the site for the '56 World Convention so now it only remains to be seen how the Statesiders take to it! [3]

Putting together a bid for the 1956 Worldcon this late in the day was a hopelessly optimistic idea. In August, commenting on the departure of TAFF winner Ken Bulmer and wife Pamela for the US and the Worldcon (held that year in Cleveland, Ohio), Vince Clarke lamented:

New York's in the running for bidding for the site of the 14th World Con.; a possible London bid is held up by lack of volunteers for a Committee so far in the future, but it's possible that an International Con will be held here next year in any case. [4]

This was the first mention in print of the possibility of holding a Second International Convention over here in lieu of a Worldcon.

Walt Willis:

As you know, the first effort of the Transatlantic Fan Fund has been a complete success. It has enabled a British fan to attend an American Convention. As administrator of the Fund since it was established in 1955, I'd like to thank everyone who helped, from the first contributors to the American fans who looked after Ken and Pamela Bulmer. I hope Don Ford, who is in charge of the present election, meets with equal goodwill and that we'll have an American fan over here soon.

Ken and Pamela Bulmer sailed from Dublin on the evening of Monday the 25th July, in a cargo boat called the *Inishowen Head*. Madeleine and I, with Chuck Harris who was staying with us at the time, went down to Dublin to see them off, and Chuck took some fine photos of the historic occasion. Because of the dock strike the ship's sailing date was advanced by nearly five weeks, so that Ken and Pamela were arriving in

the States with very little money, no one to meet them, and no arrangements made for their accommodation until the Convention. Back in Belfast, Chuck and I ran off and airmailed a mimeographed appeal for help to twelve representative fans in the Baltimore area and neighbouring states.

The response was wonderful.

The letter arrived only three days before the boat, but Bob Pavlat, John Magnus, and John Hitchcock were at the docks to meet Ken and Pamela with two cars and the offer of accommodation until the Convention in John Hitchcock's house.

A few hours later another welcoming party – Larry Shaw, Dick Ellington, and Phyllis Scott – arrived with the offer of Dave Kyle's vacant flat and whisked the Bulmers off to New York where they stayed until they left for the Convention. They've since been with Don Ford in Cincinnati, Jesse Floyd in Savannah, Chick Derry in Washington, and elsewhere. While in Savannah they visited the Okefenokee Swamp with Lee Hoffman and Charles Wells. They are now back in New York and should be coming home about the middle of November; via Ireland, we hope.

Ken registered a bid for a London Worldcon in 1956 but withdrew it in the face of overwhelming odds in favour of New York. There is now however a very good chance for London in 1957.

Ken has grown a beard. [5]

[1] *Hyphen* #13 (March 1955, ed. Willis and Chuck Harris)

[2] *Triode* #4 (August 1955, ed. Bentcliffe & Jeeves)

[3] *Satellite* #6 (Summer 1955, ed. Don Allen)

[4] *Science Fantasy News* #13 (August 1955, ed. Clarke)

[5] *Hyphen News Supplement* (November 1955, ed. Willis)

It's probably worth noting here that while at the 1953 Worldcon, Bert Campbell decided on the spur of the moment to put in a bid for London in '54. This wasn't serious, however, and went nowhere. More here:

https://fancyclopedia.org/London_in_%2754

February 1956

The New Bid

Vince Clarke:

British science-fiction fandom faces its biggest event yet with the exciting news that, although the British bid for being the venue of the 1956 World SF Convention was defeated at the Cleveland Convention this year [written 1955], the bid will be renewed for the '57 Convention and will almost certainly succeed. British SF fan-ambassador Ken Bulmer brought this news back with him from the States after being present at the Cleveland World Convention last Labor Day (a small convention by American standards – only 300-odd delegates!) and seeing his attempt to secure the next year's Con-site narrowly out-voted in favour of New York.

Many American fans have promised to support a British bid in 1957 (for the '56 site), and are already talking over the prospect of hiring planes to convey visitors over here! In London it has been announced that nearly thirty publishers of science-fiction books will lend their support to a World Convention in Britain, and fans are already looking forward to the 1956 British Convention as a training ground for the following year.

Who will be holding the 1956 British and the 1957 World Convention in this country? By all accounts, London fans have stepped into the breach again and are booking the George Hotel, Kettering, Northants, scene of 1955's extraordinarily successful "do", for the '56 Convention. It will be attempted to run it as an International Convention, for many visiting fans are expected from other countries, and the experience gained is going to be very, very useful for the 1957 Convention, which will call for a concerted effort from fan groups all over the country.

Don't think that it's too early to be talking and writing about the 1957 Convention. A World Convention is a very big affair indeed, and the active fans who will help to organise it will need all the assistance that they can get. This means YOU and if you have any suggestions for programme ideas, publicity, organisation of any sort or kind, either for the '56 or the World Convention, I suggest that you get into touch with the active fans. At the time of writing there have been no details released of who's who on Committees and suchlike, but letters addressed to The Convention Secretary, c/o The Globe, Hatton Garden, London, will reach the famous London Circle of SF enthusiasts (they meet in the Saloon Bar

there every Thursday night), and will get passed on to the right hands.

– *British Space Fiction Magazine* vol 2 #7
(February 1956)

April 1956

The Second International Convention

After the decision was taken to bid for the 1957 Worldcon it became necessary to get the word out. Ken Bulmer was put in charge of publicity and the first (full page) ad appeared on the back cover of The Journal #1 (February '56), the first Progress Report for the 1956 Worldcon, edited by Larry Shaw and Sam Smith. (The Journal – in full, The Journal of the World Science Fiction Society – was what all Worldcon Progress Reports were called at this point as part of the WSFS protocol.) The ad was pretty basic but it put a marker down and let everyone know that London would be bidding for the following year's Worldcon. Either at the same time or later the first convention flyer was distributed. However, it appears UK fans may have had a contingency in place for if they lost the bid....

Pam Bulmer:

The 1956 Kettering Convention will soon be upon us. All enthusiasm here in London is, however, indirect. The main concern of fandom here in Britain is for the 1957 International Convention which will be held from the 19th to 21st April inclusive. As I write negotiations are in hand for the booking of a suitable hotel. Very nearly the entire programme of the 1956 Con is being devoted to planning for the 1957 Convention – surely the most original programme yet!

The first Science Fiction Convention was held in Leeds in 1937 and it is only fitting that 20 years later Great Britain should be the venue for the 15th World Science Fiction Convention. Five years ago, in London, the First International Science Fiction Convention, the Festival Convention, was held and was an undisputed success. A large number of attendees at that convention came from Europe and since then interest in science fiction and fandom on the Continent has been greatly stimulated. Even for the 1956 convention – which has *not* been publicised – enthusiasts are coming from America and the Continent. British fandom will be extremely disappointed should the World Convention remain in the United States for yet another year. I hear that Los Angeles is intending to put on a bid for

the '57 Convention at the '56 New York Con. Doubtless there will be a great deal of support from west coast fans and obviously British fandom cannot come over personally to New York – much as would like to – to record their votes, so we will just have to keep our fingers crossed.

MAKE IT A 20th ANNIVERSARY!

From LEEDS in 1937 to London in 1957 – Your vote can turn the SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION into the FIFTEENTH WORLD SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION.

LONDON IN 57! [1]

The above confirms that British fans were planning to hold an international convention regardless of whether or not their Worldcon bid was successful. How else to interpret “Your vote can turn the SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION into the FIFTEENTH WORLD SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION?”

Peter Weston made the same observation about the Ellis Mills comments appended to a graph charting the declining attendances at Eastercons. Ellis wrote:

It will be seen from the graph that in the year 1957 – according to present extrapolated trends – the huge number of -13 fen will be present for the International Convention. Certainly, we will not have a Worldcon here in 1958 with a total of 227 fans not attending. [2]

I’m not sure what that reference to 1958 meant, but as Peter Weston observed:

Reading the above, I was struck first of all by Ellis’s comment (an echo of something Eric had said earlier in the issue [see below]) about an “International Convention in 1957”, which was an odd choice of words. At first I thought maybe they imagined something special would still take place in 1957, even if London didn’t win the worldcon for that year (Los Angeles was also bidding), rather in the manner of the 1951 “Festiventation”. Perhaps that was indeed the case. What’s quite clear is that at this point there was no suggestion for any sort of convention at Easter, additional to the big event planned for the autumn. [3]

Eric Jones:

After lunch [on Sunday 1st April] the discussion began on the 1957 International Convention. Perhaps at this point I should mention that the debating session scheduled for 12 p.m. just didn’t take place – or if it did I was missing. On the platform for the discussion were Dave Kyle (from

America and President of the '56 Worldcon in New York), Ted Carnell who is Chairman of the '57 Convention, Jan Jansen, Pam Bulmer, Joy Clarke, Bobby Wild. A full report of this discussion was taken down in shorthand and will be issued to all attendees at a later date. [This does not appear to have happened.]

Briefly the venue of this Con will either be London or, if not, a Holiday Camp at Yarmouth. Apparently some small difficulty has arisen re finding a suitable hotel in London, but investigations are still proceeding. The date of the Convention will be between August and September 1957 instead of the Easter date which is unsuitable for our American fen who hold their con in the States over Labor weekend and would not have enough time to save up for fares etc in the short interval. The main Committee is based in London and is comprised of London fen... I cannot quote names here off-hand as I did not take any notes... and there are also provincial members of the Committee of which I am one. Doubtless further (much more reliable) reports will follow in due course about this discussion. [2]

Ted Carnell was charged with presenting the London bid at the 1956 Worldcon. His and other Londoners plans to attend were announced in the third progress report for that convention:

London Coming

One of the most popular fellows in science fiction – on either side of the Atlantic – is Ted Carnell. He's been an active fan since the pre-historic days of First Fandom and, like so many others, has become a professional in the field, he as a leading editor in England (*New Worlds* and *Science Fantasy*) under his more formal handle of E.J. Carnell. And all of him – Edward, John, E.J., and Ted – is coming to New York for the big affair.

This will be Ted's second trip back to the States. He first came to the 1949 Clevention at Cincinnati as the advance guard of a succession of popular Britishers. Now he returns in the dual role of a science fiction editor and chairman of the Convention Committee for London In 1957.

As part of his supporting cast, the following Londoners will be present: Mike Wilson, Audrey Lovett, Kerry Gaulder and Art Clarke (who at other times will be vaguely known as Guest-of-Honour Arthur C. Clarke).

Graham Stone:

At the time of writing it is anyone's guess whether the New York Convention, held first week-end in September, will vote for London as the site for the 1957 "World" Convention, a move that has received strong

support on both sides of the Atlantic for the past two years and which would give the title some meaning. Whether or not they have American recognition, a sponsoring committee headed by John Carnell, editor of *New Worlds*, is planning an international gathering in London next year. The committee was set up by April's British Convention, which, although attended by only about a hundred people had representatives from Belgium (Jan Jansen), Germany (Anne Steul) and a U.S. delegation comprising David A. Kyle of Gnome Press (chairman of the current U.S. Con.), Richard Wilson, Larry Shaw of *Infinity* and Mrs. Shaw (Lee Hoffman), and Ellis Mills.

We hope the move to create a genuine international organisation is successful. Perhaps in time it may develop into something more than the present patriotic rally style of meeting one week-end a year. [4]

[1] *Femizine* #8 (March 1956, ed. Pam Bulmer)

[2] *Sidereal* 3.1 (1956, ed. Eric Jones and Ellis Mills)

[3] *Prolapse* #7 (June 2007, ed. Peter Weston)

[4] *Science Fiction News* #15 (September 1956, ed. Stone)



Ad in *The Journal* vol XIV #3, June
1956

*In the above image, “blog in the fog” is a play on the earlier “snog in the fog” bidding slogan (see “[March 1957: New Hotel Reviewed](#)”). This is not an astonishingly prescient reference to weblogs but rather to a drink created by the Liverpool Group, initially as the fictional sponsor of their 1955 taped production *The March of Slime* and later with various alcoholic recipes. The name could well have been inspired by the “Beachcomber” humour column in the *Daily Express*, which ran regular joke ads for a universal panacea called Snibbo or – at least once – Bloggo.*

August 1956

Bombcon?

In the Programme Book for NyCon II (aka NEWYORCON), the 1956 Worldcon, was an ad for the 1957 London Worldcon (see below). This would have been produced by Ken Bulmer, who was in charge of “Overseas Publicity” for the con, and is an altogether peculiar piece of work. It calls our second convention NECRONOMICON (a name it had never had either before or since), 1948’s WHITCON is listed as LONCON, and the 1949 convention is suddenly RAGCON. The 1951 one is listed as 1st INTERNATIONAL CON – which is fair enough and at least bears some resemblance to the name it appears under on the day membership tickets – but it had almost immediately been dubbed FESTIVENTION and has been known by that name ever since.

Then there’s BOMBCON.

One weekend in September 1941, a dozen or so fans met up at various places in London, including a railway station waiting room and a park. Among their number were Ted Carnell, John Beynon Harris (Wyndham), and Ken Bulmer. There are a couple of contemporary reports of the gathering but at no point did anyone involved name this gathering a convention. Not until fifteen years after the event was it elevated to a con and given the name BOMBCON for the first time in this ad. So either Ken was misremembering, or he decided to consider it a con purely to support his claim for London as “The City with the WORLD record for conventions”.

That such a list was able to be presented as an accurate one also highlights a problem that existed at the time and for many years afterwards: namely that there was *no* official list of British conventions. This state of affairs would not be rectified until 1971 when Peter Weston, wanting to print such a list in the programme book for that year’s Eastercon, got together with Ken and compiled one. Unfortunately they made a mess of the pre-war cons, omitting the 1939 convention, including BOMBCON, and attributing the 1944 national convention in London to Manchester. They also reduced FESTIVENTION to just another national convention and omitted the 1957 Eastercon entirely. This was the list that would appear in Eastercon programme books for the next two decades.

As a result of the research I did in the late 1980s for *Then*, my history

of UK fandom, I came up with a corrected listing that included the cons Ken and Peter had omitted, restored FESTIVENTION to its rightful place as an international convention, and dropped BOMBCON. This list was subsequently accepted as being more accurate and is essentially the one that has been used ever since. As for why I dropped BOMBCON...

It became obvious to me very early on in the writing of *Then* that I needed to be clear on what is and is not a convention or conference. In the spring of 1978 I attended a weekend party at the London home of Greg Pickersgill and Simone Walsh (reported by Dave Langford in *Twll-Ddu* #12). Many of the most active fans in the UK travelled from different parts of the country to get there (I myself came up from Wales) and, because they were active fans a fair bit of fannish business – in re the British Science Fiction Association, cons then being organised, and the like – got discussed and sorted out over the course of that weekend. At one point I remember saying: “Y’know, this is virtually a convention. We should declare it one.” Someone, possibly Greg, replied: “Don’t be daft!”

And they were right.

At the absolute least, a convention should have been announced and planned as such beforehand. It’s not a status you confer in the middle of an event or retroactively declare afterwards. So that was my bare minimum for inclusion. Inevitably, there were things that met this minimum requirement yet still missed the mark in other ways, and those outliers I decided on an individual basis. In the case of BOMBCON the decision was an easy one. It didn’t meet the minimum requirement, so it was out.

LONDON CONVENTIONS

*The City with the
WORLD record
for conventions*

1938
Necronomicon

1941
Bombcon

1948
Loncon

1949
Ragcon

1951
1st International Con

1952
Loncon

1953
Coroncon

1957
WORLD CON 

The American Dream Con

September 1956

The New York Bidding Session

Ted Carnell:

The Biltmore Hotel, New York, September 3rd.

In the palatial 19th floor ballroom of this hotel before a packed audience of science fiction enthusiasts gathered from all parts of the United States, plus several from Canada and England, voting for the 1957 World Science Fiction Convention site has just been concluded, and before the tense audience Chairman David A. Kyle of New York City has informed them that by the overwhelming majority of 203 votes to 65 London has outbid Oakland, California, for the honour of having next year's Convention.

While this had been anticipated in England and a substantial Committee formed some months before I left London for New York to make the bid on behalf of Great Britain, nobody until this moment could be quite sure how the majority of Americans would take to the idea of their own World Convention being held outside United States territorial waters. In fact, at a business session held earlier today there were some lively debated scenes, held in true American style reminiscent of scenes in the Senate, with author L. Sprague de Camp presiding.

Unlike any British Convention, I found that considerable lobbying was being done both for and against London and as the day wore on it became evident that an exciting fight would develop between those who wanted the Convention to stay in their own country and those who recognised that science fiction had become international and that recognition should now be given to the many countries outside the United States who had become active in our particular field of interest.

At 3:00 p.m. this afternoon Anthony Boucher, editor of *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, rose to make the opening bid for Oakland and in a very fine speech explained their city's plans for next year should they be successful. Several prominent West Coasters then added seconding speeches, being allowed ten minutes in which to make their tributes in favour of the Oakland-Berkeley area of California. The opening bid for London then followed by myself and was seconded by Larry Shaw, editor of *Infinity Science Fiction* who attended our own Kettering Convention earlier this year. Short supporting speeches in favour of London were then

made by authors Dr. E.E. Smith of “Lensman” series fame and Richard Wilson who had also been at Kettering this year. Some thirty minutes later the result in favour of London was announced.

London can now go ahead with preparations for the first truly *World Science Fiction Convention*, tentatively booked for September 6th, 7th, and 8th at the Royal Hotel in Bloomsbury. This will be held under the auspices of the World Science Fiction Society Inc., a body specially formed at Cleveland last year to handle these national meetings. At that time provision was made in the Society’s by-laws to allow a World Convention to be held outside the United States and it is axiomatic of the democratic method used by the Society that delegates present voted the site to Europe.

Late tonight, as I write this, after the final official session has finished and the exhibits dismantled and the 12ft. “World Science Fiction Society” banner in blue and white is furled ready to send on its way to London, there will be a continuous film show in colour of scenes from many previous Conventions. All the major events this year have been covered in film and the sound tape-recorded and it may be possible for all these to be shown next year for the benefit of the many European delegates who will be visiting London and who will no doubt find an interesting comparison between British and American type Conventions.

Already, as I write this, discussions have been held in the hotel between the present Convention Committee and representatives of Pan American Airways to charter one or two 70-seater planes to take American delegates across the Atlantic in 1957. While London cannot expect to compete in overall numbers they will at least have adequate support from many American authors and fans, and those guests will receive a “Royal” welcome.

As to who will be London’s Guest of Honour next year only time will tell, but the London Committee have already compiled a list of possible celebrities from whom we may expect at least one more to be present. An air letter I received this morning informs me that author John Wyndham has accepted the position of President of the Committee Council now at work planning the skeleton of next year’s Convention.

Already it looks as though London will be truly representative of a “World” Science Fiction Convention. [1]

Ron Ellik:

There had been an ad in the Con Booklet, placed by the Chesley Donovan group*, saying that “Los Angeles” was withdrawing in favour of London. EE Evans stood up and declared that this looked like LASFS was

doing such, while LASFS wanted Berkeley to get it next year. ((Mr. Evans was mistaken. A member of the CDS announced the above-mentioned ad at a LASFS meeting and no one objected to it. Officially, LASFS had not gone on record in favour of either site. Unofficially, there were – and are – a goodly number of LASFS members favouring London in '57 and South Gate in '58. – Len Moffatt))

** An LA group founded by artist Ron Cobb and friends at Burbank High School. Initially C.D. Inc. (the C at first standing for Cobb, and the D for co-founder Tad Duke rather than the fictional Chesley Donovan or [sometimes] Donovan), it lasted until its members were in their early twenties. For more see: <https://alienseries.wordpress.com/2016/01/31/crew-logs-ron-cobb/>.*

I had talked with Evans beforehand, and it seems that it was really only Evans who wanted Berkeley to get it. Of the other attendees from L.A., which included Ackerman, Liebscher and myself, two wanted London, while Liebscher didn't care.

Tony Boucher made the bid for Berkeley, and Carnell bid for London. Evans, Ben Jason and Greenberg seconded Berkeley, and EE Smith, Larry Shaw and Dick Wilson seconded London. All the speeches were good, although Greenberg's was "below-the-belt". [2]

The faction who opposed the London bid on nationalistic grounds, and whose presence at the earlier business session he mentioned in passing, were more determined than Ted Carnell reported, as Ted White recalls:

I remember the foofaraw that surrounded the bidding at NyCon2 – there was a fiercely xenophobic movement which was determined to keep the Worldcon in North America, because "If we let them have it they'll never give it back".

Nor was this the end of the matter. There was an attempt to torpedo the bid soon after the con:

Dick Ellington:

NEW YORK – OCT. "SUGGEST LONDON WITHDRAW BID TO PREVENT SPLIT IN FANDOM. PUBLISHERS GUARANTEE LONDON IN '58. ARTHUR CLARKE".

This telegram was sent to the Bulmers from the NY convention. As it was misaddressed, it didn't hit Tresco [the Bulmers' home] till a couple of days afterwards, but when it was received by Joy and Vince Clarke (the Bulmers being away) it necessitated fast exchanges of telegrams and cost

the Clarkes, Arthur Clarke, and me much time, trouble and worry – not to mention the fact that Mike Wilson was sort of suspected of being the guilty party.

Ego and myself put our magnificent brains together and in true GDA* style evolved a plan. I rumoured it around that Clarke had sicced the FBI on the case (international forgery and all that, you know) and set my own little GPU* to smell out some culprits.

** The Goon Defective Agency, which featured in many John Berry fan fictions during this period. The GPU (State Political Directorate; later OGPU) was the old intelligence agency and secret police of the Soviet Union.*

Comes to the Dive [the “slan shack” where Ellington lived] a culprit who has admitted knowing and being in on the whole thing. I threaten him with the FBI and general doom and destruction and he finally squeals like a stuck pig. The squeals translated roughly into Bob Chazin of Ohio, currently a student at that great Institution, Harvard, which says very little for them.

Fun’s fun, but Chazin is hereby warned that he better not show his face around New York for many a moon or comes Retribution, and I do not mean the John Berry one. Anything that costs me money I disapprove of to say the least. I almost wish this idiot was an actfan so’s I could rip into him and start a smashing feud in some poor unsuspecting fanzine. I also wish I hadn’t agreed to keep silence on the other idiots who were “in on” the thing with him. Suffice it to say that one of them got enough crap thrown at him at the convention for other idiocies he pulled to last him for... well at least till another convention. [3]

[1] *New Worlds* #54 (December 1956, ed. Carnell)

[2] *Science Fiction Parade* #2 (September 1956) ed. Len Moffatt

[3] *Contact* #1 (October 1956, ed. Jan Jansen, Ron Bennett, Ellis Mills, John Hitchcock)

September 1956

The First Press Release

James V. Taurasi:

Jackson Heights, NY, 10 September (CNS*)

** CNS was Taurasi's Cosmic News Service.*

Ted Carnell gave out the details of the tentative plans for the 1957 World Science Fiction Convention (The Loncon) as far as they have been worked out, at the home of SF author John Victor Peterson. Ted stated that the Royal Hotel in London had tentatively been booked for the gala event. These bookings include the Main Ballroom, Small Ballroom, and an annex for displays etc. Also two floors above the Ballrooms (approx, 200 rooms) had been reserved. Room rent begins at \$3.00 a day and includes breakfast. All are single rooms. For those who prefer rooms with baths, they can get accommodation next door in the Tavistock Hotel, which is run for American tourists. Here rooms with baths can be had from \$4.50 a day. Both Hotels stand side by side and can be considered as one.

There will be three chairmen for the Convention, each for a special job. John Wyndham will be the chairman for all fan activities and the fan portion of the programme. Ted Carnell will be the go-between for authors, editors and publishers and will handle the professional end of the programme. There will also be a third chairman, as yet unnamed, who will be in charge of all entertainment of the convention.

To join the convention it will cost fans in the US only \$1.00, though it will cost them another \$1.00 if they attend the convention. This was also the arrangement at the recent New York Convention. We suggest that all readers of *Fantasy Times* join up with the convention right now by mailing in \$1.00 to Secretary Charles Duncombe, 82 Albert Sq., London E., England. 113 fans joined the 15th World SF Convention, at the recent 14th Convention.

Ted informed us that tentative plans call for certain days to be set aside for certain types of programme (such as fan-type, professional speakers, etc.). In this way one would attend the portions that he liked and not be bored.

At the present time, Pan-American Airlines will charter to a group one of their DC-6Bs which will seat 71 persons. This airliner would leave

New York on September 4th 1957 and arrive in London three hours before the convention starts. The price one way (to London) would be \$115 a person. Since some of the persons going over would want to stay over and visit Europe, the return trip is in doubt at this time. Regular fare on a return trip is \$288. But if almost the same number of persons went and came back as a group the return fare would also be \$115. Plans are now underway to make definite plans for those who care to travel in this manner. 36 persons at the NY Con have indicated that they would go in a group.

– *Fantasy Times* #255 (September 1956, ed.
Taurasi)

November 1956

London Ahoy!

Ron Bennett:

Howdido Friday, Serious Saturday, Fannish Sunday and Weary Monday. Ready made chapter headings for the various con reports that should see publication after next year's World Convention in London.

Indeed, a cursory glance through the programme in its present infantile stage shows these clearly defined Sections. Friday afternoon the first attendees may be expected from far and wide, and festivities will commence with an introduction of the fans present. The actual programme will start on Saturday morning, a fairly serious day with big names there and discussions etc. which should make it quite an important gathering, with press coverage. On Sunday the fannish element will be more in evidence, with the programme, such as it may be then, slanted that way. There should be no need to explain the evening and night habits of the conventioning fan.

Among the items planned perhaps the most important is the showing of the film Ted Carnell took at New York this year, together with selections from films taken at earlier conventions by Bill Grant. The Achievements Awards and the Guest of Honour's talk are of course musts, while a banquet, a masquerade ball and a publishers cocktail party are mentioned.

John Wyndham is the president of the committee and Harry Turner has been appointed official editor of the *WSFS Journal*, first of volume 15 due out in January. Ken Bulmer will act as Harry's assistant. Hopes are to make it even better than before, litho and a nice blend of fannishness and dignity.

Norm and Ina Shorrock, John Roles and Dave Newman are putting in work for the convention, and with Fred Brown as liaison between London and Liverpool they are handling programme arrangements. Pamela and Ken Bulmer who swamped New York with publicity for "London in '57", and evidently did a good job, are the Overseas Publicity Committee, and have Walt Willis co-opted.

The secretary is Bobbie Wild, who lives at 204, Wellmeadow Road, Catford, London SE6. And a word of warning here: all bookings for rooms at the Royal should go through her and not direct to the hotel.

The manager of the Royal Hotel has promised a section to ourselves where noise will not matter. This is something we must have, for though it is perfectly possible to run a con without, it does help if plans like that have been made.

You can get a good “bed and breakfast” room at the Royal for 25/- (\$3.50) a night, although prices may move up a little by next year. The date still remains September 6, 7 and 8.

By now you should have been convinced that this is not an occasion to pass by, so get out your purse and, if you have any money left after subbing to *Contact*, send in your registration fee. And don’t wait too long. The first *Journal* is in preparation.

News of the plane from America continues to improve. It might actually take place, and what a great epic it will be. *Triode* has brought out a fanhistory of Trufans sailing the Seven Seas. They’d better get up-to-date.

At the moment two aircraft are envisioned, with fans travelling in number one, and bheer and blog (no mention is made of JD!) in number two. Dave Kyle will be issuing a full statement to American fandom about this. [1]

Terry Jeeves:

Preparations are well under way for the ’57 shindig. Dave Newman heads up a programme committee consisting of. John Roles, Norman Shorrock, and Pete Daniels. Fred Brown is the Liaison Officer... his job is to liaise. Dave is anxious to hear from anybody with (sensible) programme ideas and offers, so why not write him. As for those backsliders who haven’t already sent in their akkers (that includes me), shoot your 7/6 along to Charlie Duncombe as soon as you can bust open the kid’s piggy bank. Remember the dates, 6-7-8 September 1957. The Royal boasts all modern conveniences by the way... hot and cold zap gun* ammo in each room, a glass roof to inhibit roofcons, and it is only 1 min. from the main road outside. [2]

* Zap guns – water pistols – were a favourite fad of early 1950s UK fandom.

Helen Winick:

I’m a bit worried – as you mention, a lot of the Stateside fen are going to suffer a distinct anti-climax at the enforced sobriety at the Hotel. It does ruin the spontaneity of the thing if one has to go somewhere afterwards to relax, but it’s better than nothing. Well, during the 1953 con I ended up with a bunch including Bryan Berry and Jesse Floyd at an all-night jazz

session held in an almost empty house: a sad little man turned out to be the landlord but we just let him brood! I know two places that are equally uninhabited right now – wouldn't it be an idea to have a scout-round, say two weeks before the con, to find somewhere like this where about sixty congenial spirits could gettogether overnight and cement Anglo-American relations! ((Gee, that would really be a fannish ploy! I'll bring the cement, you bring the relations! – eb)) Given a few beds and sleeping-bags, hot and cold water, room for the beer barrels, tapers and impromptu jazz sessions – and we could have quite a ball! And no fear of breakages either. [2]

Eric Bentcliffe:

Whilst I don't expect the Royal to be all that sober (at least, not after the fen get there) I think Helen's idea is a good one. We definitely will not be allowed the same latitude, and facilities for all-nite parties at the Royal as at Kettering. I imagine that any attempt to entertain ourselves on a similar scale to Kettering would mean that the fen involved would be asked to leave the hotel. This leaves us with limited size parties, held in the homes of those London fen within easy reach... and large numbers of fen left out. An empty house would be ideal. [2]

Ken Bulmer:

The World Convention Committee were a little shaken to see some of the statements in *Triode* referring to the possibility of the Royal Hotel management clamping down on fan parties and other goings-on at the '57 con. There are plenty of factors to be taken into account when running a function of this size apart from the smoke-filled room angle, but we don't intend going to bed at 10:30 each night either. We made a particular point of regarding each hotel of the dozens that came to our attention from the viewpoint of the partywise, and received personal assurances from the Royal's manager that as long as we didn't burn the place down we would be left alone. As far as possible all attendees' rooms will be together, which means that the central units of the block will be sound-insulated from the mundane world by... well, probably scores of rooms. Also, it's a possibility that the rooms will be over the halls, eliminating any fear from folks below that the ceilings are about to descend. Of course the Royal isn't all that could be desired... nothing would be, apart from the Tucker Hotel, but as with all cons, your enjoyment is 99.6% dependent on the spirit you bring to it – and we don't mean whiskey either. [3]

Dave Newman:

"[The] programme committee were rather interested to discover that somebody had already planned the programme for them..."

Being head of the programme committee, Newman was understandably unhappy about this, commenting on the...

“...apparent discourtesy of the central committee in not giving we North-Western types the chance to comment on the ideas prior to publication.”

[4]

[1] *Contact* #2 (November 1956, ed. Ron Bennett, Jan Jansen, Ellis Mills, and John Hitchcock)

[2] *Triode* #8 (Autumn 1956, ed. Bentcliffe and Jeeves)

[3] *Triode* #9 (January 1957, ed. Bentcliffe and Jeeves)

[4] *Natter* #2 (November 1956, ed. Dave Newman)

February 1957

A Royal Rejection

Peter Weston:

In the summer of 1956 Dave Newman, John Roles and Norman Shorrocks were invited to form the Programme Committee for the proposed London worldcon the following year, and Dave produced four issues of *Natter*, a discussion newsletter, between September and January 1957. He was responsible for starting the revolt against the main Committee's choice of the Royal hotel, scene of the 1951 and 52 cons...

In *Natter* #4 (16th January), with the backing of the full programme committee, he protested vociferously and at length about the hotel, calling it "a morgue, operated on a shoestring". Although the decision had by this time been announced in Loncon's first PR, the venue was eventually changed to the Kings Court, but I dare say this did not make Dave and the other Northerners too popular in London circles. [1]

Ron Bennett:

Since our earlier mention that the Royal would serve as consite, there has been a lot of controversy over this matter, with plenty of fans unhappy at the choice of hotel, mainly due to experience of previous conventions held there.

During the past ten months, the Secretary has contacted well over a hundred hotels and hotel chains in and around London, and at the insistence of provincial committee members, several seaside resorts as well. On a new list passed along by the Liaison Officer of the Programme Committee (it would have been shorter to say Fred Brown) some names cropped up which hadn't previously been tried. The KINGS COURT HOTEL was one of these.

The Secretary contacted this hotel, and the details were promising. The Chairman, the Secretary and the Publicity Committee made a trip to the hotel, and returned with the news that the KINGS COURT HOTEL seems to be the answer to a committee's dream. Description has it: "another George-type hotel, with staff who are willing and friendly".

The Committee snatched the hotel from under the nose of a travel agency, for the very same dates, by only 12 hours. Still sweating at the close shave, they trust you will be at the Con in September.

The above news was released to faneditors for publication after a

short “blackout” of convention news. However as publication of the *WSFS Journal* has been delayed for two or three weeks, the committee decided not to keep fans waiting any longer. Bang goes our editorial on Freedom of the Press.

[But] we would like to find out why the committee has so far neglected to appoint a representative in the US to collect dues from possible non-visiting members over there. [2]

Bobbie Wild:

When Dave Kyle was over here, he said the Royal would be okay for a World Con, but at that time none of us had foreknowledge of the disastrous financial state that would arise from the Nycon. So the Royal is out. Its hall was far too expensive to hire with the budget we’re working on. However, there is no need for alarm and despondency. We have got a hotel. At the eleventh hour – or it seemed like it to me – I found one in Bayswater. It’s called the Kings Court Hotel and some of you will probably know about it before the mailing comes out because the news is being released to the fanzines. However, in case you don’t know, you will probably be happy to hear that the residents’ bar is open 24 hours a day and there is no restriction on parties. (I should collect a Scotch from you lot for finding this). The manager, his wife, and the staff can cope with about nine languages between them and Anne, the receptionist speaks German. We have also been informed that if we do get a planeload of Amerifen over, the hotel will arrange for a coach to pick them up at the airport and bring them to the hotel.

The manager, because he has been so helpful, has been made an honorary member of the World Science Fiction Society and if anyone is low enough to think this is a cunning ploy on my part, he’s dead right. After all, if he should change his mind about parties (a highly unlikely thing) as a member, he’ll have to throw himself out, too. [3]

Ken Bulmer:

We were not happy with the Royal and have been trying to find a fresh hotel; this has been done. KINGS COURT HOTEL, Leinster Gardens, London, W-1. This is just a minute or so from Hyde Park, Marble Arch and Oxford St., and Park Lane a few minutes more. The other way is Bayswater and Queensway, with a food shopping centre.

The hotel has been inspected by members of the committee, who report that it should prove the ideal venue. The management are very friendly (the con just beat out by twelve hours a rival bid from a travel agency to take over the entire hotel). The staff between them speak six

languages with three more as standbys; they specialise in continental and good cooking, and charges are reasonable.

Bed and breakfast – the standard thing over here is 20 shillings (\$2.60) per night. Luncheon is 4/6d (60¢) and dinner 6/6d (90¢). Hot meals are served up to 10:30 p.m. or so, and snacks carry on later. The bar is open all day.

The hall can seat 400. It is long and narrow and can be partitioned off if necessary. There are several lounges, a cocktail bar, and a TV room. The committee have taken over the entire hotel, and there should be no embargoes on all-night parties.

The hotel has facilities for cashing travellers cheques and foreign currency. It can be very easily reached from two Underground stations and buses pass at the end of the road. It is also fairly near Paddington Station.

As a matter of interest, the Farnborough Air Show will be held during the week prior to the con and those visitors who are air-minded can nip down there comfortably and see what there is on show.

There are rooms with four, twins, and singles, and no difficulty is anticipated in apportioning rooms in particular ways. The only thing to remember, of course, is that first comers will be first choosers. All bookings and requests for special treatment should go to the Secretary, Roberta Wild, 204 Wellmeadow Rd., Catford, London SE6, England.

Dues for the World SF Society are the normal \$1, plus another \$1 from those actually attending the con. We have had a fine response from the US fans and pros in joining and we therefore hope that many more will join up and send in their dollar. We are running under the handicap of having no money spare this year, so every little helps.

The Journal is slated to appear in February and all those desirous of obtaining advertising space should contact or send their stuff ready for photographing 1½ up to Harry Turner, 10 Carlton Ave, Romiley, Cheshire, England. Ads should be sent ready laid out as Harry at the moment is doing far too much work to take on the extra layout work involved, and we don't want to charge for it. Same size as previous two *Journals* (Cleveland and New York).

Plans are shaping up nicely and already we have the flag* sent over by Dick Ellington. He has also sent over material for the auction. All in all, Dick has done a tremendous amount of work for us, and all of us here appreciate it very much.

The plane business is being handled by Dave Kyle (c/o WPDM, Potsdam, NY) and interested parties should contact him for info. [4]

* [Footnote in original] The flag mentioned is a huge one with a blue field and white lettering. “THE WORLD SCIENCE FICTION SOCIETY”. It was FLOWN outside of the hotel at the New York (14th World SF) Convention, and in the Ballroom on the last day. [4]

Ted Carnell:

The committee regret that this first *Journal* is going into the mail later than anticipated – however, there has been a very good reason for the delay. As you will have seen from the announcement on the front page the venue of the 15th World Science Fiction Convention has been changed from the Royal Hotel in Bloomsbury to the King’s Court Hotel, Leinster Gardens, Bayswater, London W.2.

This move was not taken hastily, but has been the result of innumerable committee meetings, telephone conversations, and finally a Committee ballot as to whether the Convention should be moved outside London to one of the coastal resorts where accommodation was more in keeping with a Convention atmosphere.

Whilst the Royal Hotel was large enough to accommodate any number of delegates, its general atmosphere did not make it universally favourable to all the committee. On top of this, the additional cost of hiring the necessary conference rooms and ballroom, and PA equipment, turned the site into a speculative gamble and it looked extremely unlikely that the Convention would break even. There would be no money available for additional items such as films and equipment, prizes, special publicity, and the general cost of producing all the necessary printed material required by the Convention.

In short, although the Royal was large enough it would have meant the Committee operating on a shoestring budget and wondering whether sufficient members would join the Society to pay the bills.

This picture has now been completely changed. We can go ahead with arrangements safely and happily, secure in the knowledge that this really is going to be the Convention which will be talked about for years to come as a criterion.

We have booked the entire King’s Court Hotel from mid-day Friday September 6th until Monday evening September 9th. The Convention will be a self-contained unit for the entire period, delegates being able to dine together at all meals if necessary although lunch and dinner are optional and not included in the tariff. There are adequate lounges, a television room, a cocktail bar and mobile (!) bar, a stage with PA equipment and a dressing room. Each room has a wall radio, telephone, and h&c water. The main auditorium can hold comfortably 400 delegates.

The hotel is situated a few minutes from Hyde Park in one direction and the main shopping thoroughfare of Queensway in the other. Here there are numerous eateries of types to suit all tastes, although the hotel catering will be adequate, being under French supervision and specialising in catering for Continental visitors.

The tariff per day is ridiculously low – £1 a head for bed and breakfast (\$2.80 in American money). Lunch is 4/6d (65 cents) and dinner 6/6d (95 cents). In addition to the advantages of this low rate the management has a helpful and co-operative attitude to the Convention. Hot meals can be obtained up to 10:30 p.m. And after that coffee and sandwiches may be obtained at any hour. For delegates the bar is open twenty-four hours a day if necessary. Rooms are reasonably capacious for after-hours sessions, although the main lounges will probably be suitable for any larger parties and the masquerade parade.

To release one secret at this early stage – this year's Convention will open with a luncheon banquet at approximately 1:00 p.m. on Saturday the 7th September. The cost will be 10/6d per ticket (\$1.50). The luncheon will be followed by speeches and introductions. This will be the first World Convention ever to start on time!

Behind all this enthusiasm there must, of course, be a snag – but only a minor one. The King's Court Hotel has sleeping accommodation for approximately 200 people; any overflow can be accommodated in associated hotels only a few yards away. BUT – the Convention Hotel accommodation will be first allocated to those delegates who propose staying there for three, four, or more nights. Overseas visitors will therefore have first priority on such accommodation. Delegates who only propose staying one or two nights will run the risk of sleeping “next door” if they intend going to bed at all!

It is therefore to everyone's advantage (whether resident in Britain or overseas) to place your required reservations with the Convention Secretary as soon as practicable so that you may be given the best possible accommodation. No advance booking fee is entailed at this stage – the Committee have already reserved the entire hotel – but you must state the period for which you wish to book. Naturally, this request does not apply to those delegates who will be visiting each day and going home (or elsewhere) to sleep. It will also help with catering arrangements if firm bookings for meals are placed well beforehand.

At this early stage I can say that the arrangements for this year's World Convention look like living up to the title WORLD. All that is required is the full co-operation of Convention Members. [5]

- [1] *Prolapse* #7 (June 2007, ed. Peter Weston)
- [2] *Contact* #8 (February 1957, ed. Ron Bennett, Jan Jansen, Ellis Mills, Steve Schultheis and John Hitchcock)
- [3] *Vagary* #3 (Spring 1957, ed. Roberta Wild)
- [4] *Fantasy Times* #266 (March 1957, ed. Taurasi)
- [5] *The Journal* #1 (March 1957, ed. Harry Turner)

March 1957

New Hotel Reviewed

Vince Clarke (letter to Mike Rosenblum, 10 February 1957):

As you'll know by this time, we've finally picked the Con Hotel, and do hope that for once we'll see you at a con. As the hall is rather narrow, displays will probably be done in lounges; this will mean that the stuff can be kept under lock and key, and under surveillance when open, if necessary. I've been wondering if there would be sufficient interest to justify a show of magazine and book rarities, and will let you know how the wind blows.

Mentions of meetings at Eric Williams's Catford home before the War reminds me to point out an odd coincidence; Ted Tubb's home is now within 200 yards of the old Williams address.

Betty Rosenblum:

Whenever Michael and I contemplate a visit to London, we are always full of plans for which theatres we are going to, where to eat and, as for me, which shops to gaze into. The only slight blot on the horizon is the fact that we don't know where to stay. We have stayed in all three of Joe Lyon's gaudy, gilded, noisy warrens; and have not enjoyed our visits very much. We have also had experience of smaller places where the prices were very slightly lower than the ones already mentioned, but the service (?) was too condescending for our taste, and the request for a cup of tea at nine p.m. sent the staff into a panic.

So when details of plans for the London Convention arrived, together with a description of the King's Court Hotel, we thought, "Just the job". It sounded just what we've always looked for – moderate price, comfort, various lounges, willing staff, good cooking (although all we ever want in an hotel is breakfast). I wrote to the manager, booked a room on the first floor (supposedly one of their best), packed our bags, dumped our two darling offspring on to their Grandma with great glee, and off we set for a carefree, happy weekend in the Metropolis.

Came the dawn, I was amazed to find a very shabby, dingy place, badly in need of thorough cleaning, not to mention decoration. There was a strong aroma which made my tummy feel very peculiar indeed, but which I couldn't at first identify. After a while I realised that it was Cats. Many of them, and cats which were not too particular about their personal habits.

Then we were shown to our room. Quite large, very high, with twin beds on which lay bedspreads which looked as if they had only just been unscrewed from the ball and picked off the floor. A decrepit wardrobe with one hanger. A dressing table covered with burn marks, a gas fire, and a wash basin. It was this last item that caused me to remark to Michael that just possibly the brochure which we had received was not quite accurate? The wash basin had once been white, but was now dirty grey. It had a very large lump missing from the front edge. That had probably been bitten out in fury by a previous guest who had tried to get hot water by the usual method of turning on the hot tap, but finding that the hot tap gave only cold water. Michael did find out later that hot water did eventually come through the tap marked cold. Quite a novel arrangement.

By this time I was seething, but Michael who is always very forbearing, and anxious to look for the bright side, tried to calm me down, and we went off to look at the West End, and book for theatres and have an early dinner before astounding our friends by our sudden appearance at the Globe. By the way, I forgot to mention that we had been supplied with a very small hand towel each, and no soap, for the three nights that we were to stay.

After the first night at the place, where, incidentally and by now, quite surprisingly, we found the beds very comfortable, we arose early so as to have breakfast and get to the Ideal Home Exhibition in time for the opening. According to a list of meal times, the dining room should have been open for breakfast at 7:45 a.m. It wasn't. At 8:00 a.m. Michael went to the receptionist to find out when we would be able to have a meal. At 8:15 a.m. we were finally admitted by a slovenly waitress, who proceeded to serve us at leisure. The choice of food at this hotel with the French cuisine was corn flakes or porridge, and bacon and eggs. I'm very awkward with food for breakfast. I don't like cereals, nor do either of us take bacon. I also find it difficult to digest eggs first thing in the morning, but I do like a little fresh fruit of some kind. It needs no preparation or serving, but there was no such thing in the place. Michael had very indifferent porridge and ordered a boiled egg. When that came it had hardly been cooked at all, albumen poured out of the shell in a most sickening way, and poor Michael just had to leave it. The girl took it away, but didn't offer to have another egg cooked more thoroughly. There was toast, marmalade, generous quantities of tea and coffee, and plenty of margarine, with 10% butter.

The following morning was a replica of the first, except that Michael ordered scrambled egg, which was not too bad. The third night we were

there, our last, we arrived at the hotel at midnight, to find that our towels had been removed and not replaced. This time Michael went down to the receptionist's desk and really gave them a few home truths, and the receptionist was most apologetic. However it took twenty minutes and a visit from the housekeeper and another visit from the cheeky chambermaid to get any towels, and apparently neither of these women thought that our complaint was at all justified.

That night the place was packed mostly with American Servicemen. We were pleased to note that there didn't seem to be any colour bar, but there was also no bar to any kind of behaviour through the night. The noise was awful, of shouting, fighting, furniture being moved over our heads, thuds up and down the corridor, and sundry unidentifiable squeaks, squeals and sounds. I must say that I slept through most of the night, because it takes an awful lot to wake me up or prevent me from sleeping, but Michael suffered all night and hardly had any sleep at all. From that point of view, the King's Court Hotel is an excellent venue for a Convention. No-one will stop anyone from doing just as they like. But I do advise anyone who contemplates attending the Convention, and who is not in the very best of health to start with, to arrange for a nice long rest and a holiday afterwards. It was without regrets that we left that hotel far behind us, and we will not return.

Can anyone recommend a clean, quiet, moderately-priced hotel in London, not too far from the centres of entertainment? [1]

Mike Rosenblum:

The foregoing is a straight and honest account of our impressions of the Hotel chosen for the London Convention later this year. I must point out however, that we are not the easiest persons to satisfy and other people may say quite legitimately that sleaziness is a fair exchange for a tolerant attitude. But since then I have had a tape of impressions and explanations from some of the Liverpool group who have also sampled this hospitality, and moreover had a long talk with the hotel manager. Apparently the hotel in "winter dress" does not cater for the same clientele as in its proper season, is run with skeleton staff, and is due for redecoration and refurbishing at Easter. So perhaps we caught it at its absolute lowest level. We hope so. But I think Betty will be amongst those not present in September, and I am not too happy about attending myself unless I can stay elsewhere. [1]

In the event, neither attended LONCON.

Ron Bennett:

I mentioned in *Ploy* #9 that I was looking forward to seeing for myself the King's Court Hotel, the venue chosen for the Worldcon. Well, I suffered the experience gladly towards the end of July, and was pleasantly surprised when several London fen turned up to celebrate my short stay. My own views are that the hotel will serve fandom very nicely as a convention site. [2]

Also in March 1957, Bennett published his objection to the semi-official "snog in the fog" slogan long associated with the LONCON bid. This had appeared as a full-page ad on the rear of The Journal #2 (the second progress report for the 1956 Worldcon) back in March 1956:

Whilst on the topic of the coming WorldCon, I'd like a certain slogan to be played down and/or forgotten completely in publicity. I must say at once that this is absolutely *no* reflection on the hard-working official Publicity teams, for I don't think the slogan has been employed in the official publicity campaign. I refer to "Snog in the Fog", which seems to me to be undesirable. Oh, no – I'm not being high-handed and prim. Last issue Bill Harry made the point that Convention reports might cater for parents whose offspring attended conventions (a point neatly taken up by Walt Willis in this issue's letter column) and I feel that some consideration should be made to these under-privileged youngsters in Convention publicity. We'd surely like youngsters to attend the Convention; after all is said and done, Fandom can prosper from fresh, young blood. Let's therefore not indicate that they will be attending an uninhibited orgy. Oh, heck – I *know* the slogan is a facetious one and I appreciate its humour as much as anyone (I've even made reference to it myself somewhere in this issue) but let's play it down, huh? [3]

Terry Jeeves took the opposite view:

This "snog in the fog" slogan. Bennett, I'm ashamed of your honourable profession (or something). Firstly, and moreover, to boot. This convention is principally for actifen, and the bods who don't know what a convention is will be few and far between. Actifen know it's a gag... partly. And the neos, who don't, can probably be counted on the fingers of one hand (if like Bentcliffe you have fifteen). Secondly and moreso, I imagine that if this slogan is suppressed, and *if* we do manage to attract to the hotel any fen who would have been offended by it, then same fen will be downright shocked by our all night sessions. If they can't take the slogan, then they've no place at a con anyway, and it's better to sort them out before

they start spreading the word that we're a load of sex-fiends.... [4]

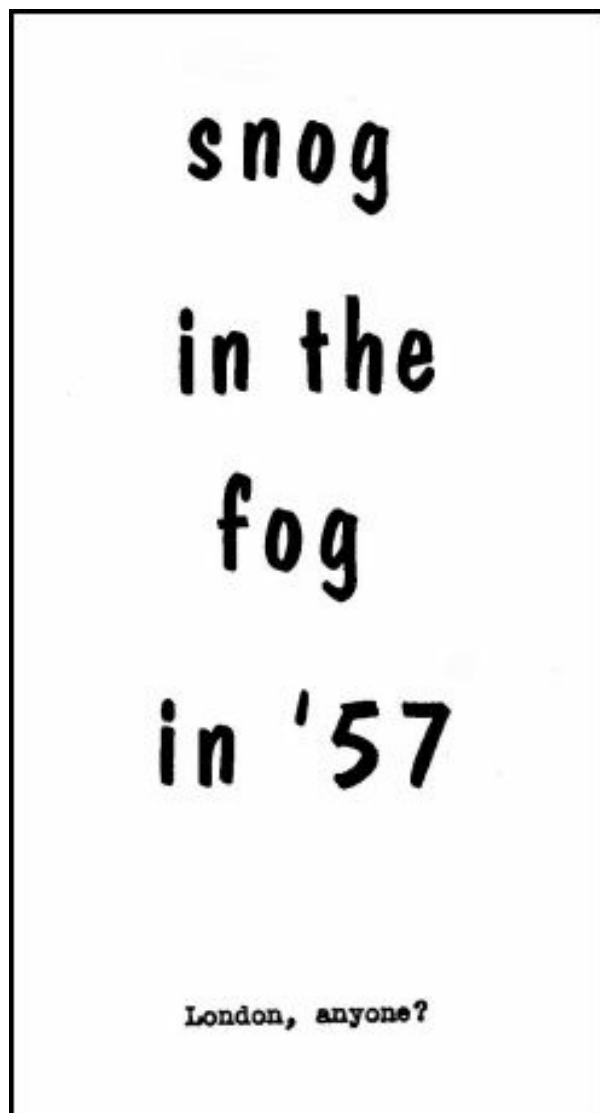
Bennett's view won out and the slogan was duly dropped. Unfortunately, it was to be the cause of some trouble even after the convention was over. See the final chapter, "[October 1959: Schism](#)".

[1] *New Futurian* #7 (Spring 1957, ed. Mike Rosenblum)

[2] *Ploy* #10 (August 1957, ed. Bennett)

[3] *Ploy* #8 (March 1957, ed. Bennett)

[4] *Ploy* #9 (July 1957, ed. Bennett)



Ad in *The Journal* vol XIV #2,
March 1956

April 1957

Cytricon III

It had always been intended for a UK convention to be held at Easter only if London failed to secure the Worldcon, but Northern fans decided there should be an Eastercon anyway.

Ron Bennett:

No further news has been forthcoming on the London Convention next year. As this is the World Convention British fans have decided to stage an informal “Kettering type” convention over the Easter weekend (no programme, but plenty of fun) probably at Harrogate. The Cecil Hotel which was the ideal location has however been sold to be built into flats, and so far no new location has been spotted. [1]

...

First issue’s statement that a con would be held over Easter next year seems to have been hasty. Indeed Harrogate has declined the honour (or rather the hotels have decided they like nice quiet roomers) and hence the sponsoring body has faded away. Poor Ron. Discussions are however under way to hold a business con over Whitsun in order to clear the path for the September World Con and although there will be bheer around the place, time will be devoted mainly to arranging the programme of the larger event.

The location of this Whitsun meeting has not been decided but will most likely be made public after the Liverpool group visit to London. Other than the con committee a small body of active fans will be invited to attend the Whitsun affair, mainly those who will in one way or another be responsible for part of the convention activities. [2]

Dave Newman:

Enclosed with this wad of guff is some advance gen about the proposed fan-social weekend at Kettering next Easter. As the demand for this event has been quite large, it is likely that most of active Anglofandom will be present and this, of course, includes the Worldcon committee. It seems to me that this will provide an excellent opportunity for the whole committee to get together for a couple of business sessions – particularly as there will be no official programme to add distractions to those already present in the form of parties and serious boozing. How about it, you lot?

[3]

Ron Bennett:

Everybody having had a say about the various types of convention that will see the light in 1957 in England, we finally seem to get some definite news on at least one of them. KETTERING is the place, the EASTER WEEKEND the time, for a social convention: no programme whatsoever and the six bob dues to go on booze. So far twenty-two people have booked to attend, and overflow is not catered for. Why not drop a line to Dave Newman if you feel like going?

London fandom is not too happy about this event as a whole, especially because of the additional expense which may well cause some Kettering conventioners to stay away from the main world convention in September. Although this matter of an informal con was mentioned this year at Kettering, nothing more was said about it at a later date, and the sudden springing of the news on London without further talk has irked several con-members. [4]

Ethel Lindsay:

[Inchmery Fandom*] paid me a visit. It was Easter Sunday, in fact, just as the Kettering Con was getting underway. I notice there seems to be an air of disbelief about the reception of the London fans' explanation for not being able to attend. We had one and we all said that we could not afford it. Still, we ought not to have been at all surprised by that. People who have money never do seem to comprehend the lack of it. The reaction is always... oh, if they had wanted to come they could have, they live there because they like it, poor people usually have only themselves to blame... etc. [5]

** Joy Clarke, Vince Clarke and Sandy Sanderson, then living at 7 Inchmery Road, Catford, London.*

Tony Keen:

The convention took place from Friday 19th April to Monday 22nd. Many well-known fans weren't present. Peter Mabey visited his parents while Keith Freeman declined an invitation in favour of going home on leave from the RAF. John Brunner was marching with the CND, Inchmery Fandom stayed at home, while others absent included Jim Linwood, Derek Pickles and (probably) Stan Nuttall and Bill Harrison, two other Liverpool members. Both appeared in later lists as having being inducted into St Fantony in 1957, but were not shown on the original "Decree" and are not otherwise known to have been at Kettering. As for Ken Bulmer himself,

from correspondence we know that he and Pamela were at Kettering in 1955 and 1956, but after that the family spent Easter for the next four years with Walt and Madeleine Willis in Northern Ireland. [6]

CYTRICON III got no advance notices in *New Worlds*, *Fantasy Times* or *Science Fiction Times*.

[1] *Contact* #1 (October 1956, ed. Ron Bennett, Jan Jansen, Ellis Mills, and John Hitchcock)

[2] *Contact* #3 (November 1956, ed. as above)

[3] *Natter* #2 (November 1956, ed. Dave Newman)

[4] *Contact* #5 (December 1956, ed. as above plus Steve Schultheis)

[5] *Scottishe* #11 (April 1957, ed. Ethel Lindsay)

[6] *Prolapse* #9 (November 2007, ed. Peter Weston)

May 1957

Awards Categories

Franklin M. Dietz, Jr.

(Recorder-Historian of World Science Fiction Society)

New York, 1 May (CNS) – At a meeting of the Convention Committee of the World Science Fiction Society; Inc., held in London on April 2, 1957, it was unanimously decided after due consideration that the custom of presenting individual Achievement Awards is impractical this year, due to the widely divergent reading habits of the international attendance expected this year.

The fact that many members in both countries are not likely to read publications of the other country would make it necessary to provide individual awards covering both the British and American publishing fields. It is almost certain that the International Fantasy Award for the best novel of 1955-56 will be revived this year, promoted by a group of London publishers. This award will be presented at the World Convention. Therefore, the Convention Committee has selected certain awards which will be made in conjunction with the 15th World Science Fiction Convention. These will be: Award for the best American Professional Magazine; Award for the best British Professional Magazine (British reprints to count as British magazines) and the best Fan Magazine published in any country in the world, during the period of July 1956 to June 1957.

The Awards will almost certainly be replicas of the International Fantasy Award Trophy, but without the Global lighter, as the mould is available for such use.

This is indeed what happened. As seen on the cover photo, the Hugos this year were the same IFA trophy that had first been awarded in 1951 and would have been part of a batch of four ordered by the convention, the fourth actually being for the IFA.

The Committee regrets that it is not possible this year to be able to include the many interesting individual awards which have now become an integral part of World Conventions. Even if the Committee should find an amicable solution to the problem, this year's Convention will undoubtedly be on a much smaller scale than recent Conventions, which would

preclude any large sum being available to purchase a larger number of such awards.

The Convention Committee will have this announcement in *Journal* #2 (May), a Ballot will also be included for each member. Ballots must be returned to the London Secretary not later than Saturday, August 31, 1957.

I feel that the London Committee has done an excellent job in resolving this rather difficult question, and am pleased that they will be able to continue the tradition of presenting Achievement Awards at the World Science Fiction Conventions.

– *Fantasy Times* #271 (May 1957, ed. James V. Taurasi)

May 1957

Pledging Informality

INFORMALITY WILL BE TRADEMARK OF LONDON CON – Ken Bulmer

London, 19 May (CNS) – The Guest of Honour is still undecided. The programme items are being handled by the Liverpool crowd and they are still in the process of developing them. The usual fancy dress ball, auction, etc. The sessions will open with a luncheon on Saturday, September 7th, instead of the usual and unpopular banquet. ((Banquets are not unpopular, their prices (\$7.10 at the last Con) usually are! – the editors.))

Principal speakers? Well, we're working on a number of people, it depends, too, on just who comes from the US and who will be in London during that period. But this and the programme in the view of the committee will be flexible right up till the con time. We have no wish to run one of the rigid programme-conscious cons which break down in farce and chaos. If a thing is going to be put on, then it will go on. We've had too much experience of cons to fall into any of the old traps. And we figure that people will travel 3,000 miles to talk to friends and letter-acquaintances over here in comfort rather than sit on wooden seats and be talked at by some so-called notable who has nothing to say. We want only quality speakers.

As for the Programme Booklet:

Whole page \$6; ½ page \$3.50; ¼ page \$2.00, and ⅛ page \$1.50. Booster Ads 35¢ for two lines. Page type area is 7" x 4¼" and Ads should be made up ready for photographing 1½ times up to 11" x 6½" made up full size page. Deadline for Programme Booklet is July 18, 1957, but if you get in earlier then you stand to get a better position in the booklet. No proofs can be supplied. You send it to Harry Turner, 10, Carlton Avenue, Romiley, Cheshire, England.

There will be an auction and material is being built up. However, it has been our experience over the past few years that auctions are now on the way out and only tradition keeps them in unless material of exceptional merit is available. Auctioneer is still to be decided.

The London Con is holding a draw for free hotel accommodation. Bed, breakfast and entrance charges will be paid the winner of the WSFS draw. All members may buy one or more tickets at 30¢ each or 4 for \$1.

Applications must arrive not later than July 14, 1957 to Mr. and Mrs. Clarke, 7, Inchmery Road, Catford, London, S.E.6. England. Draw will take place at the Globe Tavern on July 20, 1957.

Display tables will be set up in one or other of the lounges and we anticipate having wardens or suchlike to check them over. Tables would be, I'd judge, about the usual 2'-6" by about 3' size, but, as in all cons, last minute changes will be bound to occur.

H. Beam Piper is now in Paris and is bringing his wife to the con. [1]

Ted Carnell:

If you've ever been on a Programme Committee you will know that the most difficult thing to be asked to do six months before the Convention is to issue a Programme Report. At this comparatively early stage it isn't possible to give a lot of detail, so we are only going to outline our general policy, filling in the picture with those events already arranged.

Firstly (and this seems important to quite a lot of people) we don't propose to hold any formal programme sessions in the mornings. There will be something to entertain those hardy spirits who are up and around though! A Jazz concert on tape, perhaps – excerpts from broadcasts or film sound-tracks. Something on those lines, anyway! And don't think that the programme is going to be overwhelmingly serious. The way we look at things is this – people are coming to the Convention to be entertained (among other things) and to our minds this means essentially light entertainment. The Con will have its serious moments, of course, but we don't aim to flatter the highbrows at the expense of people like ourselves.

Looking at the overall picture, each day of the convention falls, fairly loosely, into a different category. Friday will be devoted mainly to meeting old friends and, we hope, making new ones. Saturday, fairly serious in parts but opening with a bang and building up to a grand finale. Sunday, definitely on the lighter side with plenty of scope for trufannish activities. Monday the day for WSFS business and goodbyes but accompanied by plenty of light relief. That's the way we've planned it and we hope you'll like it.

Now for a bit of detail. The Official Opening of the Convention will take place on the Friday evening at nine o'clock – on the dot. This will be mercifully short so that people can go back to the serious business of the evening like talking and drinking. We'll introduce the Chairman, the President, and the Guest of Honour and maybe mention some of the celebrities who are present. Then we'll leave you to your own devices, though there will be some light programme items running for those who are interested.

The Luncheon session will take place on the Saturday. This should be a lot of fun for all concerned – we suggest that you reserve your place early to be sure of getting in. For those who don't like formal meals of this nature, the hall will be open to spectators when the speeches (we use the word advisedly) commence. However, the best points of vantage will be at the tables themselves so why not enjoy the meal as well? After all, you never know who might be sitting next to you.

Starting late on Saturday evening will be the Fancy Dress Party. We want this to be a really colourful Affair and we need YOUR support. There will be a competition for the costumes and we will have some good prizes in categories such As “The Most Original Rig-out”, “The Most Ingenious Costume”, “The Horriblest (lovely word) Disguise” and so on! Music for dancing, a bar in the ballroom, and probably a late night buffet served on the spot... there's a lot of detail to be settled yet.

Sunday is more difficult to write about, but it will in the main be for the fans and (we hope) by the fans. We can't say much without giving away a few jealously guarded secrets but we CAN say that if you want to do something yourselves, well – the more the merrier, and why not drop us a line and let us know?

On Monday, of course, one of the high-lights of the business sessions will be the balloting for the 1958 Consite. We've got a feeling that there'll be some strenuous rivalry between sites on the American West Coast – and excitement will probably run high. It's probable that there will be other business to transact as well, but that remains to be seen. We imagine that Monday evening will be devoted to tearful farewells though once again there will be a background programme for those who want it.

Among the other items already planned will be the auctions. These have become traditional in science fiction conventions all over the world but we're going to try a different slant on things this year. Instead of one long section resulting in boredom for the audience and exhaustion for the auctioneers, we propose to have two or three sessions strictly limited in length and have the pick of the lots on show beforehand so that people will have an opportunity to see what they would like to bid for in advance. We've already had the offer of some excellent lots for the auction!

And that's about all we can tell you at the moment. There's plenty in the wind, and the way things are beginning to shape looks good to us! [2]

Greg Benford:

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. [3]

Though members of the Worldcon they didn't attend it, but they were visited in Frankfurt on the Wednesday before by Canadian fan Boyd Raeburn who was touring around Europe on his way to Worldcon.

[1] *Fantasy Times* #273 (June 1957, ed. James V. Taurasi)

[2] *The Journal* #2 (May 1957, ed. Harry Turner)

[3] *Relapse* #13 (February 2009, ed. Peter Weston)

June 1957

The Charter Flight

Lane Stannard:

Potsdam, NY, 20 June (CNS) – What is probably the biggest success and daring that fandom has ever produced will be the special plane flight from New York to London carrying 55 fans and those interested in science-fiction to the 15th World Science Fiction Convention.

Back in 1936-37, when New York and Philadelphia fans took the train between the two cities to go to conventions and meetings, it was classified as a real “big deal”. Now a mere 20 years later, this first in science-fiction fandom, the chartering of a plane to commute between New York and London, will go down in history as another big step forward.

Thought up and worked on for over two years by Dave Kyle, and more than ably aided by Ruth Landis [later Kyle], Mr. and Mrs. Frank Dietz, Jr., and George Nims Raybin; these five deserve a lot of credit for bringing about another milestone in the history of SF fandom.

So far scheduled to fly aboard the Fandom Special are Forrest J Ackerman, *S-F Times* reporter, Los Angeles; Sheldon J. Deretchin, NY; Mary Dziechowski, Brooklyn; Ian J. Eindfield-Hall, Swarthmore, Pa. (E)*; R.D. Cahn, Swarthmore, Pa.(W)*; Ruth O’Rorke, Detroit; Edward E Bielfeldt, Chicago; Arthur Hayes, Bancroft; Canada; Mr. and Mrs. Franklin Dietz, Jr., NY; Thompson R. Fahringer, Philly; Hazel H, Fahringer, Philly; Margery Hawthorne, Philly; Jerry Nosties, Swarthmore, Pa. (E); Andrew Frey, NY (W); David A. Kyle, Monticello, NY; Edmond Hamilton, Kinsman, Ohio; Leigh Brackett (Mrs.) Hamilton, Kinsman, Ohio; William J. Jenkins (*not* Murray Leinster), Philly; Lee Sirat, Springfield, Va; Valeria Anjoorian, Waltham, Mass.; Sam Moskowitz, Newark, NJ; Arthur C. Kyle, Syracuse, NY; Constance Kyle, Monticello, NY; Ruth E. Landis, NY; Kathleen Leerburger, NY; Herbert S. Schofield, Philly; George Nims Raybin; NY; Frederick Prophet, Detroit; Robert Abernathy, Tucson; Harriet Hausman, Brooklyn; Jean Bogert, Philly; The TAFF Representative (whoever he or she may be); Cathie M. Brennan, Irvington, NJ; George R. Heap, Philly; Pearl Moskowitz (sister of Sam) Newark, NJ; Milton Spahn, Bronx; Joan Rock, Brooklyn; Judith Crad, NY; Charles G. Leedham, NY; Mrs. Charles G. Leedham, NY; Rosalyn

Gutstein, Brooklyn; Helen S. Heap, Philly; Arlene Donovan, NY; Roger Pierce, Strongsville, Ohio; Howard Neuberger, Strongsville, Ohio; David Nillo, NY; Winifred McGill, Chicago; and Rose Miller, Newark, NJ.

** (E) and (W) mark fans flying eastward or westward only by the charter plane, making different arrangements for the other half of their trip.*

The above are all paid up for the trip, while 14 others, including some of the big names in pro and fandom have placed a down payment on the trip but have not as yet paid in full.

Happy Landings; Folks, we wish we were going with you.

– *Fantasy Times* #274 (July 1957, ed. James V. Taurasi)

July 1957

TAFF Troubles

Walt Willis:

In May 1953 a letter had been received from Don Ford and the Cincinnati Group saying that they had raised some money to help bring over a British fan, Norman Ashfield, who was a friend of theirs. Norman hadn't been able to come, so Ford's group had sportingly offered the money to any other British fan we cared to name. During the next interval, I convened an informal meeting of about a dozen leading English fans. Having sounded a few possibles, we agreed it wasn't practicable to send anyone over that year. I then proposed that, subject to the approval of the Cincinnati Group, the money be made the nucleus of a Two-Way Transatlantic Fan Fund which would be used not only to send British fans to America, but to bring American fans over to Britain. This proposal was unanimously agreed upon, and I was delegated the job of arranging the administrative details, elections, etc., as far as the British end was concerned.

The fund was introduced to fandom at large in Hyphen #4, and in that and the following issues I put my proposals before fandom for approval, so that the election procedure would be agreed upon before the voting started. The proposals were principally that minimum qualifications should be laid down for voters, including that they should have made a certain minimum contribution to the Fund, that fans on both sides of the Atlantic should be entitled to vote, and that each voter should be allowed to give alternate preferences, to prevent split votes and confusion should candidates withdraw in the course of the election, but only one vote per person, etc., etc. All these proposals were agreed to more or less unanimously, and the first election was held for a British fan to go to San Francisco in 1955.

Privately I didn't think that enough money could be contributed in the time, but I figured the election would bring publicity and do no harm. As it turned out, quite a large sum was collected, but the winner of the election, Vinç Clarke, couldn't go for private reasons and the runner-up, James White, decided to forego the opportunity and let the Fund be carried over until next year. I had added a questionnaire to the ballot form to find out the wishes of the contributors in event of a situation like this, and they voted as follows:

Vote again for a British fan to attend the next US con – 244
Bring a US fan to the next British Convention – 243
Offer the money to Candidate #3 – 90

(Incidentally, the overwhelming majority of the voters in this election were British fans.)

As you can see, this was virtually a tie between the first two alternatives, so I made the next election an open one; that is, fans on either side of the Atlantic could be nominated. As it happened, however, only British candidates were put forward, the Americans evidently feeling that the Britishers shouldn't be done out of their turn. This election was won easily by Ken Bulmer; there was now enough money in the Fund for the two-way boat fare; and we started to try and arrange a passage.

We ran into tremendous difficulties, and in the end all Ken could get was a berth on a cargo boat with an uncertain sailing schedule. So uncertain, in fact, that in July Ken got a telegram that the sailing date had been advanced to the 25th of that month. The Bulmers rose to the occasion and travelled overnight to Dublin. Madeleine and I and Chuck Harris, who was staying with us at the time, took the train down to Dublin to see them off and took photographs of the historic occasion.

Seeing Ken and Pamela in that little boat in Dublin ready to sail for America had been a great moment for me, but my real ultimate ambition was to see an American fan brought over to a British convention. There was no doubt that this must be the next item on the TAFF programme. I made the preliminary arrangements for the election, and then handed over to Don Ford. The election for 1956 was won by Lee Hoffman, but she got married to Larry Shaw before the polling closed and the newly married couple made the trip at their own expense. The runner-up, Forry Ackerman, also waived his right to the money and it was carried over to 1957. This election is now in progress. I myself resigned from the TAFF administration early this year, and handed over to Ken Bulmer. Among other reasons, it seemed to me a good idea to set the precedent that each successful TAFF candidate should prepare the way for his successor. TAFF is now as firmly established as any fan organisation is likely to be, and while there have recently been disagreements on points of method and procedure, there is no reason why they shouldn't be discussed and settled in a friendly manner as they have in the past. None of those concerned have anything but the best interests of fandom at heart, and all they differ about is the best way TAFF can serve them.

The first [point] concerns the qualifications of voters and candidates. One school of thought believes that there must be a verifiable definition of

a fan for TAFF purposes, to prevent frauds and abuses, and that this definition must be based on evidence of some participation, however slight, in fanzines. The argument is that TAFF's purpose is to encourage more and better fanactivity, and fanzines are the only link between fans separated geographically: a person who has not sufficient interest in fandom as a whole to have ever written a letter of comment to a fanzine cannot have the knowledge of fans outside his own group to vote properly nor the qualifications to represent them. The other school of thought, however, says that this attitude is too legalistic and that many people who have no interest in fanzines are good fans and shouldn't be disenfranchised.

The other is about the counting of votes. The method in the elections held by me had been to allow each voter to name first, second, and third preferences, to give a more accurate reflection of opinion, but to permit a voter to "plump" for a candidate by not using his second and third votes. Don Ford evidently misunderstood this and allowed people to vote one candidate in first, second and third places, thereby in practice accepting two votes for the same candidate from the same voter. This didn't come to light until he published his own ballot form, the one used in previous elections having been drafted by me. Don now feels that having used this method of counting in the last election and having announced he was going to use it in this one, he cannot very well change it now. Against this his opponents argue that he is not being asked to change the method of voting, only the method of counting; and that the method he proposes to use is wrong and will upset the balance of the election by tending to give more weight to the votes of those who only know one candidate than to those who are discriminating. [1]

Donald E. Ford:

BOB MADLE WINS TAFF ELECTION

Loveland, Ohio, 8 July (CNS) – Results of the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund election are as follows:

ROBERT A. MADLE – 486 AND WINNER,
Stuart S. Hoffman – 316,
Richard H. Eney – 287,
Dick Ellington – 158,
Boyd Raeburn – 135,
Forrest J Ackerman – 65*,
Ed McNulty – 54,

** Ackerman had withdrawn long before the end of the voting and had bought his ticket on the Plane Trip long ago. – eds. [Footnote in original.]*

A round-trip ticket has already been paid for the London Trip Plane and there should be enough money left on the U.S. side to pay the fare to New York and back. Additional money is available in England and my financial report is pending a statement from Ken Bulmer as to how much he has collected on his side. Assuming Madle makes the trip ((we understand he will – eds)), I'll turn the U.S. end of TAFF over to him upon his return.

At the Midwestcon, I announced the fact that the winner would get this job and asked for a vote from con attendees on the method of voting they would like to see in future TAFF elections... U.S. end only. They chose to have a single choice vote; by that I mean you vote for 1 candidate only, and there'd be no 2nd or 3rd choice votes. If the winner can't go, it'd be offered to the #2 and on down the line until someone takes it. [2]

Eric Bentcliffe:

The results of the election for this year are in and it appears that First Fandom isn't Dead! Bob Madle is the winner.

To me the result comes as somewhat of a shock, I'd expected (and hoped) that either Eney or Raeburn would get to be top of the poll – and to the Worldcon. From where I sit both the two at the top of the poll have been relatively inactive over the past few years, whereas Eney, Ellington, and Raeburn have been quite prominent in the fan-pubbing world. To carry my train of thought further, however, would embarrass the TAFF officials and this I don't want to do... they have enough headaches already.

CONGRATULATIONS BOB MADLE. U.K. Fandom will be looking forward to meeting you at the Worldcon. [3]

Bentcliffe's dismay at the result was widely shared among UK fanzine fans – it was reported in Contact under the headline "FORD'S FARCE", for example. One of those who felt this way was Willis himself. In the event Madle turned out to be a fine candidate and was welcomed warmly, but resentment would remain at how the race was conducted and votes counted.

[1] Yandro #50 (March 1957, ed. Buck and Juanita Coulson)

[2] *Fantasy Times* #275 (July 1957) ed.

James V. Taurasi
[3] *Triode* #11 (August 1957, ed. Bentcliffe
& Jeeves)

July 1957

Summer Update

Ted Carnell:

London, 11 July (CNS) – The London Publishers primarily interested in science-fiction have agreed to sponsor an International Fantasy Award Trophy for the best novel published during 1956 and 1957, and Leslie Flood, the secretary of the I.F.A. is already in touch with the adjudicating panel who officiated at the 1956 Award.

This trophy will be presented at a special luncheon to be held at the Convention Hotel on Monday, September 9th, which makes two special luncheons to be held during the Convention period. This year's Trophy will be similar to those previously presented, having a very handsome Ronson Global Lighter included on the plinth.

The fantasy film chosen by the Programme Committee to be shown at this year's Convention is *Mr. Wonderbird*, a 70-minute animated fantasy made in France, which won an award at the recent Vienna Film Festival. The English-speaking version which we shall see has Peter Ustinov's voice used for the leading character, Claire Bloom's voice as well as many other well known-British actors and actresses. This film was chosen specifically because it would be new to the vast majority of delegates both British and American, never having been generally released in either country, although it had one showing in London at a special cinema during the Film Festival week.

The London Planetarium will not be opened in time for the Convention but the Senior Lecturer will be attending the Convention and giving a short humorous discussion on the work in progress, and it may be possible for delegates to have a preview at the Planetarium soon after the Convention closes.

The London Planetarium was opened by Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, on 19 March 1958. It closed on 30 April 2006, the building subsequently housing Madam Tussaud waxwork displays.

One American magazine publisher has already donated \$100.00 towards this year's convention expenses and unlike last year where the money was used on cocktails, this amount of money is being devoted entirely for use

on the electronic equipment to be used in conjunction with the Convention in general. Thus making the entire proceedings technically perfect. For instance, a central control room covering microphones, loudspeakers, tape recorders, power outlets, P.A. system, room radios, and even the main telephone switchboard, will be incorporated in this one control.

Frank and Belle Dietz:

Additions to the roster of the Big SF Fan Plane Trip to the London Con have come in since the initial listing in issue #274. They are:

Donald L. McCulty, Bob Madle – winner of the TAFF, Mary P. Graham, Nella Hellinger, Zelda Benowitz (going East); Sid Guson (going West), Cylvia Margulies representing *Satellite Science Fiction*, Gray Barker, Harry and Mrs. Harrison (going to England only, staying there for a time and then to the Continent staying for a time in countries like Spain, France, Italy, etc. Harrisons were in Mexico for over a year, and have just returned to New York), and John Speer.

Reservations for Edmond Hamilton and Leigh Brackett Hamilton have been cancelled as they received a contract offer from Hollywood.* One reservation was taken by Steve Schultheis, and one reservation is still open.

* *Comparison of their IMDb pages suggests that the offer was to Brackett alone and that the script in question may have been for Rio Bravo, the Howard Hawks western starring John Wayne and Dean Martin.*

– *Fantasy Times* #275 (July 1957, ed. James V. Taurasi)

July 1957

Guest of Honour Announced

Although it had a couple of brief mentions earlier in P. Schuyler Miller's "Reference Library" column in Astounding, it was May before editor John W. Campbell enquired about the convention. Bobbie Wild wrote back in reply:

Dear Mr. Campbell:

Thank you for your letter of May 29th and following are details of the 1957 World Science Fiction Convention:

Membership Fee, \$1.00: Payable now. This entitles members to votes, journals, programme booklet, et cetera.

Entrance Fee, \$1.00: Payable now or on arrival at the Convention.

Special Lunch arranged by the Committee: \$1.50 per head. This will be held on Saturday and arrangements are being made for a number of well-known personalities to be speakers at the lunch.

Hotel: \$2.85 bed and breakfast. Lunch 80 cents approx. Dinner 90 cents approx.

With the exception of the membership and entrance fees, prices quoted above are, of course, liable to fluctuation, but this should not be more than a few cents. The hotel is now fairly full, but arrangements have been made with the manager that other hotels in the same street will be available for accommodation. In any case, members will have access to the King's Court Hotel at all times.

Friday will be mainly registration and introductions will take place in the evening. Saturday will commence with the special lunch and will be mainly for the professional side of science fiction. There will be a costume ball in the evening which will be covered by Pathé Pictorial. Sunday will be a light-hearted day for the amateurs, but there will also be a special film show, for which arrangements are now in hand. Monday will be for business sessions and farewells.

All bookings must be made through the Secretary. Membership and entrance fees may be sent to me in the form of dollar bills or international money orders, but not by check as the banks charge an enormous fee for changing the checks. Franklin M. Dietz is collecting fees from Americans, if they prefer not to send money out of the country, and he has opened a World Science Fiction Society account with the Emigrant Industrial

Savings Bank, 5 East 42nd Street, New York, for this purpose. Applicants for membership who wish to pay by check – or in dollars – should send the fees to his address at 1721 Grand Avenue, Bronx 53, New York.

Information may also be had from him concerning the chartered plane trip.

– Roberta Wild, Secretary.

The World Science Fiction Convention. [1]

As soon as they knew Campbell was coming, what happened next was perhaps inevitable.

Ted Carnell:

Convention time is rapidly approaching and this will be the last Convention Report you will receive from myself as we shall not have time to produce a fourth *Journal*. However most of the late news will be incorporated in the Programme Booklet and those Society members who do not attend the Convention will eventually catch up with all the news.

The most important news this issue is that John W. Campbell, Jr., editor of *Astounding Science Fiction*, will be our Guest of Honour. There is no need for me to point out how great John's influence has been on science fiction during his years as editor – he will actually be celebrating his twentieth year with Street & Smith almost to the day as the Convention opens. Undoubtedly no other person has contributed so much to the shaping of the genre into its present adult form or in developing writers to the present high standard required by magazine publishers throughout the world.

Although our Guest of Honour has appeared at a number of American Conventions, the Committee feel that his acceptance this year – the first year the World Convention has been held outside North America – is a fitting tribute to the internationalisation of science fiction and an honour all Society members will heartily endorse.

Meanwhile, the charter plane trip from New York has now been fixed and the final arrangements are for a KLM 55-seater leaving New York on August 30, arriving London on the 31st and going on to Amsterdam, Holland. Many of the Americans are taking advantage of this extra mileage to have a quick look at Holland and France before arriving at the Convention on the 6th. The passenger list looks like a Who's Who of science fiction, being a cross-section of professionals and fans. And there are other Americans coming separately by ship and plane!

At this stage I must warn members that the Convention Hotel is almost completely booked out and late-comers will almost certainly have to take their accommodation in an adjoining hotel. Not that that presents

any problem – you can either stop up all night in the Convention hotel or get a good night's sleep away from the madding crowd.

Elsewhere in this issue you will find a brief statement from our Programme Committee. I do agree with their policy of not announcing items at this early stage or making elaborate statements about the programme which might not materialise, although the entire framework of each day's events has been decided. You will find many pleasant surprises listed in the Programme.

There is also an announcement in this issue regarding your application for tickets for the Luncheon on Saturday, September 7th. This will be one of the major items and well worth attending – but it will be essential for you to apply by Wednesday, September 4th, if you wish to make reservations. While every effort will be made to accommodate everyone, the Committee cannot guarantee reservations received after the 4th. Non-dining members will be able to hear all the speeches and following programmes immediately after the luncheon concludes.

The Committee also wish to draw your attention to the fact that the Society Draw (announced in *Journal* No. 2) has been extended until September 7th and will now take place during the Convention. It was realised after we had gone to press with the last issue that little time had been allowed for applications to be received from overseas members, and although sufficient tickets have been sold to enable one member to win free expenses at the Convention, applications are still coming in. The number of prizes will now be governed by the tickets sold up to midday on September 7th. You will, of course, be able to purchase extra tickets at the Convention on the 6th and 7th.

In conclusion I must commend to American members the 250ft 8 mm colour cine film which has been made by MAD Productions (Mersey And Deeside – basically your Programme Committee) entitled “May We Have The Pleasure?” This has been made especially for showing in USA and a copy was flown to Don Ford in Ohio to screen at the Mid-Westcon. Thereafter it is available from him on loan to recognised fan groups in America (see separate announcement). A copy will also be shown at the Convention but in effect it is an extremely humorous advertising film for this year's World Con.

Next stop – the Convention.

•

It has been said many times before – and dozens of books still in print bear testimony on their dedication pages – that John W. Campbell, Jr. has done more in developing science fiction into its present form than any other

person in the world.

It therefore gives us great pleasure to have him with us this year as our leading guest.

Among American authors you can expect to meet at the Convention will be Edmond Hamilton, Leigh Brackett, Robert Silverberg, Mack Reynolds, H. Beam Piper, Robert Abernathy, and John Victor Peterson.
[2]

Carnell was evidently unaware that Edmond Hamilton and Leigh Brackett had already had to cancel their trip at this point.

[1] *Astounding Science Fiction* vol LX #1
(September 1957)

[2] *The Journal* #3 (late July 1957, ed. Harry
Turner)

** 1957 15th 1957 **
** WORLD SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION **
** (Sponsored by the World Science Fiction Society, U.S.A.) **
** SEPTEMBER 6—7—8—9 **
** KING'S COURT HOTEL, LEINSTER GARDENS **
** BAYSWATER, LONDON, W.2. **
** GUEST OF HONOUR **
** JOHN W. CAMPBELL, Jr. **
** Who will also be celebrating his twentieth year as **
** editor of Street & Smith's *Astounding Science Fiction*. **
** Society Membership Fee 7/6 plus Convention Fee 7/6 **
** All Communications : Convention Secretary, **
** 204 WELLMEADOW RD., CATFORD, LONDON, S.E.6 **

Ad in *New Worlds* #63, September 1957

August 1957

The Final Minutes

Ted Carnell:

At the time this issue of *New Worlds* will be on sale in Great Britain there will only be seven days to go before the 15th World Science Fiction Convention opens in London.

Even from four weeks away (as this is being written) there is an atmosphere of excitement and anticipation as long-range plans take final shape and Londoners prepare for the influx of visitors from the provinces and overseas.

It will certainly be the greatest Convention ever held in this country and there is every possibility that it will be the most outstanding World Convention yet presented, despite the organisational abilities of the various American Committees who were responsible for the previous fourteen conclaves.

The outstanding personality amongst a host of eminent science fictionists will be Guest of Honour John W. Campbell, Jr., who has been editing America's *Astounding Science Fiction* for the past twenty years and who was, before that, a noted writer of short stories and novels in the genre. Undoubtedly, Mr. Campbell has done more in the development of authors and new ideas during his two decades as an editor than any other person – it will therefore be a supreme pleasure to welcome him and his wife on their first visit to our shores and have him as the focal point of the Convention.

Delegates are coming from a wide variety of places – the radius exceeds 9,000 miles! Apart from the 55-seater charter plane of Americans, others are coming independently by sea and air. Late news informs that Arthur Clarke and colleague Mike Wilson, experts on astronautics and aqualung diving, are flying in from Ceylon; authors H. Beam Piper arriving from Paris and Mack Reynolds from Spain. There will be delegates from Sweden, Germany, Belgium, Holland and France.

This year, too, the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund brings the first American delegate on a passage-paid trip to represent the amateur writing and publishing fields of U.S.A. – Robert A. Madle of Virginia having been chosen by vote to fill this honour. Readers may remember that British author Kenneth Bulmer (at that time an amateur) represented Britain at the

1955 World Convention held in Cleveland, Ohio.

If you live in the British Isles and are not going to be able to attend the big event you will hear quite a lot about it one way or the other. It is too early to forecast how much publicity will arise from this Convention, but I suggest that you watch your newspapers during the days preceding Convention-time, keep an eye on B.B.C. television on Monday evening, September 9th, and look for Pathe Pictorial movie magazine in colour after the convention ends. Anything can happen! [1]

London, 21 August (CNS)

Here is a final news report nine days before the Convention and before your personal representative, John Victor Peterson, officially takes over reporting.

Convention plans are now finalised, with the hotel completely booked and the overflow being accommodated in a neighbouring hotel, at least for sleeping (if any). The BBC have invited John W. Campbell, Jr., to appear on a ten-minute TV programme on Friday, September 6th, just before the Convention officially opens, and it is possible also that further TV and radio items will be included during the following three days.

A major press conference is being held soon after John W. Campbell's TV interview, during which some interesting items may cross the Atlantic. We are also hoping that considerable publicity, both pictorially and news-worthily, will be obtained from the charter plane arrival.

The programme is an extremely compact one this year, and the Programme Committee intend to be ruthless in regard to timing – participants in any particular item who are late will find their spot in the programme cancelled, and a substitute item put in its place.

Barbara and Bob Silverberg arrived safely this week, and I understand that a Lt. Col. Kallis and his son Steve have also arrived and are touring the country. Last minute change of plans have enabled Eric Frank Russell and his wife to be in attendance. [2]

Below are what appear to be the only surviving minutes of a committee meeting, the final pre-con one. It took place a full two weeks before the convention, at the then home of the Bulmers. Interestingly, Bob and Barbara Silverberg were present, having opted not to take the charter flight and so arriving in the country much earlier.

Minutes of the 18th and Final Meeting of the Central Committee of the World Science Fiction Society Convention held at 6:15 p.m. on Saturday

24th August at 204 Wellmeadow Road, Catford S.E.6

Present:

E.J. Carnell, Roberta Wild, Ken Bulmer, Pam Bulmer, Joy Clarke, Vince Clarke, Sandy Sanderson, Ron Bennett, John Brunner, John Newman (Insurance) Dave Newman, Fred Brown, Norman Shorrock, Peter West, Bob and Barbara Silverberg (U.S.A.)

Minutes of Last Meeting. The minutes of the last meeting were read and it was proposed by Dave Newman and seconded by Ron Bennett that they be passed. Carried.

1) Special Luncheon. After discussion the Committee agreed to the menu and wines for the Special Luncheon and the Chairman stated that he could arrange this with the Catering Manager of the Hotel.

2) Finance. Proposed by Sandy Sanderson and seconded by Joy Clarke that the Programme Committee receive £130 for expenses. Carried.

Proposed by John Brunner and seconded by Pamela Bulmer that the Programme Committee be allocated £9.0.0 for performing rights fees. Carried.

Proposed by Joy Clarke and seconded by Peter West that Dave Newman, Norman Shorrock, E.J. Carnell and Sandy Sanderson should be the sub-committee for handling the immediate expenses at the Convention. Carried.

Proposed by Sandy Sanderson and seconded by Pamela Bulmer that £7.10.0 be allocated to John Brunner for hire of feature film *Mr. Wonderbird*. Carried.

Proposed by John Brunner and seconded by Dave Newman that the insurable equipment at the Convention be insured to the sum of £2,000, the premium being £5 and that insurance for unlimited liability be £100,000, the premium being 15s. Carried.

A vote of thanks to John Newman for time and effort spent on organising insurance covering Convention equipment was proposed by Fred Brown and seconded by Vince Clarke. Carried.

3) Press Conference. After discussion the Committee agreed that 14 Press representatives should be invited to the Press Conference on Friday and that six invitations to the Special Lunch also be extended to the Press.

4) Tape Recording. After prolonged discussion the Committee agreed that the Manchester tape recording, not being of a sufficiently high standard, be reluctantly refused. A vote of thanks to the Manchester Group for its offer was proposed by Joy Clarke and seconded by Sandy

Sanderson. Carried.

5) Vote of Thanks. Proposed by John Brunner and seconded by Vince Clarke that a vote of thanks be offered to Pam and Ken Bulmer for the use of their house for the meeting.

There being no further business to discuss, the final meeting came to a close at 10:45 p.m.

Distribution: As before.

[1] *New Worlds* #63 (September 1957, ed. Carnell)

[2] *Science Fiction Times* #278 (September 1957, ed. Taurasi)

August 1957

A Fan-Tastic Honeymoon

Dave Kyle:

Taking 53 other people on one's sf fannish honeymoon is Amazing. Bringing along the mother and father of the groom is Astounding. And having a worldcon as the destination is a Wonder – actually an Air Wonder Story because a chartered airplane was involved.

This is an abbreviated history about what happened to me and my bride and all those people on the famous overseas 1957 Fan Flight. I think fandom ought to honour their pioneering pilgrimage and to know the names of those who completely filled the seats in the four-prop DC-4 Skymaster.

It all began in February 1956, while I was Chairman of the upcoming 1956 Newyorcon and pretty fanne Ruth Landis was con Secretary. I had made a promise then that if the 15th World Science Fiction Convention site were voted for London for 1957, I would make arrangements for a trans-oceanic air flight for the greatest number of fans.

London did win, and the London Trip Fund swung into high gear, handled by Ruth and me. Ours was a combination sure to work, because by then we had gotten engaged. So Ruth bore the brunt of the administration in Manhattan while I was 350 miles away establishing a radio station in upstate New York. I went to the city as frequently as possible for two important reasons, the LTF and, most certainly, to see my sweetheart.

There were many ups and downs during the year and a half in the complicated process of accomplishing this mission. My first attempt resulted in a remarkable bargain of a \$130 one-way fare to London (this assumed fans would arrange for their own way back at whatever time they were ready to come home). But it turned out that most of the fans who were planning to go on the trip actually wanted a round trip fare. That came in at \$285, based on availability of planes (and there were to be no complimentary seats, not even for Ruth and me). So we set September 2nd for departure and September 20th for return, as the convention was scheduled for September 7, 8, and 9. The deadline for reservations was April 30th, but June 30th was the moment of truth when cancellation of the flight might happen if we didn't have enough confirmed (and paid)

reservations, and all monies would then have to be returned.

The biggest challenge developed in late April. Ruth phoned me that Pan American Airways couldn't furnish the west-bound flight. I immediately flew to the city for a three day attempt to solve the problem. Pan Am was dropped in favour of the Royal Dutch Airlines, KLM. The KLM Charter Director described my task as "virtually impossible," but we worked hard and eventually obtained a two-way trip under the original budget. I crossed my fingers and signed an agreement stating that "I may be held personally liable for default of the contract" and "I will make arrangements personally for return passage insurance." I was greatly encouraged to know that everyone pledged to go was enthusiastic and optimistic.

It was that crucial June 30th cancellation date which now suddenly had me frantic. Last minute commitments by individuals were bouncing around like crazy. In May, one drop-out was replaced by getting my brother Arthur to sign up. Then came the really disappointing news that Edmond Hamilton and Leigh Brackett, the famous husband and wife authors, couldn't go because of a Hollywood script assignment. What to do at this last minute? Increase the fare? Or cancel? The solution was in convincing my mother and father that they should become convention members and make the trip. My parents were going on my honeymoon!

Finally, the passenger list was considered settled. And then it was time for the next step, the biggest one of all – marriage for Ruth E. Landis and David A. Kyle.

On August 31st, in the chapel of The Little Church Around the Corner in midtown Manhattan, the Kyle nuptials were performed. I'd originally intended that Dick Wilson was to be Best Man. Years earlier I was his Best Man when he'd wed Doris "Döe" Baumgardt (aka Leslie Perri). However, my brother, the last minute trip substitute, was in town with my parents for the London trip so he became best man, and Dick served as an usher. (Afterwards, Dick lent me his Volkswagen to whisk Ruth away for our wedding night and I ran out of gas on the Palisades Interstate Parkway. I struggled back with a gas can only to learn the next day from Dick that there was a reserve tank that could be used by simply flipping a hidden switch.) With flight departure only days away, a few of the con-bound travellers attended our simple wedding ceremony and the reception which followed. The presence of Forrest J Ackerman has to be specifically mentioned, as it was he who maintained that "KLM" really meant "Kyle-Landis-Marriage".

There were 55-and-a-fraction fans who boarded the plane at New

York's Idlewild International Airport two days later (Harry Harrison and Joan had brought their infant son Todd). We each carried a small, bright blue, canvas carrying bag with the letters KLM stencilled boldly in white. We were bound together then forever friend and foe. ("Foe?" Yes, there were two of them, but that's another long, long agonising story. What would fandom have been in those turbulent days without some kind of spectacular fan feud?)

The trip was eventful for Ruth and me. KLM presented us with a bottle of champagne, sparingly shared, and a large wedding cake trimmed in bright blue and white icing. The colours matched our overnight knickknack bags, and a sliver of cake was tasted by all. The flight was long, 16 hours or so, this being before the age of jet airliners. There was a refuelling stop at Gander in Newfoundland which allowed us some leg-stretching, but while on board the airplane most of us drowsed or slept. This was Ruth's first airplane ride. She was by a window, on the left side to the rear behind the wing, able to see what there was to see. Her head had been nestled against my shoulder. But then, in the droning silence of the night, she moved and stirred me awake. "David!" She was alarmed. "David, we've stopped!" Stopped? Outside dawn was breaking. I looked out the window. Far below, the low carpet of clouds did indeed seem from our great height to be stationary.

So who, exactly, went on the flight? Not unsurprisingly, metropolitan New York furnished the most travellers, but strange to say, the majority of them were not active fans: Mary Dziechowski (Forry's friend), Milton Spahn, Judy Grad, Arlene Donovan. Even more obscure were those whose first names I've forgotten: K. Leerburger, H. Hausman, R. Gutstein, L. Shapiro, J. Rock, and the two Leedhams, C. and B. Better known were Sheldon Deretchin (who was a prominent fan then) and Cynthia Margulies (the wife of Leo, big time sf publisher and editor), Frank and Belle Dietz, and Nims Raybin.

Philadelphia furnished nine people, which included some prominent fans: Jean Bogert (frequent PSFS officer), Will Jenkins (often confused with the Murray Leinster one), Herb Schofield, Bob Madle (who was really from Hyattsville, Maryland by then), Ozzie Train (fan and pro), M. Hawthorne, the Fahringers (husband and wife), and H.S. Heap (whom I remember as the mother of George R. Heap, who fully paid but received a refund when he couldn't get away).

From Newark, New Jersey came R. Miller and, of course, Sam Moskowitz. C.M. Brennan came from Irvington, New Jersey. But who was the mysterious traveller P. Moskowitz (#34) also from Newark (Sam was

#20)?

Two came from Chicago: Ed Bielfeldt (a regular con-goer) and W. McGill. Two came from Strongsville, Ohio: R. Pierce and H. Neuberger. Two came from Clarksburg, West Virginia: D.L. McCulty and G. Barker. From Springfield, Virginia was Lee Sirat, and Val Anjoorian from Waltham, Massachusetts. R. Callahan came from Dearborn, Michigan.

Coming from farthest away (except for Forry from California) was Bob Abernathy of Tucson, Arizona. The lone Canadian was active fan Art Hayes. And from Detroit we had a future worldcon co-chairman, Fred Prophet. It turned out that four Fan Flight tickets were split into separate east-west passages. They were I.J. Hall, R.D. Cahn, and Jerry Josties, all of Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, A. Frey, M.P. Graham, Nella Hellinger, Z. Benowitz, and S. Gerson, all of New York. Joan and Harry Harrison went on to live in Denmark, but I don't have a record of who flew back west in their place. Four well-known couples who hoped to go but didn't were Ian and Betty Ballantine and, with their wives, Bob Sheckley, Charlie DeVet, and Jack Speer. Three who paid their full fare but received last minute refunds were F. Rae and D. Nillo of New York and R. O'Rorke of Detroit. The final tally brought all 55 voyagers an unexpected \$19.60 refund.

– *Mimosa* #30 (August 2003, ed. Rich & Nicki Lynch)

August 1957

London and Belgium

Terry Jeeves:

The hurtling express of British Railways crawled into St. Pancras station only half an hour late. I unloaded my case of portable fanning gear and staggered off down the platform to find Arthur Thomson. In spite of the thousands of hurrying people, I had no difficulty in finding him. As a stalwart member of the GDA, his false beard, trenchcoat and slouch hat made him easy to recognise. My diagnosis was confirmed by the large poster – ARTHUR THOMSON – which he was holding over his head.

We exchanged fannish greetings. Arthur gave me his hand and I gave him my case. Apparently the GDA are NOT prepared to accept ANY case as mine was returned so quickly that two passers-by caught Asian flu from the draught. To avoid being caught again Arthur set off towards the tube station at top speed. I was forced to totter along behind him, leaving a trail of mutilated passengers nursing battered shins and broken ankles.

The escalator proved no problem as Arthur had the Bright Idea of allowing my case to slide down the steps – probably because I offered it to him again. The case slid beautifully and caused quite a stir. However we were lucky enough to get on a train before the crowd caught up with us.

We had a relatively peaceful ride, marred only by the old lady who told me off for not letting my grandad sit down, and surfaced at the Oval. Once again Art set off as if hot on the trail of a Marilyn Monroe calendar. He shot past the Parish Church, through the traffic lights, and across the road on to a waiting bus. Here again, I was out-maneuvred. With a cry of “cases have to go upstairs” he vanished up the steps. Fifteen minutes later as my heart had dropped to a steady 100 rpm, Atom jumped to his feet and dashed down the stairs. I deduced that this was his way of showing me where I got off, so I followed at top speed. I didn’t want to miss him, and I didn’t. The case slipped from my hand and vanished down the stairs. An anguished yell from the platform informed me that a unique occurrence had taken place. Instead of the Goon being on a case, this time the case was on a Goon. My triumph was short-lived. Atom handed me the case with an injured air.

“I was going to carry it the rest of the way, but now my back’s broken I’d better not.”

Disentangling his false whiskers from the conductor's braces, he set off at a hot race which proved that his legs were OK even if his back was broken, but I don't think it was. He was probably just fibbing. After another half-mile dash, Atom turned in the door of a block of flats. He removed his beard, hung it on a nail beneath the sign BROCKHAM HOUSE, and nonchalantly pressed the button for the lift. I dropped my case on the floor and breathed a sigh of relief... too soon. The goddam lift was out of order. Three floors later, I made an effort to walk into Atom's flat. The human body can only stand so much – with the traditional sickening thud I collapsed on the doorstep. The click-click of high heels sank into my bemused brain. I opened one eye. Mrs. Atom was hovering over me like a ministering angel. I prepared to be ministered. The Goon agent's spouse must be accustomed to bodies, as she merely stirred me with her toe and complained, "But you can't leave it there, Arthur, it looks so untidy." Atom solved the problem by waving a double whisky under my nose. By keeping it just out of arm's reach, he was able to lure me into the living room. Then he drank the stuff. However, Mrs Atom (who turned out to be called Olive) (and who is a real good-looker to boot) took pity on me, and began to ply me with sandwiches and tea. I was soon fully recovered, so much so that Arthur began to suggest another turn around the block, complete with case, if I didn't stop chasing Olive around the room.

Tempus fugited on its merry way and it soon became time to sally forth in search of Eric the Bent, who was due in on the 9-15 train. We got to the station in good time, and having sampled a few noggins of BRale (the stuff you have to touch to find out about) we walked on to the platform, dug Eric out of a crowd of screaming females and headed off back to Brockham House.

Eric Bentcliffe:

My story begins on Saturday, August 31st, when I bid dull work begone for my annual vacation. At around 6 o'clock I caught a train. for London, where I was to meet Terry. The journey down was relatively uneventful, and mercifully brief... considering that British Railways were responsible for the conveyance. The train, rather misleadingly titled The Comet, arrived at London, Euston at 9:30 p.m. And there I was met by Terry, and by Arthur Thomson, who had offered to put us both up for the night.

We arrived back at Arthur's flat to find out that news of our passing (through London) had not failed to provoke a reaction. Apart from several females waiting to see Terry, all with irate expressions on their faces

(which stemmed I gather from the days when TJ was “on manoeuvres” with the RAF); Lars Helander and Mike Moorcock were also present. Mike, complete with guitar.

I hadn’t met either Mike or Lars before, although I knew them both from correspondence, but was pleased to see their fine sensitive fannish faces. Lars was much younger than I expected, I knew that he was still at school but had got the impression from somewhere that he was in his early twenties. We nattered about this and that whilst Olive, Art’s charming wife, plied us with sandwiches. After a considerable amount of persuasion Mike decided not to play his guitar!

Somewhere around twelvish Arthur locked us in for the night, and after I’d gagged Terry’s snores with a pillow, I got some sleep.

The next morning we arose fairly early and bidding Art and Olive adieu caught Tube, Train, and Bus for Southend airport. The Ghods must have been with us that day, for every connection was made perfectly. It’s quite usual when one has to make a few changes that British Railways will decide to cancel the most important train, the one you want to catch, but this time they outdid themselves. Hardly had we got onto the platform at Kennington Oval Underground, than a train came in. We were a half hour early at Fenchurch Street Station for our connection to Southend, but there was a train there waiting for us – a special. We had the same fortune on the return journey, most gratifying. There is such a thing as wish fulfilment.

From Southend we flew over to Middlekerke Airport, just outside Ostend (Ostende), and as soon as we had cleared customs were welcomed by Jan Jansen and his wife Rosa. Jan had driven down from Antwerp (Antwerpen) in his 2hp Citroen, which in spite of its lack of horses is a goodly little car. After a visit to the Gents (Hommes), we climbed into the car, Jan zipped up the back, and we were off.

As this was the first time either Terry or myself had been in Belgium we found plenty to interest us on the way to Antwerp. In between cowering down on the back seat as cars zoomed past on the wrong side, we admired the local scenery, very fetching, too! One thing we immediately agreed on was that the autobahn are an institution which should be introduced in England. We also agreed that we were hungry, and after a couple of hours driving Jan parked the car near the market square of Bruges (Brugge), and we went in search of an eatery. We passed the very ancient and impressive cathedral on the way, but we were very hungry.

The menu was in Flemish, and in spite of having catarrh Terry could not read it, fortunately Jan could, and did. We had Bifstik Frits; which is to the Belgians what Fish And Chips is to the English.

It was about this time that we became enamoured of the Belgian licensing laws which allow Beer and Wine to be sold almost anywhere at any time. Spirits are less widely sold, but again can be purchased almost anytime of the day, where found. Belgium would be an excellent place to hold a Science Fiction Convention.

Unfortunately it rained heavily during our drive to Antwerp, and this made the countryside less interesting than if the sun had been shining. Flanders, the portion of Belgium we passed through on this drive, is part of the very flat coastal plain, and although the fields of flowers make it a wonderful sight when gilded by the sun, it tends to be somewhat monotonous on a dull, wet, Sunday afternoon. However, we were too busy nattering to Jan and Rosa to be depressed by it. Rosa, incidentally, claims not to speak English, but she certainly understands most of what is said, and when persuaded to speak the language doesn't seem to have any trouble.

We arrived in Antwerp in the early evening, booked ourselves in and were given The Room That Ellis Mills Slept In last time he was there... we hurriedly looked under the bed to see if he'd left any tape-recorders behind, but found nothing. The Cecil Hotel, is the fannish mecca in Antwerp... we found in one of the Hommes (Gents) an inscription to the effect that "Ron Loves Cecil!". Right next to this was an injunction to read *Ploy!* I've a vague urge to type that in still another toilet we found the legend "Dave Kyle says you can't sit here", but it wouldn't be true, and in any case I like Dave.

Later that evening we went out to Borgerhout, the suburb of Antwerp in which Jan lives. There we were fed, and had the pleasure of meeting Sonja, the female-type Jansen daughter. We talked, and ate, and tried to persuade Jan that he should come to the Worldcon, even if only for a couple of days. And, eventually, we went back to the Cecil, to bed.

The next morning Terry and I strolled the streets of Antwerp, and sent pocsarcds to people, until it was time to meet Jan for Lunch. The afternoon was spent largely at an exhibition of Magic Through The Ages, and studying the local flora and fauna. Although entrance to the exhibition had to be bought in francs, a free movie show was given, so naturally we went and saw the film. This was a very ancient Danish Film called "Vampyr", and was all about Vampires, I think. The reason for my doubt is that the sub-titles were in Dutch, which didn't help very much. Even Jan had difficulty in following this, although the spoken languages of Flemish and Dutch are fairly close the written versions aren't, and we had to keep prodding one another awake.

The evening session was far more interesting. We had a meal at Borgerhout then leaving Rosa to look after Sonja, headed for Brussels – and, purely by accident (says Jan) we parked right slap bang in the middle of the Red Light district. Which was quite interesting. You’ll understand that I’m using the British Gift For Understatement in that last sentence. For the benefit of those who have never strolled through a Red Light District on the Continent I will mention that fetchingly-clad femmes sit in the windows of what at first sight appear to be cafés, and leer at you. Our interest was purely (sic) clinical, of course.

– *Triode* #12 (December 1957, ed. Bentcliffe and Jeeves)

James V. Taurasi:

New York, [Sunday] 1 September, (CNS) – Mr. & Mrs. Leo Margulies of *Satellite Science Fiction* were host and hostess at a “going away party” for the people leaving on the charter plane trip to the London Convention here today.

Guests who enjoyed their hospitality, including *hors d’oeuvres*, *canapés*, and pineapple punch (strong!) were Mr. and Mrs. Charles Leedham, Oscar Williams, Enid Williams, Forrest J Ackerman, Joan Sherman, Anette Benjamin, Arthur Kingsley, Mr. and Mrs. Alex Jackinson, Frank Belknap Long, Mr. and Mrs. Steve Takacs, Judith Grad, Mr. and Mrs. Franklin M. Dietz, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Harry Altshuler, George Nims Raybin, Mr. and the brand-new Mrs. David A. Kyle (the former Ruth Landis), Fred Prophet, Dave McDonald, Donna Massey, F. Srudnicka, Paula Valenska, Ray Benjamin and Edward W. Bielfeldt.

James V. Taurasi, Sr., Ray Van Houten and Stephanie Van Houten covered the affair for *Science-Fiction Times*.

Mrs. Margulies was one of the passengers who left on the charter flight the next day. She will represent *Satellite Science Fiction* and *Weird Tales* at the 15th World S-F Convention in London.

– *Science-Fiction Times* #282 (November 1957, ed. Taurasi)

September 1957

The Netherlands

Eric Bentcliffe:

Tuesday was a very different kind of day. Sometime prior to our departure I had dropped a line to Dave Kyle suggesting that he and the other fen who were “Doing The Continent” before the Worldcon, join us in Antwerp for day or night. Dave wrote back and agreed that a preconvention warming-up session would be a good idea. He also wrote to Jan and asked him to arrange a hotel booking for the party of a dozen or so, both in Antwerp and Amsterdam. Unfortunately, there was a slip up on the part of the hotel people in Amsterdam which would have necessitated Shel Deretchin sleeping with three females if not rectified. Although this would probably have been quite okay with Shel, we thought things had better be put right. So... at around 9am we piled into the Citroen and headed for Amsterdam.

And the amazing Two-Horses got us there in just over three hours, during which time we covered something like 200 kilometres, passing through Breda, Rotterdam, Den Haag, and Polygoon (the site of the first GDA convention?) The greater part of the afternoon was spent searching for a suitable hotel in which eighteen Americans of assorted sexes could be bedded down morally. In between hotels we saw quite a bit of the city, with which I was quite impressed. Amsterdam is known as the Venice of the North, and is a spotlessly clean city when compared to Venice. Every hundred yards or so you cross a canal, at least you do if you look where you are going, evidence that not everybody does was provided by a crane hauling a car out of a canal. I would suggest that the first person to invent a car which will work underwater has a ready made market here!

Eventually, a hotel was found. We celebrated this with a few drinks and a game of billiards (at which Jansen cheated, but Jeeves cheated even better). The KLM airliner with its cargo of fen was due at Schiphol Airport, a few kilometres outside the city, shortly after 10pm... at least, that was our information. We arrived at Schiphol in plenty of time, and found ourselves a suitable vantage point from which to watch for Kyle and Company. After an hour's wait, during which several planes had arrived from New York via London, we began to get a little worried. Several enquiries by Jan at the information desk didn't help matters either – KLM

weren't sure about this plane themselves, it seemed – they had a flight due from Teheran if that would do.

Terry Jeeves:

By 10:30 we had seen people arrive from Persia, Blackpool, South Africa and all points East, but still no Dave Kyle. Our coat lapels were worn down to the padding through thumbing our Worldcon badges in the faces of people who looked like Kyle, looked like Americans, who just looked. After another three trips to the enquiry desk, Jan found that they had been holding a message for a “Mr Jansen”. The staff were amazed to find that he was Mr Jansen. Apparently Kyle & Co. had arrived at 7:30, and were sitting waiting for us at the KLM offices in Amsterdam, five minutes from our starting point. We set off back and found them thusly, chewing lumps out of KLM's polished floors. Gear was loaded into taxis, and the giant fleet swung off in impressive array. People gaped at the parade, but the effect was slightly spoiled by the little Citroen gamely struggling to keep up at the back. However we gave the Royal salute to all and sundry, took a wrong turning, just missed parking in a canal, and got to the hotel in time to save the flock from being turned away. The manager finally bedded down the twenty odd fen and near-fen, we had the pleasure of sampling some of the Kyles' lovely wedding cake after we had rescued Ruth Kyle from the clutches of Bentcliffe (apparently no one had warned her) and set off back to Antwerp just after midnight.

Eric Bentcliffe:

The drive back to Antwerp was quite something. Holland is such a water-logged country that it gave me an almost permanent sinking feeling, and due to its dampness fog and mist is fairly common. At least, it was that night. Almost as soon as we left the city boundary we encountered ground-mist and this stayed with us for almost the whole of the journey. At times you could see a few yards beyond the bonnet of the car, at times the mist was just above the road and we were driving through what seemed to be a cavern of clouds. Most unusual lighting effects were seen when a car approached from the opposite direction, the mist glowing and becoming brighter for some time before headlights suddenly appeared and rushed past you. We were all three deadbeat by this time, and Terry and I took turns in sitting in the front seat beside Jan and talking him awake. Being unused to these straight Continental autobahns I also several times, nearly had kittens (metaphorically, of course). Jan was bashing along at a steady pace and felt quite safe in doing so in spite of the fog, for he knew that there would be no sudden bends. I didn't, being more used to the torturous

machinations of the English roads.

Before we left Amsterdam we decided to stop at the first café we came to and have a round of coffees to help us keep awake. The first café we came to was in Antwerp, the time then being something after 4am. We had a coffee just the same – it's the spirit which is the thing.

We didn't get up very early the next morning, and as we didn't see Jan until early afternoon, I guess he didn't either. He, Rosa, Terry and myself spent the greater part of the afternoon sat in a sidewalk café drinking Pils (BHEER), studying the local flora and fauna as it passed on parade and, of course, talking. Lassitude had set in. Towards 5pm we journeyed to the local station to meet the train on which the American party was travelling from Amsterdam. It came in on time. Aha, we thought, this time no slip-ups! We were a little premature, though. Dave Kyle had lost his brother.

The party were escorted to the Cecil, and after they had sorted themselves out, Jan, Terry, and I set out with Dave, Ruth, and Dave's mother and father to find a telegraph office. After contacting the USA legation in Amsterdam, Art Kyle was located, and we went for a meal. I can't recall the name of the restaurant, but it was quite an excellent one, although it's possible, that the reason I so enjoyed this meal was that I was sat next to Ruth. After the meal I discovered that I'd been playing footsie with Jeeves!

Back at the Cecil we found the rest of the party had also eaten, so we sat around and talked and drank for a while. As this was to be our last night in Antwerp, Terry and I decided to have a last stroll around the city. Shel Deretchin and a couple of "the girls" joined us. The day ended soon afterwards. It began to rain, so we went to bed – without Shel and "the girls" of course.

I must admit to being slightly amused at the American convention of calling men and women, who are often past middle-age, "boys" and "girls". Seems in the States you can never get to be a Dirty Old Man! I was also rather amused at a remark made by one of the "girls" of the party. We were talking about passports at the time, and I quasi-quote: "... and there was a little note from Ike in with our passports when we got them back asking us to be polite to the foreigners, and, I mean how can you be anything but polite when you can't speak their language." I've half a mind to sell that one to *Readers Digest*.

Thursday, Terry and I arose relatively early, strolled round town and did some last minute shopping. Jan arrived about 11am, ready to drive us back to Ostend, whence to London. I was extremely sorry to leave

Antwerp and the Jansens for the few days there had been very pleasant ones. If it hadn't been for the Worldcon I think both Terry and I would have thought up some excuse for not going back yet.

The drive down to Middlekerke Airport was relatively uneventful, and as the weather was much better than when we had travelled in the opposite direction a few days earlier, very pleasant. The fields by the roadside often ablaze with colourful flowers... which probably Paul Enever could have identified but which I couldn't. On the way, Sonja taught us a Flemish song, which sounds quite filthy but is actually about a car with no wheels... especially for squares?

On arrival at the airport our travelling luck was still in. We arrived there a half hour early and there were seats vacant on a plane leaving in five minutes. We bid Jan and Sonja a reluctant adieu (Rosa had wifely duties to perform and had been unable to come down with us), boarded the plane... and a few hours later we were in London.

– *Triode* #12 (December 1957, ed. Bentcliffe
and Jeeves)

September 1957

Countdown to Loncon

Ron Bennett:

I began to lodge with Joy and Vince Clarke and Sandy “Joan W. Carr” Sanderson in London about a month before the con. One day I was informed of a Committee meeting at the King’s Court Hotel. As Joy, Vince and Sandy were all members, it rather looked as though I’d have to fend for myself for an evening; the thought of being alone while the more permanent representatives of Inchmery Fandom were with other FANS didn’t appeal to me, and I asked whether I might not come along, purely as a guest, in order to re-meet such personalities as John Brunner, the Bulmers, Bobbie Wild and Ted Carnell. Later when the minutes of the meeting were published I was somewhat surprised to find that the Committee had co-opted me as a member.

So it was as a Committee member that I next visited the Con hotel, the King’s Court. Sandy had given me some money to take over to Dave Newman who booked into the hotel on the Monday prior to the Convention. Representatives of the British interest feature newsreel, Pathe Pictorial, were there, as were John Brunner, Dave, and Peter West. Bobbie came along later, and the hotel also experienced that night a skiffle session from Pete Taylor, Mike Moorcock and Sandy Sandfield.

On Tuesday various members of the committee who could get away from work early enough (I couldn’t) met the specially chartered plane at London Airport. [1]

Forry Ackerman:

Our actual reception at touchdown was a dismal disappointment for there was no one there to greet us with brass band or even clasp of hand. They couldn’t help it that we were a couple of hours ahead of schedule, and so the magnificent moment limped into limbo as we desultorily dispersed to Passports and Customs. ’Twas not till dinnertime that the Welcoming Committee finally caught up with us, and afterwards we were bussed into London proper and our Convention Hotel.

During the bus ride most of us shied as a stream of traffic kept coming toward us on what seemingly was the wrong side of the road, and again it is one thing (in America) to be acquainted with the occasional small European sports car on the street but another to be three-

dimensionally surrounded by swarms of such minimobiles. “And to think that here we are regarded as aliens!” Lee Sirat shook her head. At which Mary Dziechowski fannishly observed, “Where aren’t we aliens?” [2]

Ron Bennett:

Several fen in Britain had been a little apprehensive at how these visitors would turn out. Were they fans? Were they merely tourists taking advantage of a cheap flight? Apparently, as Sandy reported to us at Inchmery Road that evening, we need have no worries. And it turned out that he was more or less correct. The only disappointment was evidently that Jack Speer finally didn’t make the flight, and Vince Clarke’s cramming on *The Fancyclopaedia* proved in vain.

I took the day off on Wednesday too, officially my last day of my work period in London, and went up to the hotel in the morning. Dave Newman was there sitting talking to a group of American fans and a bearded gentleman I recognised as Bert Campbell, the late lamented editor of the now late lamented *Authentic*. I hadn’t seen Bert for over two years and was surprised to find that he was still interested in SF. I recognised Forry Ackerman from photographs and had a word with him about, naturally, Ray Bradbury, and I also asked him about the projected “Cinerama in Space”. Forry struck me as an epitome in politeness. He must get asked the same old questions and told the old viewpoints over and over again, but he still shows interest. A perfect audience. He says little, and his voice is calm and quiet when he does decide to speak, even when cracking one of his outrageous and infamous puns, but he listens. At one point during the convention I saw him nodding sagely while Norman Wansborough prattled on. The world could do with more people like him, never mind just fandom.

Forry showed me his electronic pulsator, a small machine which may be held in the hand and which boasts a dozen valves which light up alternatively and intermittently. The entire effect is fascinating. Bert Campbell suggested that Forry walked down the Bayswater Road, about a hundred yards from the hotel, holding the gadget in his palm and occasionally changing direction, as though he were divining uranium. The British members of the party were all in favour of trying this ploy there and then, especially when Bert demonstrated, strutting about the room, but the Americans were against being so ostentatious. I thought the English were supposed to be reserved...

After an afternoon looking round London, I returned to the hotel in the evening, and met another group of American fans. I went out to dinner with Steve Schultheis, Will Jenkins, George Nims Raybin and Belle and

Frank Dietz. This was a very friendly and enjoyable dinner party, spoiled only when a diner from another table came over and complained of the noise we were making, disturbing, he said, his friend who had a bad headache. We apologised, but George pointed out to us that he thought the only reason said character had raised any objection was because he knew we were American (I have to include myself, naturally, as the said stinker obviously couldn't know I wasn't), and Will noted that the ailing friend was sitting next to an espresso coffee machine which gurgled and roared every time a coffee was served from it. We grinned at the offensive showmen as we left and wandered back to the hotel. I found myself wearing Steve's hat and was surprised at the way I kept tripping over the turned-down brim, until Steve pointed out that after all, he is the Stateside Rep of the Goon Defective Agency.

What struck me with this group, and indeed most of the visiting Americans, was that they weren't loud-mouthed, flashy, ostentatious or patronising, most of which labels are tagged on to American visitors in most English people's minds. Steve Schultheis has a quiet and sincere manner of speaking and a nice line in humour. He should make a good agent for the GDA, being so unobtrusive.

Will Jenkins is also a reasonably quiet character. He wandered through the convention wearing a tag labelled "Will Jenkins, no NOT Murray Leinster," which shook some of the neofans present who didn't know the reference anyway. As you'll probably know, there has been some speculation in TAFF circles as to what constitutes a fan, and it has been suggested that only those fans with definite fanzine connections as contributors or subscribers should be allowed to vote in the election for the Trans-Atlantic award. Will proved, by his very presence, that this segregation is to say the least unfair. He's the president of the fifty-odd strong Philadelphia club, and although he was previously unheard of on this side of the Atlantic, and is probably little known outside his immediate club, it certainly can't be said that he isn't a fan.

George Nims Raybin is surely well known enough in the States for me to say but little here. A defeated TAFF candidate this year, George showed up well against the other Americans at the convention, his boisterous personality being in marked contrast to the quiet relaxation of the others. His loquaciousness is a joke which has become a by-line, encouraged greatly by George himself, George aired his views on politics in a very general way, and I managed to ask him to quote an obscure paragraph from the U.S. Constitution, and Belle Dietz later remarked that it was the first time she'd ever seen George speechless.

Frank and Belle Dietz came over to the convention on a holiday, yet the pair of them worked extremely hard, shaming many committee members. I was never near the reception desk without noticing Belle sorting through forms and membership cards. I only wish I could have seen more of them over the weekend; a grand couple.

We walked back to the hotel to find Dave Newman talking to a Canadian accent which turned out to belong to Boyd Raeburn. We adjourned to the bar where I had a well-needed brown ale. Well-needed, yes. For eleven months in the year I live in Harrogate and never see a fan, except when I go into Leeds, and then I come to London and meet in one day Forry Ackerman, Boyd Raeburn, the Dietzes, George Nims Raybin and... well, it's more than the frame can stand. [1]

[1] *Innuendo* #6 (1958, ed. Terry Carr)

[2] *Imaginative Tales* (Vol 5 #2)

The Convention and Beyond



The King's Court Hotel

Thursday 5th September

The Globe

Walt Willis:

Imagine a quiet old part of London just outside the heart of the city. Bayswater. Stately old stone-faced terrace houses with balconies, rusty iron railings and desultory trees. Nobody can afford to live here anymore and the main streets are all small shops, offices and restaurants. But in the quieter streets, like Leinster Gardens, the old houses linger on almost unchanged as hotels. Like the Kings Court.

We approached it from the tube station by a curiously circuitous route and the first thing we noticed about it were two tattered doormats wedged against the stone pillars on each side of the door, like hair growing out of nostrils. Directly inside the door was the reception desk with two pretty girls behind it talking to someone with an American accent whom I didn't recognise, an island of order in a sea of chaos. The lounge opposite them was strewn with unassembled electronic equipment, paint pots, junk, shavings, paper and rubbish. Overalled workmen were everywhere; there was a smell of turpentine and a sound of hammering. The carpets were up, of course, but it looked as if they might come down again by Christmas. No such glowing hopes could be held out for the stairs, where work had hardly yet started. Probably the decorators had had a look at the bedroom floors and decided there was no point in encouraging anyone to go up there. The corridors had a definite air of being reconciled to demolition, being neither straight nor level, so that you found yourself brushing the walls or now and again running downhill... very disturbing in the early hours of the morning. This was because the hotel had been made by knocking three or four houses together and of course they didn't quite fit. Every now and then a flight of steep stone steps led down to a dirty lavatory or bathroom. There was not much the management could have done with the antiquated plumbing at short notice but they might, in deference to the susceptibilities of our refined American friends, have segregated them into male and female.

Downstairs again I found Bobbie Wild and Dave Newman, Convention Secretary and Programme Committee stalwart respectively, both talking at once to a dark, plump, disgruntled man of about 35. They introduced him as the manager who had, they enthusiastically affirmed,

been “very cooperative.” I formed the impression that they were trying to butter him up and tried to do my bit. “Ah, M. Maurigny!” I exclaimed joyfully with my best mixture of French accent and Irish charm. So this was the wonderful M. Maurigny, proud representative of the best of French cuisine and continental gaiety and blood brother of the Convention Committee. Bobbie and Dave looked slightly taken aback and hastily explained that M. Maurigny had just sold out, leaving the sinking ship to this new manager, Mr Wilson, who had had a Raw Deal but was being Very Cooperative. Very Cooperative, they repeated fervently. Apparently the villainous Maurigny had handed over the place in dilapidation and chaos, leaving the cooperative Mr. Wilson to cope with redecoration and a convention simultaneously. But convention or no convention, the redecoration must go on. [1]

Sam Moskowitz:

The convention hotel was without question the worst in the entire history of world science fiction conventions, a dubious distinction which it will probably retain for all time. The Kings Court was set in a complex of hotels. Its rates were reasonable enough, about \$3.00 a night, but when I saw it, I paid the \$3.00 to help out the convention but immediately secured rooms elsewhere. The place compared unfavourably with flop houses in the United States. What few bath tubs there were had rotted or rusted through and couldn’t hold water. For all we knew they had no water running to them, because you didn’t dare turn it on.

The beds in the rooms had rags for blankets with patches sewn in them where they had worn or been burned through. Of course, there was then no central heating but you could put a shilling in the gas heater, which would radiate heat for a specified amount of time – if the one in your room was working. There appeared to be no hot water in the “water closets”, or in the bath rooms.

The main hall was very narrow and long with pillars spaced across, blocking the view. There were curfews; if you didn’t get back to the hotel by the specified time they locked you out and kept you out, which was, in a way, a blessing. [2]

Walt Willis:

I also learned that several of the Americans who had come over on the chartered plane had checked out of the hotel in high dudgeon already, some without paying their bills, and one of them had felt so deeply about it he had gone to the trouble to telephone a complaint about the hotel to the British Hotel Association. I scanned the list of their names anxiously and

was somewhat relieved to find I didn't recognise any of them except Gray Barker, the flying saucer man. Feeling that my intervention hadn't been too helpful I slunk away to get something to eat. It was only 15 paces from there to the dining room but in that distance three people told me the food was unspeakable so we invited the last of them (Harry Harrison) to eat outside and had a worried curry at an Indian restaurant two blocks away. No matter how you look at it, it wasn't a good start for a Worldcon. [1]

The Willises had flown from Belfast to Liverpool in a war-surplus DC3 Dakota fitted out for passengers, and then taken the train, whereas James White was booked on a direct flight to London in a modern Viscount. Needless to say, his was the flight that was delayed by mechanical problems. Eventually, the plane did take off....

James White:

Four hours later I was scanning the biggest lounge of the King's Court Hotel for sensitive fannish and/or voracious pro-type faces. I spotted Ackerman at once, talking to a small group in a tight circle of armchairs – the armchairs were tight, not the occupants; it was only 3:30 in the afternoon – so I went over and said:

“You probably don't remember me...”

But he did; he said, “Why, Bob Shaw...!” and shook hands warmly.

After disillusioning him tactfully I told him he was looking much better than last time I had seen him in 1951 when he had been somewhat under the weather due to a double-barrelled ailment comprising travel sickness and non-asiatic flu. I also noticed there was a considerable speeding-up in the well remembered Ackerman drawl; now he jabbered along almost as fast as Gary Cooper. The musical “HMMMMMMMMMM-mm-mm?” was gone too, but it was nice seeing even this stream-lined, healthy and vigorous Ackerman again.

He introduced me to a young German fan called Rainer Eisfeld, who was later to distinguish himself as an after-dinner speaker, and to Bob and Barbara Silverberg. I said excitedly, “Not the Robert Silverberg whose story was printed upside down behind mine in the latest Ace pocketbook? *” just before he got in a similar question.

* D-237: Master of Life and Death/The Secret Visitors.

Barbara Silverberg I found to be a very nice girl with a lively sense of humour who possessed the good taste to laugh at most of my jokes. She does not look like one of the three specialists in an abstruse section of

electronics. Bob Silverberg is young, intelligent, blackhaired and good looking in a vaguely neanderthal sort of way, and his face seems to fall naturally into a scowl. This, he explained carefully, is because his face muscles are constructed that way and it is painful for him to lift the corners of his mouth. He was destined to go through the Convention in constant agony. When someone – usually me – made a pun, the scowl become a sneer and the Silverberg Sneer is a devastating thing. Humbly, I asked if maybe he could teach me to sneer like that and he said he'd try.

We did not guess then at the awful consequences this simple request was to have, the mind-shattering weapon it was to unloose. We said goodbye, having still not decided who was upside down with regard to which, promising to meet about 7:30 in the Globe... it being Thursday night. I left to search Gamages for accessories for my train set. [3]

Ron Bennett:

Thursday evening I went round to the Globe, showing Forry Ackerman the way. By this time I was so confused that I took the tube going in the wrong direction. I noticed that we'd passed a couple of stations I'd not noticed so checked with the wall-plan in the train. When we arrived at the terminus, I merely explained to the party that we had to change trains and ushered everyone into a train going back in the right direction. I later heard someone remark that the trip back from the Globe was much quicker, but I was ordering a drink at the time, and couldn't comment; and frankly, I preferred it that way.

In case the reference to the Globe is new to you, I'd better explain that every Thursday, London fandom gathers in a most informal fashion at the Globe, a small public house just off Holborn. During my stay in London, I worked for a fortnight only four streets away, and one London fan, Mike Moorcock, who edits a juvenile magazine called *Tarzan Adventures*, goes one better by working but two streets away.

I've never seen the Globe as packed as it was that evening before the convention, it was here that I met Sam Moskowitz and while we were talking Walt and Madeleine Willis rolled in. It was too crowded even to bow. Several fans held their own minicon outside in the street. I had the pleasure of introducing Boyd Raeburn to Terry Jeeves and Eric Bentcliffe, and also to Norman Wansborough. I can't understand why Boyd *still* wants him out of OMPA. [4]

James White:

The Globe that night remains for me a noisy, smoky blur. I can remember Ted Carnell and I plying each other with drinks, one each. I met

Bobbie Wild, the Convention Secretary, an efficient, overworked and slightly harassed girl who said she had insured herself so that she could wrap a certain person's blank guitar round his blank-blank neck with impunity. I wished her luck. Then there were Joy Clarke and Ken and Pamela Bulmer, all looking as pretty and vivacious as ever, except Ken. But Vince Clarke was a shock. Gone was the distinguished toffee-apple of yesteryear; in its place was this soft-spoken young patriarch with sane straightened-out kid written all over him.

The place became quickly smokefilled and the fans overflowed into side bars, then the billiard room, finally spilling out into the street. There I vaguely remember a gutter brawl between the Silverbergs and Boyd Raeburn on the proper method of making coffee, which Bob left to test his American-English vocabulary on me. We talked about lifts and elevators, then the Underground, the Tube and the Metro in Paris. When he suggested that the Underground in Ireland was called the Mother Maquis I used one of his own sneers on him and left for the purer air inside.

Suddenly it was "Time, Gentlemen, Please" time and we were driven onto the streets again. A party of predominantly London fans formed and began trekking away in a direction opposite to that in which lay the Underground station they were making for. I managed to convince them of their error and eventually we were being borne hotel-wards. An argument developed then as to which station – Lancaster Gate or Queensway – was nearest to the Kings Court. Half the fans got out at Lancaster Gate and booed derisively at those still on the train, who booed back. Then the weaker willed types on the train had second thoughts and got off hurriedly, while those of a similar disposition on the platform made a quick dash back onto the train. An interesting situation developed with the guard yelling "Mind the doors!" repeatedly and the said doors... rubber-covered, luckily... opening and closing with thunks on fannish arms, legs and torsos. Finally we all, counting halves and quarters that is, found ourselves on the Lancaster Gate platform. It turned out that the nearest station to the hotel was Bayswater.

It was about 2:30 when I went up to my room, to find a still, emaciated figure occupying one of the three beds. I went through its luggage quickly; it consisted of four snazzy suits, twenty-three ties, a camera and one hundred and fifty two-colour printed cards bearing the GDA legend and stating that the holder was one Stephen F. Schultheis. After a few moments deep cogitation I decided that the figure on the bed was Steve Schultheis. It bothered me somewhat that it did not appear to breathe, but I went to bed reassuring myself with the well known fact that

Arch-Goon John Berry is dead from the neck up, and it was therefore conceivable that the Cleveland Op was extinct from the cervical vertebrae on down.

Next morning the figure did not move or breathe during the time I dressed, washed or shaved. It did, however, make a slight snurkling sound when I inadvertently spilled some of my shaving water on its head. Greatly relieved at this sign of life I went down to breakfast. [3]

Harry Harrison:

It was an interesting hotel. It had apparently been made by knocking holes in the walls to connect a number of ancient and adjoining buildings. The corridors rose up and down as one passed from building to building. Our room had a double bed, a window, a sink, and a curious metal construction in one corner. This proved to be a shower of sorts. Old-world charm – and we were charmed. After some of the fleapits we had stayed in in Mexico this was indeed a form of luxury.

Not to all. Next day a tearful Dave Kyle wanted to know if we were leaving too? Why on earth should we? Apparently most of the other Americans found the accommodation too primitive. Obviously none of them had ever been to Mexico. Eventually the rebellion was put down and they stayed. Probably because a few scouts had looked at the other accommodation in the neighborhood. [5]

[1] *Opsla* #23 (November 1957, ed. Gregg Calkins)

[2] Sam Moskowitz letter to Rob Hansen, 1989

[3] *Hyphen* #19 (January 1958, ed. Walt Willis & Chuck Harris)

[4] *Innuendo* #6 (1957/1958, ed. Terry Carr)

[5] *Harry Harrison! Harry Harrison!* (autobiography, Tor, 2014)

Friday 6th September

1 – And So It Begins...

Ron Bennett:

I was up bright and early before eight on the Friday, the BIG day, I came downstairs to find Bill Harry sitting in the lounge. He'd travelled from Liverpool overnight and had got himself lost in the tube system. Without even a blush I remonstrated that this was impossible. He later heard about my escapade of the previous evening. I'm looking forward to reading his conreport.

Bill came into breakfast even though he hadn't yet booked in, and we theorised on how one could live entirely by going into hotels and looking like a resident, especially when Eric Needham in a similar position as Bill's came in and sat down to breakfast too. Not only did this hotel staff seem keen to please non-residents by giving them breakfast, they practically insisted on said non-residents making pigs of themselves, by giving them two main courses each. Real efficient organisation.

After breakfast we left Bill's luggage in my room and went off to look round London. We went to see the Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace, only to discover that on that day it had taken place at the Horse Guards parade, which we'd passed on the way, and were surprised to notice that along the front of the Palace railings is a worn path where the Palace guards have marched up and down over the years. As you'll probably know, the Palace guards are not allowed, when on duty, to speak to or acknowledge anyone, and we were amused to see the usual crowd of tourists from the provinces and abroad taking snapshots of the hapless guards. One gentleman placed his two small children one at either side of one guard and proceeded to shoot the scene. Bill reminded me of the time a film starlet had thrown herself on a guard for publicity.

"Knock his busby off, Ron, and see if he shoots you." [1]

James White:

The few occupants of the dining room ran heavily to bloodshot eyes and slow, thick speech, with the exception of Mary Dziechowski... uh, yes... who came down looking trim and smart in a ski-suit and cap. I concluded she had a room on the top floor.

After breakfast, the Silverbergs and I went to Les Flood's shop. He hadn't got a copy of the latest Ace Double, but insisted on taking our

pictures in a semi-stiff, back-to-back pose. It took him a long time to get us arranged just right, but finally we got away just before the crowd began throwing pennies. We headed for the British Museum.

I spent two hours wading through ancient pottery, mummies and postage stamps before discovering the awful fact that this was *not* the museum which contained a whole floor devoted to Aeronautics. But I concealed my disappointment well, I thought, being content merely to make sneering remarks about completist pebble-collectors in the Geology Section and trying to decide, in the Egyptology Room, which of the occupants most resembled George Charters. It was hard to tell with those bandages.

Bob Silverberg, in an attempt to instil in me the rudiments of archaeology and stuff like that, began giving me the history of a collection of sculpture which he was keen to examine called the Elgin Marbles. These, it seemed, had been purloined while the Greeks were away fighting some war or other. "Ah," I observed, "so the Greeks are missing some of their marbles." They did not speak to me after that except for suggesting that surely I had presents to buy for my family, and that they could recommend some good shops at the other end of London.

The hotel was undergoing structural redecoration and it was not until 5:30 on Friday night, when the painters knocked off for the day and the weekend, that the convention members were able to permeate among each other satisfactorily. Groups formed, broke up and re-formed all over the place and there was an atmosphere building up that I had never encountered at any convention before... exuding, I think, from the fact that there were now no nonfans in the hotel to scoff or raise eyebrows or otherwise apply wet blankets to the proceedings. [2]

Walt Willis:

By Friday evening things were looking up. There were nice new carpets everywhere downstairs and even some bits on the walls. At least they were covered with an odd, hairy wallpaper, all little patches of short, red fur. I remember asking Moskowitz if it was science fiction plush. I'm sorry to be talking so much about the hotel, but believe me it was important. It set the whole mood of the convention. The lounges were the key. There were five of them altogether, all quite small, and furnished with comfortable armchairs and coffee tables. Waiters with trays and girls with trollies patrolled them until dawn plying the fans with food and drink. The drinks actually had ice in them. Yes, ICE! (Only those of us who have been to Europe will be properly impressed by this.) It seemed to me it would take an awful lot of dirty bathrooms to outweigh all this. The most

important result was that we had lounge parties instead of bedroom parties, a quite different thing, smaller, more intimate, more fluid, little congenial groups constantly forming and reforming. [3]

Ron Bennett:

By the time we got back to the hotel it was after four in the afternoon, but we were surprised to find that registration had not yet opened. I sat down in the lounge where Walt Willis, Mal Ashworth, Steve Schultheis, Wally Weber and James White were swapping yarns. When a drinks waiter came in I ordered a brown ale. No one else ordered a drink, except Walt who calmly asked for an orangeade. Not to be outdone, I ordered an orangeade too. Actually, when thirsty, which I was, I like orangeade. I also like brown ale. Well, why not? A moment later someone came through from the restaurant pushing a coffee-and-cake-laden trolley, so I purchased here too. James offered to mix me a cocktail from the three drinks, which was kind of him. James explained that he and Bob Silverberg are practically married, for they have seen print back to back in an Ace pocket book. He later came out of his way to ask me not to print the quote out of context in case people might misunderstand him.

Walt told of the battle he'd had three years before with Chuck Harris when both tried to push forward prodigies in a friendly manner. Mal was his prodigy, Walt explained, and Ken Potter was Chuck's. I couldn't help being in character and Mal-baiting by remarking drily,

"What a pity you lost, Walt."

A few polite laughs and then a sweet little Katy Johnson-like lady walked in and was introduced as Rory Faulkner. Rory is the sixty-nine-year-old great-grandmother who came over from Los Angeles to make the bid on behalf of the Outlanders for the site of the 1958 World Convention. We talked about Harry Turner, with whom Rory had been staying, and said what a pity it was that he couldn't make the convention.

Rory told me how the Liverpool group had met her off the ship the previous weekend. Norman Shorrocks had somehow obtained a Cunard Official badge and had boarded the ship wearing this, collecting Rory and ushering her through the customs while Harry – who was the official reception party – had to wait on the quayside.

A little later, while I was running around bearing piles of cardboard boxes, I was hurriedly introduced to someone who looked like a youthful Don Ameche, Sheldon Deretchin. Shel was the first American fan I ever wrote, getting in touch with him through Terry Jeeves, who was the first English fan I ever wrote. Shel was in evidence throughout the convention, pointing various pistols at various fans at a variety of times, and was, I

think, the most exuberant attendee at the con.

Two minutes later I bumped into a young, bewildered looking face which belonged to Mike Gates, who is evidently trying to follow in the footsteps of the Benford twins. Immediately afterwards I met Ellis Mills, with whom I spent so much time last year. Alas, no more jaunts out to Rhein-Hain and into Frankfurt to be introduced to the Benford twins as Helmuth Gebogen, a neo Gerfan, for Ellis was going back to the States immediately after the convention, and the Benfords were due to return to the home country in October.

Ellis took me up to his room, number 64, for a short drink. About an hour later I staggered out of the room, arms laden with magazines, and with Jack Harbold following bearing more mementos such as a paper knife, Lucky-Strike cigarettes, and various American and continental beer bottle labels. [1]

James White:

Around six o'clock the laws of randomness governing such things selected four people who were hungry and arranged for them to occupy the same square yard of space at the same time. Thus I found myself in company with the fabulous Rory Faulkner, a small quiet girl named Ruth O'Rourke, and my other room-mate Mal Ashworth, in an Italian restaurant for tea. Rory is a charming 69-year old ex-bulldozer hostess who fairly radiated excitement at being able to attend the convention. Her hair is white but it is impossible to think of her as being so many years old. Ruth O'Rourke was an unobtrusive person during the convention until on the third day she created a fannish precedent by going on a pilgrimage to the Shrine at Walsingham, causing some anxiety to Rory, Bobbie Wild and others who thought she had been spirited away to Buenos Aires or Rainham [home of Chuck Harris] and notified the police. But all these things were still in the future that Friday night, and the only clod on our horizon was Mal, who insisted on punning continuously. Despite this it was a most enjoyable meal, though in my case a bit delayed, and I had to rush to get back in time for the press conference. [2]

[1] *Innuendo* #6 (1957/1958, ed. Terry Carr)

[2] *Hyphen* #19 (January 1958, ed. Walt Willis & Chuck Harris)

[3] *Oopsla* #23 (November 1957, ed. Gregg Calkins)

Friday 6th September

2 – Meet the Press

Chuck Harris:

I know now what Damon Knight meant when he referred to our conventions as a sort of “love-feast”. No matter how disillusioned and cynical you may get with fandom (and, after the mingy response to my last *Hyphen*, I was very cynical, and very disillusioned), once you have checked into the Con hotel, and gotten lost in the melee, all the resentment and feelings of ineffectuality vanish and are replaced by a sense of contentment and, more important, kinship.

Here were 268 people who shared my viewpoint, who accepted me as one of themselves, and who were, in varying degrees maybe, pleased to see me. I discovered I was just a goshwow boy at heart, and I skittered about meeting Big Names, getting people to sign my programme booklet, talking myself hoarse, and, well, having myself a hell of a wonderful time.

I arrived Friday night and met my first Real American at the Reception Desk – big, calm, competent Belle Dietz who had been working there for hours, and who must have been deadly tired, but who never failed to smile and look genuinely pleased as she greeted each new arrival. Belle, I thought, seemed to be the American equivalent of our Bobbie Wild – one of those girls who slog their guts out to make the cons a success, and whose efforts are seldom noticed by the mass of us, and almost never appreciated.

Registration is always chaos for me, but this time Norman Shorrock and Ethel Lindsay booked me in, found my room number, took my money, gave me maps, banquet ticket, registration ticket, programme booklet, my case with the vodka in it, and directions on how to find my room and Walt Willis. All calm and efficient they were too. Me, I was damn near frothing with excitement, trying to carry on six conversations at once (which is no easy thing for a lip-reader as poor as I am), shaking hands with everybody in sight, including the hall-porter, and drooling at the hotel receptionist who was very blonde, very pretty, and very unapproachable.

I drew Room 42, third floor, sharing with my usual room mate, Arthur Thomson. His case was already there. I stepped into the corridor, hollered “Arfer” in the Moskowitz manner, and he shot from the room next door, looking excitingly dishevelled, along with Mary

Dziechorowski, and another American lass called Jean whose second name I never did catch. Bringing up the rear was Steve Schultheis and Our Boy Mal Ashworth, who used to be one of my very special friends until he double-crossed me and married my dreamboat, Sheila.

I said hallo to Mary (umm), to Jean, to Steve, and to Arthur, and then turned to Mal.

“Well, where is she?” I asked.

He knew what I meant, and why I asked. I’ve been due to kiss the bride since way back when, and I don’t like leaving these little jobs unfinished. Women are not like vintage port – they don’t improve with keeping – and Ashworth was quite capable of keeping her away from me until she was drawing her old age pension.

However, he mumbled something about her arriving the next day so I unpacked the bottle, and, after a drink, we went off in search of Walt and Madeleine. [1]

John Victor Peterson:

A pre-convention press conference was called in the bar at 7:30 p.m. by Chaiman Ted Carnell. In readying myself to go, I had the radio on in my room and heard the taped interview held with John W. Campbell, Jr. (Guest of Honour at this Convention) upon his arrival at London Airport. The interview was prefaced with news of the fact that the 15th World Science Fiction Convention was being held at the King’s Court Hotel, etc. It took about 5-8 minutes of BBC air-time. The meat of it being that Campbell felt that reaching the Moon was strictly a matter of economics and that given the funds, we could reach the Moon within 24 months. At the press conference, Ted gave the floor to Dave Kyle who presented Arthur C. Clarke with last year’s trophy for “The Star”. Ted then introduced John W. Campbell, Jr. who said but little then. John Brunner then took over and answered various questions from the press regarding the programme. JWCjr advised the press that it would be strictly an informal session as in a regular scientific meeting with people meeting face-to-face, person-to-person, discussing the things with which they are personally concerned – not something you can programme. He said, “We have no message”. He went on to say that there are no journals of speculation – of speculative thinking – of disciplined imagination – and that the SF mags come closest to that. Ted mentioned some of the more notable SF authors present such as John Wyndham, Arthur C. Clarke and John Christopher. The press asked what is the average circulation of an SF magazine. Ted Carnell said he sells about 20,000 copies per issue. JWCjr. says he sells about 95,000 per issue and that his recent poll showed that

each issue is read by 1.9 persons. The press then asked where all the ideas for SF stories come from and JWCjr said that he has frequently given a single idea to six different authors and received six entirely different stories. Ted then mentioned that SF writing requires a certain background knowledge and a definite technique – all of which calls for authors in a speciality. Then the press asked if SF authors use their own names and a discussion resulted during which JWCjr mentioned Heinlein’s departure from his “future history” with the Anson MacDonald yarns. He also mentioned the two-headed Robert Randall (saying one head – Silverberg – was here). Further, that Will F. Jenkins periodically writes SF under the name of Murray Leinster (incidentally, we’re in Leinster Gardens). Finally, JWCjr mentioned that John R. Pierce writes SF under his own name but articles under the name of J.J. Coupling (because Bell would not take kindly to his publishing of extrapolated science under his own name). Then the press asked: What Is Psionics? Campbell mentioned Rhine and “psi” and said that he had stuck on the “-onics”. JWCjr said that psionics is the science of phenomena for which there is no explanation and that the old name “magic” is the closest correlation. He went on to say that SF is by and for amateurs. He said his own hobby is SF and that he makes his living by it. He said that an amateur spent 20 years on a curious problem and charged it off to entertainment, not losing a nickel, while a commercial outfit can’t afford to do that. The press asked what is the usual membership of a convention. Dave Kyle said that last year’s was around 1,200, with over 800 attending. The press asked how the word got around about the conventions. Brunner explained about the fan mags and clubs. The press inquired as to whether any authors otherwise prominent wrote SF and Arthur C. Clarke said that almost every well-known writer has penned at least one SF yarn. Campbell said that flying saucers are no longer used as a story basis and went on about Ike Asimov’s “duck”.

Then the First Session began at 9.00 P.M. as programmed. JWCjr was introduced. He said he has to be a professional prophet since he buys six months ahead of publication. Said he’s taken no part in Conventions because of his position and because he could not be able to handle the details and feels the fans do it well enough. Dave Kyle came on and said he felt he had no right to look back and introduced American’s fan representative, Bob Madle, giving background since 1936. Bob briefly gave his thanks, says he’s here five days and feels he’s already covered a full convention. Ted wound up with a tale of how he went out to London Airport on a motorcycle [on Wednesday] to get John W. Campbell, Jr. [2]

Ted Carnell:

After Ken [Bulmer] had exhausted the possibilities of hiring a car, we then checked every garage within a mile radius of this office without success. It was decided that I would go out to the air terminal and hitch a ride on one of the airline coaches to the airport, while Ken continued his efforts to hire a car to meet us out there, but at this time (mid-day) there was little likelihood of my reaching the airport by 3:30 p.m. when Campbell's plane was due to arrive from Ireland. This was also complicated by the fact that I had arranged for a BBC radio interviewer to meet John upon arrival and felt that it would be essential for me to be there to get the two factions together.

However, just as I was leaving the office, artist Brian Lewis arrived on his Vespa motorcycle and immediately offered to take me out to the airport. Then ensued a rather wild ride, which delivered me at the airport at 1:30 p.m., two hours before the plane was due.

From the time Campbell arrived, things went magnificently – the BBC interviewer had arranged to record the discussion in their airport studio, and as John and his wife came through the Customs we went straight into the studio where the whole interview went very well indeed.

During the whole of this time I was still expecting to receive a message from Ken or his arrival by car to take us back to the hotel, but as we left the studio the BBC interviewer asked whether we had transport, and not having seen or heard from Ken we accepted his offer to take us to the King's Court, where John and his wife were delivered in fine style to the amazement of the delegates in the foyer. [3]

Walt Willis:

I wasn't there myself, but I heard that Rory Faulkner went over big. There had been invitations issued to the press for this press conference, but as it worked out, many of them came along during the day to try and steal a march on each other. I guided the representative of Reuters' News Agency round myself, and he talked to some dozen of the fans who happened to be present... who fortunately included Forry Ackerman. Forry made an excellent job of conveying to the reporter the function and mood of the Convention and modern sf. Excellent interviews were also given by Steven Schultheis and a 16 year old German fan called Rainer Eisfeld. [4]

Chuck Harris:

Walter Himself was talking to The Press (Reuter's, no less!), and I wasn't able to get to him. So, I met Forrest J Ackerman Himself instead. I didn't do anything, it just happened to me. I was just standing there, being quiet, on the landing, when this burly great chap came up, smiling from ear

to ear, pumped my hand between both of his and said, "I'm very very pleased to meet you, Chuck. I'm Forry Ackerman!" Well, I gulped and I guess I said something in reply, but I'm damned if I'll ever know what it was now. Goshwow or not, brother, this was my Big Moment and if I had a tail it would be wagging yet. This was the man who was directly responsible for me being in fandom. The first fanzines I ever saw were *VOM* and *Shangri L'Affaires* which Ackerman had sent to Fred Brown. (Fred, one of Britain's biggest collectors, has always given me the run of his enormous library and encouraged me to take an active part in fandom. He used to save the fmzs for me, and patiently explain all the esoteric bits about poos and yobbers and the rooster who wore red pants.) Dammit, here was the automatic choice of World's Number One Fan for all time, and he was pleased to meet me.

Is this naive? Is it gushing ingenuousness to say that I found him one helluva guy – lovable, unassuming, humble and so wonderfully approachable? He has no trace of that stand-offishness that afflicts many of the Big Names in the field, and he was just as pleasant and as courteous when he talked to Peter Reaney as he was when he talked to Arthur C Clarke.

(Which, incidentally, is more than can be said for Chuck Harris.) [1]

James White:

The only incidents I can remember were hearing Rory talk fan slang to a bewildered journalist and John W. Campbell under fire from four reporters at the same time who were trying to get him rattled. The way he had them on the defensive within two minutes was masterly. I was interviewed about this time by a drawling, patronising journalist who irked me somewhat. Using my 14 years experience of dealing with irate customers whose suits didn't fit I deftly switched roles until I was getting such details as the school he attended and his publication's official and unofficial circulation figures. ((Remind me to tell you about the time when James, at home with a cold, sold a suit to the vacuum cleaner salesman. – Willis)) After this I ate pretzels with a nonchalant air and sneered out at Chuck Harris through the glass door of the lounge where the press conference was being held. Harris, as a fake pro who has refused to cash the seven-and-tenpenny cheque he received for his one and only professional sale, was excluded from such august company as me and John W. Campbell. [3]

Chuck Harris:

Well, now I had to find Walt. I ran him to earth in the bar, chastely

kissed Madeleine's cheek (a privilege reserved solely for co-editors of *Hyphen*), showed them the very hand that had been shaken, and then bubbled away about 4e until Ken Bulmer arrived with a bombshell.

Whilst I had been meeting Ackerman on the landing, Ken had been there talking to the T.V. representative. Part of the jollity was to be televised and various people were being selected for interviews. Now, the T.V. man – a keen, perceptive type – had spotted me, fallen in love with my clean, intelligent, star-begotten looks, and wanted me to enchant his eight million viewers.

Cor! And, better still, he didn't ask Walt Willis or James White. My cup runneth over.

However, Ken knows me better than most people, and guessed that I wouldn't want to take part in the show. He told the bod I was deaf, and would have to work from a pre-arranged script (my lip-reading can't be depended upon, and nobody seemed to have thought of T.V. with subtitles), but the man was still eager and interested, so Ken came and told me about it.

Ordinarily, I would have politely refused to even consider such an idea unless they promised me a ten-minute commercial spot for a *Hyphen* plug, but under the circumstances ruling at this time, even Jayne Mansfield wouldn't have been able to drag me on the screen. I was away sick from work and desperately holding the boss at bay with sheaves of medical certificates stating that I had influenza, coryza, bronchitis, and just about everything up to, and including, Stigwort's Disease. If he knew that I was even out of bed, let alone whooping it up in a West End hotel and starring on his telly, he'd have fired me out of hand. The very thought of such things was enough to send me into a decline, and it was fortunate that Eric Bentcliffe arrived at the Crucial Moment with a free drink to revive my shattered nerves. [1]

Brian Aldiss:

Ted Carnell... ushered me into a bar where a press conference was being held and John Brunner was telling the reporters what was what. I do not recall that any of the reporters spoke to me. I went to the bar and bought a drink. Standing next to me was a slim young man who told me that there were some extraordinary types at the convention, and that he was thinking of leaving pretty smartly. He introduced himself as J.G. Ballard. [5]

Ballard can be seen in several photos taken at the convention, but he didn't hang around. It would be a decade before he

*dropped in on another one. According to Mike Moorcock:
“He told me later he’d expected a bunch of French-style
existentialists all discussing the latest ideas in science and
medicine.” [6]*

J.G. Ballard:

My one and only contact with fandom was when I’d just started writing, which is twelve years ago, when the World Science Fiction Convention was being held in London, in 1957, and I went along to that as a young new writer hoping to meet people who were interested in the serious aims of science fiction and all its possibilities. In fact there was just a collection of very unintelligent people, who were almost illiterate, who had no interest whatever in the serious and interesting possibilities of science fiction. In fact I was so taken aback by that convention that I more or less stopped writing for a couple of years. Since then I’ve had absolutely nothing to do with fans, and I think they’re a great handicap to science fiction and always have been. [7]

Brian Aldiss:

An SF audience rates as one of the best in the world. It is friendly, well-informed, sharp, humorous, will not stand cant or rank being pulled on it. It knows the tribal customs. Having experienced convention audiences one comes to see one’s readership in the same terms.

There never was such a creative readership as the SF readership. The representatives one meets at conventions may contain a few nutcases, but by and large these are men and women who wish to write themselves, or will edit, or run their own fanzines, or are artists or critics. [8]

Aldiss’s memories of the con as “An SF Convention of the Fifties” in [5] below are well worth a read.

James White:

The press conference turned out to be wasted effort because no publicity whatever came of it. Probably the reporters had been plied with so many drinks that they could not remember the answers to the questions they had asked – or even the questions. [3]

[1] *Lonconfidential** (December 1957, ed. Chuck Harris)

[2] *Science Fiction Times* #279 (September 1957, ed. Taurasi)

[3] *Hyphen* #19 (January 1958, ed. Walt Willis & Chuck Harris)

- [4] *Science Fiction Parade* #6 (Fall 1957,
ed. Len Moffatt)
[5] *The Shape of Further Things:
Speculations on Change* by Brian Aldiss
(Faber & Faber, 1970)
[6] *Prolapse* #6 (April 2007, ed. Peter
Weston)
[7] *Speculation* #21 (February 1969, ed.
Peter Weston)
[8] *Bury My Heart at W.H. Smith's* by Brian
Aldiss (Hodder & Stoughton, 1990)
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* *Chuck Harris's Worldcon report* *Lonconfidential* can be read
in full as part of the TAFF Free Library ebook *Creative Random*
Harris.



Aldiss and (twice) Ballard at Loncon

Friday 6th September

3 – Chairman's Address

Ted Carnell:

On behalf of the President and the entire committee, let me welcome you to what will be, I hope, the most outstanding World Science Fiction Convention yet held – and if you are one of the unfortunate members who will only be with us in spirit, thank you for your interest and support and may this souvenir booklet be some slight recompense for your absence.

To those of you who will be attending in person we *know* that you will have a good time – our only request is your full co-operation whenever it is required. There is a central control room from which the entire proceedings both formal and informal will be governed: your prompt response to announcements will be gratefully appreciated. Information on anything may be obtained from the Committee members wearing the special badge, or if they do not know the answer they will find out for you.

Finally, I feel sure that you will wish me to thank the Committee on your behalf for the endless hours of arduous work they have put in to make this Convention possible. In particular I would commend your thanks to Secretary Roberta Wild for her exceptional ability in co-ordinating details, and her patience with endless correspondence; Dave Newman and Norman Shorrocks together with their Programme Committee for months of planning, tape recordings, filming, and co-ordination of all electronic equipment; Joy and Vincent Clarke for British Publicity and the vast amount of work they have done on other items; Pam and Ken Bulmer for Overseas Publicity and in particular overseas advertising obtained for this Programme Booklet; Peter West for invaluable assistance on film equipment and lighting; John Brunner for his enthusiasm as general leg-man on Publicity Liaison with the press and film companies; Charles Duncombe as Treasurer and “Sandy” Sanderson, who as Cost Accountant, has kept us out of the “red”; Harry Turner for layout and design of the *Journals* and Programmes; and all the remainder of the London and provincial Committee members who will be working throughout the Convention to ensure your pleasure.

They will be more than rewarded if you thoroughly enjoy yourselves.

The Committee:

President:	John Wyndham
Chairman:	John Carnell
Secretary:	Roberta Wild
Treasurer:	Charles Duncombe
British Publicity:	Joy Clarke Vincent Clarke
Overseas Publicity:	Pamela Bulmer Ken Bulmer
Programme Committee:	Dave Newman Norman Shorrock
Film Liaison:	Peter West
Publicity Liaison:	John Brunner
Fred Brown	Ethel Lindsay
Dave Cohen	Nigel Lindsay
Philip Duerr	John Roles
Ewan Hedger	Arthur Sellings
Terry Jeeves	Ken F. Slater
Eric Jones	Walter A. Willis
<i>Journal</i> design and make-up:	Harry Turner

General

a) The formal sessions of the 15th World Science Fiction Convention will be conducted in accordance with such Rules of procedure as shall be deemed acceptable to the Directors of the World Science Fiction Society, Inc., several of whom will be present in London.

b) The General Committee will be responsible for the administrative work of the Convention throughout the 4-day session and the Programme Committee will be responsible for all programming, programme items and delegates concerned with the programmes. A central control room will be used, connected to the hotel P.A. system, which will be under the jurisdiction of the Programme Committee, for the co-ordination of

administration and programming.

c) All bids for the 1958 Convention site must be submitted in writing to the Convention Secretary, Miss Roberta Wild, on or before 10:00 a.m. Monday, September 9th. Each bid must contain the name of the proposed site, a list of names of the proposed officers and members of the Convention Committee, and the name of the group bidding.

d) In the event of more than one bid, nominating speeches shall be allowed a maximum time of ten minutes for each group placing a bid. Bids shall be placed in the name of the proposed Convention site.

e) Seconding speeches for each group shall be limited to three with a maximum total time of ten minutes.

f) Voting procedure to select the next Convention site will be by ballot, except in the event that only one bid is received, when a majority vote of the Active Membership present and voting on the question will constitute the election of the Convention site and the Convention Committee.

g) Should two ballots be required to elect the next Convention site, only the top bids which together receive the majority votes shall be placed on the second ballot.

Elections

a) The offices for which elections are to be held at the Business Session are: two Directors of the World Science Fiction Society, Inc. to serve a term of three years. The election for each office will be by ballot.

Nominations

a) Nominations for the elections which shall be held at the Business Session on Monday morning must be submitted in writing on or before mid-day Monday, September 9th to the Convention Secretary. Each nomination must be signed by the nominator and the nominee.

b) Any qualified Active Member of the World Science Fiction Society, Inc., may be nominated.

c) In the event of a tie-vote between nominees a re-vote will be taken.

Other Business

a) In the event of any Active Member wishing to put forward resolutions or Amendments to the By-laws or any further business to be considered at the Business Session such resolutions or amendments must be tendered in writing to the Convention Secretary no later than 10:00 a.m. on Monday, September 9th.

– Programme Book (September 1957)

Friday 6th September

4 – Opening Ceremony

James White:

Round about nine o'clock – the programme already showed signs of running late though we couldn't prove it because it hadn't been issued yet – we were shooed by members of the committee into the hall. Here the ceremonial gavel and clonker thing were handed over by Dave Kyle to Ted Carnell.... [1]

Walt Willis:

The 15th World Science Fiction Convention opened at the Kings Court Hotel this evening at 9:07 p.m., seven minutes late. Chairman Ted Carnell explained that they could have opened on time, but feared to flout providence by defying what appeared to be a law of nature as regards science fiction conventions. He also said that when making the bid for London at the New York Convention last year he had promised only one thing: that whatever it would be like, it would be different from N.Y. Even from the little the audience had already seen, they would realise that this promise was going to be fulfilled.

There was a murmur of agreement at this, because few World Conventions can have been held in such a hotel. In the first place, London is not a Convention city. All conventions in England are held at seaside resorts, and none of the first rate hotels were prepared to allow the necessary facilities – e.g., separation of fans from mundane guests so that conventioners could enjoy themselves without being annoyed by complaints. So it was a choice between going out of the city altogether (and the feeling was that Americans expected the convention to be in London itself, so that they could take their hangovers to the Tower of London, etc.) and falling back on a lesser hotel. The deciding consideration was that the less pretentious hotels were more likely to be tolerant of the idiosyncrasies. The Kings Court Hotel seemed to be a prime example of this... an informal and unpretentious hotel with a friendly and understanding staff. But when the time of the convention came nearer there were added complications.

The hotel was sold. The new owners and manager immediately decided to rebuild it. The unusual result is that the convention is being held in a hotel which is being slowly rebuilt, rather than one which is being

rapidly destroyed... Ellis Mills commented that since the hotel was being extended it should be renamed the Builtmore; I suggested that since a new wall was being created across one of the public rooms it should be called the Walledoff.

But to get back to the official programme, what there was of it (this session was purely introductory), Ted Carnell introduced John Wyndham Harris, who introduced John W. Campbell, the Guest of Honour, who received a prolonged and enthusiastic welcome. He made a short speech about the work of an sf editor (“What ever was good yesterday, we don’t want tomorrow... We have to live in the future, *now*... The editor has to be a prophet; if he’s no prophet, there’s no profit.”) With this desperate attempt to wrest George Charters’s laurels as the Convention’s most depraved punster, JWC introduced Dave Kyle with some sympathetic remarks about the troubles of Convention Committees. Dave introduced the TAFF delegate Bob Madle, who was warmly welcomed despite widespread disagreement which had been expressed earlier in British fandom with the method of voting – the objections were solely towards the possible future abuses of the system itself, not to the present representative. [2]

James White:

The new Chairman told us there would be no further official sessions until tomorrow and we were free to mix and talk and make friends. Feeling a little guilty because we had jumped the gun and been doing just that for the last day and a half, we slunk out and began permeating again, Mal and I having decided that we had been having social intercourse in sin and that these extra-legal and unofficial friendships would have to be ratified as quickly as possible. We are essentially ethical types and, speaking as a man with a married wife and child, I don’t hold with that sort of thing. [1]

Eric Bentcliffe:

Before I draw a veil over the events of Friday (those few I recall), I must make mention of Art Thomson and his Bengalese Folk Music Skiffle Group. Patent pending. This group gave a short concert in the main lounge around 1am, and was composed of Lars Helander, Mike Moorcock, and Bill Harry, all in trad-style Bengalese costume. Peter Reaney vocalised with the group, and also did an original (very!) dance. During Peter’s second number I developed a shocking headache and decided to retire. [3]

James White:

Suddenly it was one o’clock in the morning and people were actually going to bed! I rushed to find Walter to have this terrible thing explained

to me. I found Walter and Madeleine thinking about going to bed, and Ken and Pamela and Chuck and Arthur and practically everybody. Apparently it was customary to go to bed on the *first* night of a convention to have strength for the succeeding nights. Mal and I hung around to see if anyone else subscribed to this heresy and found that they did. Sorrowfully we retired to our room where we found Steve Schultheis already asleep... I use the word loosely. I took Mal on a conducted tour of the sleeping Schultheis, pointing out the cavernous cheeks, the sunken eyes and the yellow, shrunken skin. Mal was impressed. We discussed the advisability of driving a varnished chair leg through its heart but decided against it because of the likelihood of our being billed for the chair. We waited until 2:30, watching to see if Steve would breathe – either in or out, we weren't hard to please – then went to bed, breathless. [1]

Ron Bennett:

St. Paul's was beginning to toll slightly by this time, so I went to bed for a couple of hours and had a fit when I awoke to find it still dusk. Still... oh, no... 4 a.m.! I rushed downstairs to find if anyone was up and playing brag or anything and found a small group still in the lounge. Forry Ackerman was singing in a deep, quiet and melodious voice, though he came in for quite a little ribbing with the rest of the group.

Brian Aldiss, the British author who was making his first appearance at a convention, suggested that we all play asleep and immediately gave a funny and vivid impression of some neurotic character having nightmares. The waiter was momentarily startled.

Brian looks very much like Ted Tubb and has the same zany sense of humour, a real personality and one of the nicest people I actually met for the first time at the con. I note that in *The Harp Stateside*, Walt Willis laughingly apologises for calling everyone nice, and says that's the way they were. And I'll have to take a point from Walt here. So many people at the convention were grand folk.

Eventually we went to bed, with Forry's rendering of songs like "California, Here I Come" and "Sonny Boy" still ringing in our ears. [4]

Brian Aldiss:

I recall John W. Campbell striding along, grandly declaring, "Creativity is simply input surfacing as output." And Brunner scurrying beside Campbell, saying, slavering, "Exactly, exactly, just what I was thinking...."

The pratt.... [5]

[1] *Hyphen* #19 (January 1958, ed. Walt

- Willis & Chuck Harris)
- [2] *Science Fiction Parade* #6 (July 1957,
ed. Len Moffatt)
- [3] *Triode* #12 (Winter 1957/1958, ed.
Bentcliffe & Jeeves)
- [4] *Innuendo* #6 (1957/8, ed. Terry Carr)
- [5] *Relapse* #19 (Spring 2011, ed. Peter
Weston)

Saturday 7th September

1 – The Banquet

James White:

There was another fine battery of bloodshot eyes at breakfast. Mal had gone to meet his wife, Sheila, who was to join him that morning, but the Schultheis thing was still making like the undead. I ran down Walter, Madeleine, Chuck, and Arthur Thomson in the upstairs lounge and Arthur introduced me to a foully corrosive drink comprised of tonic water and Disprin which tasted like a mixture of ammonia and quinine. After a bit I left to nose about the other lounges, figuring that as I was supposed to be doing a report I ought to know what was going on.

In the lobby I was introduced to Wally Weber again. I had had this particular person introduced to me several times before, but had not yet seen what he looked like – in fact I never expected to see Weber. The first few times we had met I had tried, how I had tried, but the introducer had only got as far as “This is Wally Web–” when the Seattle fan’s flash camera would explode in a blaze of searing radiation which immediately bleached the visual purple in the eyeballs of everyone within fifty yards. Everybody had met Weber but nobody had actually seen him, so this time I automatically closed my eyes when we met and noted with grim amusement the way my eyelids turned bright pink as his flash tried vainly to blind me again. I had decided that the only defence against Weber was a white stick and black spectacles. I blundered on into the lounge.

The place was fairly crowded and I caught sight of the Silverbergs talking to someone whose broad back was towards me. I sneered a greeting and suddenly found myself confronted by the equally broad-shouldered front of no less a personage than John W. Campbell himself. I got the sneer wiped off just in time, shook hands and fought an overwhelming urge to bump my forehead three times against the floor. But our Guest of Honour turned out to be a pleasant and quite uncondescending type of person, a great amiable bear of a man whose conversation and mind processes were either stimulating or overstimulating, but never dull. I remember an incident which occurred on the last day of the convention when Mr Campbell was giving a talk on psionics. A certain femfan with a camera had been moving up and down the aisle and to and fro along lines of seats, jockeying for position to get a

good shot of him up on the stage. He must have been noticing this, although it had no effect on his delivery, for just as the girl demon photographer was about to snap her shutter he broke off to point out that she would obtain a better picture without the metal cap over her lens. The remark was delivered casually and without sarcasm, and the incident passed almost unnoticed without embarrassment to the girl.

Mr Campbell also remembered and complimented me on the one and only story I sold him, three years ago. This means that he can have three wishes, one eighth of my literary estate and my daughter's hand when she grows up, and if anyone says an unkind word about him in my presence it will mean plonkers at six paces.

I engaged in desultory shouted conversation with Mr Campbell and the Silverbergs for a few minutes – the shouting being necessary because of the background jazz music blaring from loudspeakers scattered around the place – then left to rest my ear percussion section. The only people who were chatting comfortably in the lounge were two other loud speakers, Moskowitz and Duncombe.

At 1:15 the luncheon was supposed to start, but it was considerably later than this before everyone had found his seat – so much so that there was a suggestion going round our table about the advisability of sending out for something to eat. I discovered on taking my seat that the empty space next to me was reserved for no less a person (?) than Wally Flash Weber. I shut my eyes out of sheer reflex, then thought that at last I might get to see this Weber because it was fairly likely that he could not use his flash camera while wielding a knife and fork. Then somebody nudged me and said “Weber's coming!”

Through the door of the dining hall came Weber's camera, Weber's Adam's apple and Weber himself in that order. In the flesh, what there was of it, he looked out to be a boney, blond-haired drawling thing with a devastating but economical sense of humour, tall enough to qualify for Irish Fandom. On the other side of Wally were H. Beam Piper and his wife. I asked him if he was H.B. Fyfe.... Or maybe on second thoughts I asked him if he was H. Beam Piper. Anyway, he said no. [1]

Walt Willis:

The convention programme proper began this afternoon with the banquet. There was some confused delay over the seating arrangements, which may have been a blessing in disguise since it gave many people time to recover their appetites from a late breakfast; though indeed this was unnecessary since the banquet food was quite good, the duck being definitely not the foul left over from New York. [2]

Forry Ackerman:

The banquet hall was unfortunate: about a mile long and an inch wide. By its narrow, elongated construction, a number of speakers were forced to show their backs to one third of an audience. For the first time that I can recall, banqueteers were assigned seats (by whom I know not) rather than being free to pick their own company, and I'm afraid the locations were not universally popular. Many of the Americans who had made the greatest effort and travelled the farthest distance were relegated to least desirable positions. And as for myself –! Now I love Dorothea Faulkner, in fact I think I am partly responsible for having introduced “Dotty the Demon Grandma” to fandom; but I'll be damned if I appreciate travelling 6000 miles to have lunch with someone I could in effect have lunch with any day of the week. The horrible part about making such public complaints is that I have the unhappy feeling I may be hurting the feelings of some well-intentioned individual who reasoned that the two Californians might like to sit side by side, but Rory Faulkner can not only sit next to me any old time at home but, if she wants to, on my lap. I can well imagine on the occasion of the banquet that Rory would infinitely have preferred the company of Walt Willis to Forry, or any of a dozen other “foreign” fans; while for myself, I would have far greater appreciated being seated next to virtually any non-American present. Future meal managers, please note!

En passant, I was almost the inadvertent cause of an International Incident with the Queen of England. Deliberately chosen to give the “natives” a little touch of California flair, I had elected to wear a “bolo” tie with my best shirt and suit. This was a personal production by Bjo FantaCrafts of Southern California, and featured a cluster of polished desert rocks at the usual cravat knot-point. This unusual tie was a hit elsewhere on the Continent and in New York, but at the penultimate moment before going in for lunch I was hustled aside and instructed in no uncertain terms to “get rid of that ridiculous doodad” as toasting Her Majesty was a solemn occasion and such a sartorial innovation would be considered egregious. Seems something called Teddy Boys – Britain's teddible equivalent of our teenage delinquents – currently affected similar ties. I'll never really know why my innocent little bauble should have upset the Queen so, considering all the bobbly bubbles she's seen when Marilyn Monroe, Diana Dors, Jayne Mansfield and other mammary queens have bowed low to her; but I fetched a proper tie and the show went on.

It was my pleasure and privilege to toast Absent Friends, among

whom I counted (on all our behalves) those departed Greats, Wells and Stapledon, as well as familiar Worldcon faces we were missing: Tucker, Bloch, Asimov, Boucher, et al. [3]

James White:

According to the menu, the Queen was to be proposed by Mr Wyndham and seeing the shocked look beginning to form on Wally Weber's face I reminded him quietly that the Queen was married to some friend of Chuck Harris's and that it was merely Her Health that was being proposed. Weber nodded slowly, saying "Yah, I worried..." We rose, bellowed "The Queen!" and looked round for a fireplace to hurl our glasses at. There was none, so we sat down. From somewhere a slightly awed American voice observed that this was the first time a science fiction convention banquet had opened with a serious honest-to-goodness toast to Her Majesty! [1]

Walt Willis:

After the toast to the Queen (another Worldcon first) drunk in Burgundy (imported), Arthur Clarke introduced John W. Campbell with a brilliant little speech in the serious part of which he referred to Campbell as a scientist rather than a technologist, this being, he suggested, the difference between Gernsback and him. Campbell, in his response, took him up on this, and said he thought of himself rather as a philosopher, physical science and sociology being mere facets of this field. He went on to more abstruse realms of thought where, after four hours sleep and fortified only by one cup of coffee, I am unable to follow him. However, his speech was, of course, interesting and well received.

Bob Madle followed as TAFF delegate with a few well chosen words, in the course of which he pointed out that this was really the first Worldcon. Later, Sam Moskowitz was to revive memories of the first titular World Convention in 1939, pointing out the remarkable fact that there were no less than 8 of those original attendees present, 18 years later and 3000 miles away. One difference, he pointed out to the general amusement, was that they had tried to throw out Dave Kyle, and here he was in a seat of honour.

Between these two speeches there were short informal addresses by John Brunner, Forry Ackerman, Lars Helander of Sweden, and Rainer Eisfeld of Germany. All were excellent, but Rainer Eisfeld registered a remarkable personal success, the sensation of the convention so far. This 16 year old boy, speaking in a strange language in a country he was visiting for the first time, spoke so fluently, interestingly and sincerely that

in fact he received a louder ovation than any of his predecessors, even Campbell himself. Some of the speakers had undoubtedly had more to say, but at about 4:30 Peter Daniels pointed out it was just about time for tea, so of course the session was closed. [2]

Walt Willis:

There was some delay in starting the evening session because the recipient of one of the achievement awards, John W. Campbell, had gone off to dinner with Eric Frank Russell, who had appeared later in the afternoon for his first convention for years. An auction period was substituted.

About 20 minutes later, Ted Carnell got up to make a grave announcement. The remainder of the programme had been delayed by a serious calamity; the Convention gavel had been stolen! Fortunately the affair had immediately been put in the capable hands of a famous detective agency, not the FBI, but an organisation of similar scope – The Goon Defective Agency. At this moment James White arose in the body of the hall, drawing a gun. At the other side Arthur Thomson plunged into the hall, shouting “Vile agent of Antigoon!” and a running gun battle ensued, after which White collapsed on the floor (after having dusted it with his handkerchief), and was carried out attended by Sister Ethel Lindsay, as Stephen Schultheis made a triumphant entry with the missing gavel. The whole thing took a mere two minutes but it certainly started off the Programme with a bang... or 13 of them to be exact... and is to my knowledge the first time such a purely fannish affair has figured in a Worldcon. [2]

[1] *Hyphen* #19 (January 1958, ed. Walt Willis & Chuck Harris)

[2] *Science Fiction Parade* #6 (Fall 1957, ed. Len Moffatt)

[3] *Imaginative Tales* (Vol 5 #2)

Saturday 7th September 2 – The Case of the Missing Gavel

Wally Weber:

St. Fantony is far from being the only select group in fandom. The Goon Defective Agency is not to be taken lightly, and they, too, were at the Convention in force. And, as it turned out, it was a fortunate thing they were. It was after the very first session had taken place during which the official gavel had changed hands. By sheer chance I happened to be occupying the same room with Art Thomson when Stephen Schultheis burst in to announce that the gavel had been stolen and that the GDA had been put on the case to recover it. In a moment Art Thomson disappeared from the group to discuss strategy with other members of the GDA.

The next afternoon, at the luncheon, James White asked me whether I was for the GDA or against it. Now I don't mind admitting from a distance of 6,000 miles that I am pro-Goon, and that I have been a character in a Goon story written by F.M. Busby, but you must understand that I was staying there, within easy reaching distance of White's powerful hands. Crossing my fingers, I answered, "Goon? What's that?" The tension in the atmosphere lightened and fans all the way down the table relaxed. White then informed me that he was anti-Goon. Even then, I could have made a great contribution to the GDA had I put a few simple facts together, but unfortunately all I could think about was the roast duck that never came. I sometimes feel that if the roast duck had arrived when it should have, the terrible scene that was to come about later that evening could have been avoided.

It was at the 8:30 p.m. session, during which the Achievement Awards were to be given out, that the terrible thing happened. The time for the event to start had come and passed, the audience was assembled and waiting, but no action occurred on the stage. Finally Ted Carnell appeared and regretfully announced the theft of the gavel and that the presentation of the achievement awards would have to wait, for they would have no official standing without the official gavel.

But just as he was about to leave the stage, the voice of the GDA came from the rear of the room, "Don't move! We've got you covered!"

It was James White who started out of his seat clutching a briefcase and wearing a panicky look as only a person like James White can wear. Gunfire sounded from the rear of the room and White bolted for the side exit. Schultheis suddenly appeared in it, cutting off his escape. White tried the only avenue of escape left to him – the stage exit. But he was caught in Thomson’s and Schultheis’s crossfire. In a tragic moment he expired at the feet of Ted Carnell. Triumphantlly the GDA opened White’s briefcase, handed its contents to Mr Carnell, and withdrew from the scene, taking their left-over corpse with them. [1]

James White:

Ethel Lindsay, a nurse and a very nice person who has unfortunately been led astray by John Berry, was supposed to appear, then take my pulse and temperature, and help me stagger off the scene. Instead, Unethical Lindsay was standing on a chair with a GDA badge stating that she was Stephen F. Schultheis pinned to her chest, hooting and screaming “Down with Antigoon!” And Shel Deretchin, who had no part to play whatever except lending pistols, became overcome with excitement and dashed out and began dragging me off by the feet. At this point Arthur Thomson, out of respect for my suit if not for me, grabbed my other end and lifted me clear off the ground. I didn’t think it was possible for the relatively diminutive Arthur Thomson to carry the heavy end of a fourteen stone weakling like myself, but he did it. For half an hour afterwards, however, he looked as if *he* had been shot 13 times instead of me.

The GDA-Antigoon gun battle was supposed to be a surprise item and it was. So much so that quite a lot of people in the lounge missed it. These, I found out later, had put it down to Sam Moskowitz having an attack of hiccups. [2]

[1] from Weber’s con report, as excerpted in
Prolapse #8 (August 2007, ed. Peter
Weston)

[2] *Hyphen #19* (January 1958, ed. Walt
Willis & Chuck Harris)

Saturday 7th September

3 – Music and Masquerades

James White:

John W. Campbell finally appeared and the three Achievement Awards, aka the Hugos, were awarded. These were for Best American prozine, Best British Prozine, and Best Fanzine.

A talk on a new planetarium followed [by a representative of Madame Tussaud], then an auction. I missed both because Mal and I, commissioned to write conreports, had gone out permeating again in an effort to discover something dramatic or scandalous. Everyone was enjoying himself hugely, yet somehow contrived to be well behaved. Out of sheer boredom I plucked a bloom from one of the many floral decorations and stuck it in my lapel. Carefully then I reminded Mal that I had been shot and that the James White he knew and loved was dead, but *this*, I ended triumphantly as I pushed the flower in my lapel towards him, was my reincarnation!

I left Ashworth suffering from a sudden malaise as I spotted Peter Phillips. I went up to him respectfully, steadied him, then tried the same pun on him. Mr Phillips staggered back against the wall, then he straightened up, threw back his shoulders and for the first time in my knowledge of him he went clear around the edges. He said distinctly: “My Ghod, man, you’ve shocked me sober! I hate you!” Then he grabbed for the shoulder of a passing waitress and began to sob.

An hour or so later the BBC TV unit routed a skiffle group from the back lounge as cameras and equipment began moving in. The Fancy Dress costumes were hurriedly donned and the BBC began a long series of filmed interviews. [1]

Audrey Eversfield:

I think myself that the television business was a mistake, although the Con Committee weren’t to know what long-winded types they’d be. After nearly two hours of standing in the lounge waiting for something to happen on Saturday night, we held a brief meeting at which it was proposed and seconded, thirded, fourthed... that we beat a retreat to the hall where the Merseysippi boys had also been patiently waiting for an hour or so. Consequently we had a whale of a time, but there were many others who had little opportunity to even go into the hall that night, or

anywhere else for that matter – Ruth and David Kyle being two of the most unfortunate in this respect, I believe. Apparently we did appear on both I.T.V.* and the B.B.C. I didn't happen to be anywhere near a set at the time – but even so, I shouldn't think we'll be in a hurry to let them waste so much good drinking time in future. [2]

** A 90-second ITN Archive clip appeared online in 2022. See [Appendix 4](#) for the web URL and key.*

Dave Kyle:

The BBC gave us wonderful TV coverage with renowned interviewer Alan Whicker. The costume party participants were interviewed and televised. (Some Fan Flight persons had brought their own costume materials, but I went shopping that Saturday morning at the big department store a few blocks away and purchased all kinds of penny items and hardware gadgets, using them to build costumes for Ruth and me which were surprisingly photogenic.) [3]

Wally Weber:

Costumes were fewer in number than most American conventions by virtue of the fact there were fewer people to begin with. The percentage looked about the same. And the elaborate costumes were every bit as elaborate as those at previous world cons. Frank and Belle Dietz won prizes as Denebians, Norman Weedall the Executioner also got a prize, as did Dave and Ruth Kyle (appropriately as the Honeymooners) and Marjorie Keller and John Brunner (as Krishnans). Frank and Belle had their problems with the vast quantity of grease paint they had used on their faces. It kept rubbing off on their fancy collars. Ruth Kyle was so happy at having won that it was all Dave could do to keep her feet on the floor. She could have picked up another prize as the Flying Young Lady Without A Trapeze. All the prize winners seemed to be considered equal – no first and seconds – and the prizes were not awarded until later when the committee had a chance to decide on suitable awards. Some of those in costume that got side-tracked by BBC TV didn't even get to the ball to be judged. One of these poor souls was Jean Bogert, whom we must mention now and then to keep her subscribing to the *Cry*. She was dressed (she claims) as a (I hope I have this right now) Marsupial Humanoid From The Ninth Planet of Betelgeuse. Her costume was primarily red, as you might have expected, and her pouch contained a fantastic little critter named (she claims again) Squidge. It gives me chills to think it will grow up to look like her. Jean also has a beef with the BBC employee who never did return her zap gun. [4]

Mike Moorcock:

John and Marjorie wore L. Sprague de Camp “Krishna” costumes, with antennae and green skins. I remember seeing them a week or so later and the green dye still hadn’t come out. Dedication, that. [5]

John Brunner would marry Marjorie Keller in 1958.

Walt Willis:

The results of the BBC film made the night of the masquerade ball were shown on the TV programme *Tonight* the following Monday... interviews with Rory Faulkner, Ted Carnell, the Dietzes and Kyles, John Brunner, John W. Campbell, Jean Bogert, etc. The programme was sensible and sympathetic, though humorous in a wacky, fannish way. For instance, the programme terminated with Ruth Landis Kyle pulling a zap gun on the interviewer, who disappeared through a neat piece of camera trickery. [6]

James White:

Meanwhile a band of surprising brilliance [Pete Daniels’s Merseysippi Jazz Band] had replaced the auctioneer in the hall and dancing commenced – or maybe it would be more correct to say mixed wrestling or rhythmic mayhem: that band really despatched those couples. [1]

Pete Daniels:

I don’t know how the fen liked the night’s music, but I can tell you that the band was most impressed by the audience. As you are well aware, jazz musicians are somewhat offtrail herberts themselves, and not well used to being understood, as it were. After a little while at the con, one of our lot leaned over to me and said, in tones of great wonder: “Hey, Dad, these people are just like us!” [7]

James White:

I can’t remember much after that except that I was enjoying myself. I do remember however one point where I tried to talk Bob Silverberg into strapping ourselves back-to-back and entering the masquerade part as our Ace Double. But Bob said he wanted to think it over, and as I left I saw him talking earnestly to Barbara and some members of the Committee. Later he told me it grieved him terribly, but he couldn’t do it because his wife had been picked as one of the judges and it would be unethical. I hinted that maybe the real trouble was that he had never been taught at school to walk backwards on his hands, sneered politely, and withdrew. [1]

Chuck Harris:

The fancy dress ball was already in full swing by this time. Some of the costumes were very wonderful indeed, and it must have been a hard job to judge them fairly. I think though that the Dietz's, dressed as a pair of E.T.s in red and black, complete with face make up and tendrils, well deserved their win. And, for that matter, so did the Kyles and John Brunner.

The one that impressed me most of all though was that of Paul Hammett's exquisitely beautiful wife, Joan. It wasn't stefnic – she was dressed as a typical English schoolgirl in a gym tunic and sandals and her hair in plaits – but it was so realistic that most everybody was completely fooled by it, and didn't connect this brat with the sophisticated, groomed Joan that they all know. She had every childish mannerism right down pat – even to the way she tugged excitedly at people's sleeves before speaking to them – and Paul was having a high old time going around introducing his child bride to all and quandry. I offered to babysit for him, but he wasn't having any.

Pete Daniels, of Liverpool fandom, was leading the dance band, and blows a very hot horn indeed. I haven't danced since I went deaf ten years ago, but I could feel the beat from the way the floor was vibrating and I badly wanted to try again. Arthur persuaded me that I could, and Little Sister Ethel Lindsay said she'd be glad to dance with me, so I trotted out onto the floor for the next quickstep with her. She was good and patient, and after a couple of false starts, I found my old groove again, didn't tread on Ethel and had myself a pretty big time. Afterwards, for the next ten minutes, I wandered around happily asking everyone if they'd seen me, and being reassured that they hadn't missed a single misstep. Truly, I do so enjoy being told how wonderful I am. [8]

James White:

The band packed up at 2:30 and Mari Dziechowski, Mal and I who had been listening to them from close up, went back along into the curtained-off section used as a dining room. As we trooped along the carpeted floor we noticed that already things had been set out for breakfast. Suddenly we were accosted by a night porter who told us politely but firmly not to come through this room again. He gravely gave the reason for this interdict: we were getting dust in the cornflakes.

We three despoilers of pure and innocent cornflakes slunk away, trying not to raise a cloud that would increase the poisonous dust fallout.

The small lounge, where we found ourselves next, was well filled... most of Irish Fandom, the Bulmers, Boyd Raeburn and Peter Phillips being

some of the people present. Boyd Raeburn was apparently being introduced to the local sport of snogging by Pamela Bulmer, chaperoned by her fond husband who was supplying the fog.* Peter Phillips, once more fuzzy round the edges, was eyeing the process owlshly and pulling, or at least bending Boyd's leg. There was no harm intended, of course, but Boyd's leg was not built to bend that way. I admired the way Boyd kept control of and Chuck Harris terminated what could have been an awkward incident. But immediately after this Phillips started playing a harmonica, quite brilliantly, with his left leg wrapped around his neck. Then he produced a sort of musical banister which he called a recorder and began to play that as well, and at the same time. At this point he fell off the table. After tottering to his feet he stated gravely that the discord he had just produced had been due to the harmonica and the recorder having been in different keys: then he reeled away, bumping the doorway on both sides as he left.

* A reference to the joke "Snog in the Fog" convention slogan.

It is impossible to describe or to dislike Peter Phillips...!

Some heretics among those present began suggesting that we go to bed. Mal and I left for a patrol of the other lounges in an attempt to find something reportable for our promised conreports. The BBC and the masqueraders were still occupying one lounge; another skiffle group had started in another, the ensemble including guitarists Dan Morgan and John (Hynam) Kippax. In the lobby John W. Campbell was deep in apparently philosophical discussion with Rainer Eisfeld and another German fan who seemed to know no English. Rainer was translating both ways and the result was sheer Marx Brothers. In another lounge a group contained such people as Forry, the Dietzes, Bert Campbell, Steve Schultheis and Bob Madle. At the moment they seemed to be discussing cars. We left and came back full circle to the small lounge, where Walter was alone in front of a typer doing an airlettered report for Len Moffatt. We discussed the discovery by Chuck Harris and Walter of the fabulous Ray Nelson, who had been at the convention for two days without anyone recognising him, then Madeleine lugged Walter off to bed.

The BBC men had now spent several hours collecting material for what could be no more than a five minute spot on their *Tonight* programme, and they were still at it. The skiffle group had exhausted themselves and gone, but there was a huddle of fans around the Ackerman-Dietz-Madle group in the corner of the large lounge, and George ATW Charters was benevolently overseeing a poker game between Ron Bennett,

a very nice girl whose name I didn't get who was Ted Carnell's secretary at Nova, Peter Phillips, and some nameless others. Somehow, Mal and I found ourselves in a party containing the Silverbergs, Arthur Thomson, Ellis Mills and at some distance Wally Weber. I remember at one point a curious Tower of Babel effect overtaking us. Arthur suddenly began speaking alternate sentences with a Cockney and a broad Scottish accent, Ellis's and Wally's voices were definitely doing peculiar things, I was breaking into Wally's Western drawl, and Bob Silverberg was speaking pure North Irish. I'm sure this was the first time anything like this happened, probably because there has never been a convention like this before. I could see the light of madness beginning to grow in Barbara Silverberg's eyes as she protested wildly, "Bob, stop it! You're putting question marks everywhere, like *him*! You're beginning to lilt...!"

A couple of hours later, the Silverbergs, after nearly falling on their faces a couple of times, dragged themselves off to their room. I was beginning to feel tired, so was Mal, but nothing could have got us away from that convention or those people. Weber was not technically a member of this group, because he insisted on sitting three yards away from the rest of us so that he could pretend not to be with us when the level of punning got too low. He also kept reminding Mal and me of how nice it would feel to lie down in a lovely soft bed, the fiend. To counteract this, I suggested to Mal that we go up to our room and dunk our heads in the wash-basin. This we did, and as we were leaving we paused at the door and looked back at our beds lying there so seductively and smugly. We snapped our fingers at them and *sneered*. They wilted, visibly.

It was at this moment that we felt history was being made, that what we had done was no empty gesture but an actual weapon of war. After a sneer like that, why, going to bed would be like fraternising with the enemy. It had been at that moment that the art and science of Psneeronics came into being, the foundation of an entire new field of knowledge. But just then we were too tired to foresee this: proudly and kind of humbly we returned to the lounge.

George Charters, who had booked into a hotel 3 miles away so that he could be sure of getting his sleep, was still perched benignly on a table watching an extremely fuzzy Peter Phillips taking his cautious and sober fellow players to the cleaners. About this time, roughly 6am, the BBC technicians began to evacuate the hotel. Friendly jeers followed them and somebody shouted "Yah, weaklings!" Someone pulled the curtain aside to see them off, and daylight was revealed outside. A tired, ragged but triumphant cheer went up: we had done it! [1]

- [1] *Hyphen* #19 (January 1958, ed. Walt Willis & Chuck Harris)
- [2] *Triode* #14 (July 1958, ed. Jeeves & Bentcliffe)
- [3] *Mimosa* #30 (August 2003, ed. Rich & Nicki Lynch)
- [4] *Cry* #108 (October 1957, ed. Wally Weber and others)
- [5] *Prolapse* #8 (August 2007, ed. Peter Weston)
- [6] *Science Fiction Parade* #6 (Fall 1957, ed. Len Moffatt)
- [7] *Ploy* #11 (March 1958, ed. Ron Bennett)
- [8] *Lonconfidential* (December 1957, ed. Chuck Harris)

Sunday 8th September

1 – Booze, Breakfast, and Saint Fantony

James White:

At 6:45 a.m., the card game broke up. Peter Phillips staggered off to bed and George Charters, with gentle olde worlde charm, stated his intention of walking back to his hotel, adding that as he had paid for bed and breakfast he considered it his bounden duty to go back and muss up the bread. George does not usually get his words mixed up, this was the latest he had been up since the time he gave his mother trouble with his teeth. Somebody found a trumpet and let go a couple of hideous blasts on it. The sleepers on chairs, table, and floor jerked feebly at the call of this pseudo-Gabriel, woke and went to bed. Then the manager appeared with a polite and reasonable request for the trumpet-playing to cease on account of the earliness of the hour, the people sleeping in the next hotel, and the obvious lack of ability of the player. I asked if it would be possible to obtain sandwiches and the manager said no, but that breakfast would be served in an hour. There was an immediate movement towards the dining room, but the door was locked and through its glass panels we could see the rows of tables laid for breakfast. The cornflakes seemed to mock us.

The sun was shining brightly through the big windows on the wan, bristly and red-eyed faces of the dozen or so diehards who had not gone to bed. I saw Arthur and Mal staring at me and I found myself staring back at them, and we came to identical conclusions simultaneously – we must look as horrible and haggard-looking as the others! We decided to have a wash and shave before breakfast despite it meaning the loss of our places in the queue.

We went to Arthur and Chuck's room. Arthur, who had a devil in him since about 3 am, immediately shook Chuck awake and told him the time. Chuck misunderstood, bounced out of bed and began dressing madly, shouting "Eleven o'clock! Eleven o'clock! I've missed breakfast *again*...!" When Arthur explained that it was only seven we had to rescue him and take him to our room. While Mal and I freshened up. Arthur, who had never seen a Schultheis asleep before, was completely fascinated. He disappeared suddenly to his own room and returned with Chuck and a

lemonade bottle full of vodka and lime juice. Apparently he wanted to hold a wake. [1]

Rory Faulkner:

At 10 o'clock breakfast drew out a few hardy souls, being as how it was a free meal, but the larger part of fandom emulated the invisible nine-tenths of an iceberg, being completely submerged in a sort of foggy, unravelled condition that rendered them unfit for human consumption for several hours. At the table it was generally agreed that if you found yourself unable to look a fried egg in the face, there was still hope for you, but if the egg covered its eye and refused to look at you, it was time to call the dead wagon.

The so-called morning quiet period was really almost quiet in these fannish halls, as a rare celestial phenomenon had appeared in the sky over London, and there was a general exodus to the front sidewalk. It was the sun! The Americans stood about shivering, trying to find a little warmth in the feeble rays, while the hardy British beat their chests and inhaled deeply of the fresh London air.

Sam Moskowitz was holding one group completely enthralled by his descriptions of the life and habits and degree of desirability of the prostitutes who throng Bayswater Road. His scholarly research had uncovered the fact that there was a state of extreme dissatisfaction existing among these ladies who were very irate over some new government measure designed to curtail their activities.

Someone spotted a lone American G.I. watching from an upper balcony of the flea bag across the street, and after a few smoke signals of mutual recognition were exchanged, he came over to see what was up. Being a reader of science fiction, although not a fan, he was quite interested, and as an added attraction, the great John W. Campbell descended from a taxi at just that time, impressing our young compatriot no end. He later turned up at a few of the festivities, and I made him promise to spread the word about South Gate in '58 when he went back to his post in Germany.

A few more haggard faces graced the dining room at lunch, expecting to nurse their hangovers in peace and quiet, but some uncouth clot in the next room started a tape recording of a "skiffle" group, at about 100 decibels, and the wails of anguish and clapping of hands to the head sent Bobbie Wild out on an errand of mercy. I guess she did something drastic – took the fire axe to the recorder or shot the operator, presumably – but peace broke out once more.

In the afternoon this lowly fan was given another dose of the red-

carpet treatment which I have been receiving every day. With other initiates I was dubbed Lady of the Order of St. Fantony, in an elaborate ceremony staged by the Cheltenham Circle, in full medieval costumes, with real swords, armour, etc. Those who received this signal honour were Walt Willis, Bob Silverberg, Terry Jeeves, Bobbie Wild, Eric Bentcliffe, Ken Slater, Bob Madle, Franklin Dietz and Ellis Mills [also Boyd Raeburn]. We were given the test of the true fan, under threat of the executioner's axe – a real one – if we failed. It was to drink a glass of water from the well of St Fantony. It looked like water, smelled like water, and Roberta Wild threatened to sue the s.b.s if they were making her drink water, but it turned out to be 140 proof white Polish liquor. I couldn't let American grandmotherhood down, so I shut my eyes, and swallowed all three ounces, but the rest of the programme passed in a sort of a mist. [2]

Forry Ackerman:

A hi-lite of the Londoncon, by my lights, was The Ceremony of St Fantony. This was pomp and pageantry of a high order, done up in fine British fettle, and it was only because of the cramped quarters available for the performance that it has to be termed anything less than DeMillean, let us say a “shrinking fan's” Cecil B. DeMille production. A small-scale triumph of a large-scale enterprise, the Ceremony extrapolated knighthood and heraldry into the Space Age, and the rich and lavish costumes were a sight to behold and the solemnly proclaimed encrollments a sound to be heard. All hail the Cheltenham Science Fiction Circle and Knight Grand Master Eric Jones and Knight Armourer Robert Richardson. [3]

Dave Kyle (1991):

According to A History and Structure of “The Most Noble and Illustrious Order of Saint Fantony” by Stanley Nuttall and Keith Freeman, “... the main aim is to have fun.” Ceremonies and initiations, though lighthearted, are treated with dignity. However, behind the playfulness lies a number of serious purposes. The Order exists to help one another, if need be, as in any other Order. In fandom, The Order is pledged to offer its services at science fiction conventions – and is “... willing to bring groups together and new fans into the fold.” Membership is based on two factors, social compatibility and demonstrated interest in fannish activities. Beyond the “fun” itself, The Order attempts to institute or encourage projects in fandom and to make or proclaim awards for “... the recognition of convivial fans who have done good works but are not necessarily eligible for TAFF, DUFF, and the like.” The Order wants “... to consider the little-known fan who works hard behind the scenes; may not have his

or her name on a fanzine, perhaps merely helps in collating it; may not run the club or convention, merely helps it to be a success.” This is precisely the basis for the Big Heart Award, given annually at World Science Fiction Conventions by its originator and trustee, Sir Forrest J Ackerman. (Oh, by the way, let’s not forget – The Order used to love to have a party for itself and its friends. It’s been a long time, now, since the trumpets have sounded for a reunion.)

I queried Sir Stan Nuttall of Liverpool when I first started writing this article. Part of what he had to say follows:

It all started as a spoof thing we did in Liverpool when we were still Liverpool S.F. Society (LaSFaS) around ’56. We did a fake medieval ceremony – direct from Danny Kaye’s *The Court Jester* – with lots of “Yea, verily, yea” in it and decided the highest honour we could bestow on anyone was to be an ex-Chairman of LaSFaS without the rigours of being one* on the first Chairman of the Cheltenham Group. We had a party up here in the clubrooms and invited people from all over, and the first two to be made ex-Chairmen were Eric Bentcliffe and Eric Jones, the Chairman of the Cheltenham Group. (I’m sure you were one as well, David.) So it was this that sparked off Eric Jones to do something in return, and he and Bob Richardson cooked up “St. Fantony”.

** Preceding by many years the similar honour of becoming Past President of fwa (Fan Writers of America), founded by Ted White in 1984.*

Not surprisingly, the first knights were our lot, as we were invited down to Cheltenham (early in ’57, I think) for the first ceremony. We think they also did one at the Eastercon in ’57 which went down well, and then again at the Worldcon in London in ’57. Most of the Americans, we think, were done in Heidelberg in ’70 and some later in Salzburg. Norman [Shorrock] found the Eastercon ’71 programme booklet for Worcester, and there is a mention by Keith [Freeman] about St. Fantony (there was also a ceremony then) wherein he states that the purpose was to recognise fans who had done good works and were convivial, but wouldn’t necessarily be eligible for TAFF (the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund). Also he says, new fans were encouraged to look for the S/F badges, as they were worn to help make introductions...

Blazon was the official organ [a sporadic fanzine]. I don’t know how many were produced. Norman says the first issue was high quality, but the next wasn’t... There were various criticisms that it was all too serious. Well, of course, the ceremony was played with a straight face – it has to be

– but otherwise no one took it seriously. Also, some thought it was forming an elite grouping within fandom. Others thought it should have a much broader base, which would have lost its purpose... The main officers in the early days were Eric Jones (Grand Master) and Bob Richardson (Armourer). With Bob dying in the early '60s and Eric circa '66, a lot of heart went out of it. There were the special get togethers at the George Hotel, Kettering, for members and spouses/girl friends. There were two or three around '67-'70... It tended to die out in the early '70s – a revival later never got off the ground. [4]

[1] *Hyphen* #19 (January 1958, ed. Walt Willis & Chuck Harris)

[2] *Science Fiction Parade* #6 (Fall 1957, ed. Len Moffatt)

[3] *Imaginative Tales* (Vol 5 #2)

[4] *Mimosa* #11 (1991, ed. Rich & Nicki Lynch)

Sunday 8th September

2 – Tea

It seems bizarre now, but tea-drinking contests were a feature of UK conventions in the late 1950s and early 1960s, so it wasn't strange for one to be included as a programme item. On the day the contest was cancelled, but how seriously these were taken can be seen from the "rules" printed in the Programme Book:

1. The following rules pertain to the Tea Drinking Contest to be held at the 15th World Science Fiction Convention on Sunday, 8th September 1957, and hereinafter called the "Contest".
2. The Contest shall be open to members of the above mentioned Convention only.
3. The object of the Contest is to retain internally the maximum quantity of tea, subject to Rules 8, 9 & 10 below.
4. The prepared beverage shall be of a brand or make selected by the Judges and shall be prepared in a manner acceptable to them.
5. The tea shall be served at a temperature of 75 degrees Centigrade plus or minus 5 degrees.
6. The tea shall be consumed from standard measures which will be selected by the Official Measurers from crockery in normal use at the Convention Hotel. These measures will be of "breakfast cup" size (approx. one third Imperial Pint or six and two thirds fluid ounces).
7. Each contestant will be supplied with six standard measures of tea at the start of the Contest. When these have been consumed it will then become the responsibility of each contestant to call for further supplies as required. After the first six measures are disposed of, tea will only be supplied to each individual contestant in single measures.
8. No limit shall be imposed upon the duration of the Contest, but any contestant failing to consume 10 standard measures in the first hour of the contest shall be disqualified.
9. The winner of the Contest shall be that contestant who consumes the greatest quantity of tea before quitting the contest table.
10. In the event of a tie, elapsed time shall be taken into account.
11. Any tea spilled, wasted or otherwise called-for and not consumed by any contestant shall not count towards that contestant's score. The estimation of such quantities shall be at the sole discretion of the Judges.

12. Each standard measure shall be filled to within ¼" of the brim. The whole of the contents of each measure shall be consumed and the tea will be poured through strainers to ensure that the measures include no objectionable dregs.

13. Sugar will be provided at the contest table and may be added to the tea by the contestants to suit individual tastes.

14. The organisers of the Contest will provide tea without milk and tea ready-milked at the standard temperature and all contestants will be required to indicate their preferences prior to the commencement of the Contest in order that adequate quantities of each may be made available.

15. The addition to the tea of any matter other than the sugar provided at the contest table is expressly forbidden. This particularly applies to salt or any form of alcoholic beverage. Any effort to cool the tea by means other than blowing with the mouth or fanning with hat or handkerchief is forbidden.

16. For the duration of the Contest no contestant may consume any form of nourishment other than that which forms the subject of the Contest. For the purposes of these Rules chewing-gum and similar items are regarded as nourishment. Smoking shall be permitted.

17. Any diversionary tactics on the part of a contestant or his adherents other than heckling shall, at the discretion of the Judges, result in the disqualification of that contestant. This particularly applies to actions of a physical nature such as spillage of an opponent's tea or attempts to remove the contest table to a location other than that laid down by the organisers. Talking of a conversational nature and reasonable verbal encouragement by spectators shall be permitted.

18. Any appeals, protests, disputes or complaints from contestants shall be addressed to the Judges who shall settle such matters by reference to the Rules. The interpretation of the Rules shall be solely at the Judges' discretion, and in the eventuality of a situation arising which is not already covered by the Rules the matter shall be settled by majority decision among the Judges.

19. The Judges, Scrutineers, and Official Measurers shall be appointed by the Convention Programme Committee and at least one member of that Committee shall be present upon the panel of Judges.

20. In all matters concerning the Contest the decision of the Judges will be final.

21. Any entry for the Contest shall be deemed an acknowledgement and acceptance of these Rules.

Sunday 8th September

3 – Into the Night

Chuck Harris:

[The St Fantony ceremony] was followed by some fine fannish films made by the Liverpool and Cheltenham groups – including the candid camera one made at the last Kettering Con.

When I saw some of the situations which had been filmed without the participants being aware of it, I was rather relieved that I hadn't been present myself. I'd hate to be caught like Shirley Marriott, for instance – shown helplessly drunk on the floor, beaming vacuously whilst somebody near drowns her with a soda syphon. On the other hand, I would have loved to have held the camera, my breath, the crowd back, anything, whilst they filmed Ina Shorrock in her bath. This, brother, was stupendous, terrific, colossal, and in glorious Technicolor too. Ina is a dish at any time, but clad in nothing but a little LUX lather she's enough to make strong men scream, and even George Charters and the rest of the Oldest Guard lean forward and quietly bite chunks out of the seats in front. I tried to ask Norman Shorrock afterwards what happened to the pieces he must have clipped from the film before showing, but he was vague, non-committal, and not interested in trading for a mint set of *Galaxy*. [1]

Rory Faulkner:

Adventures in Hypnotism, which followed, was rather anti-climatic. In effect, Harry Powers, a semi-pro hypnotist, put a group of six under his spell, including the perfect subject for such monkey-shines, Jean Bogert, the perennial convention girl and America's answer to Norman Wansborough. (This may be explained later, in case it is necessary.) However, finding myself passing into a sympathetic coma, I hastily beat it from there, and so missed most of it. What I saw was not unduly exciting, anyway, I have had a bigger kick out of watching Dr. Lee Grable hypnotise his opponent in the Olympic wrestling ring, and then knock hell out of him!

To sup at a restaurant in Queen's St, with the Irish Group, where we dined on fish and chips and merry quips. I hear that Chuck Harris is doing an "Inside" story of the Con, on the order of *Confidential*, which I hope reaches America. Need I say more? [2]

James White:

George and I went out for tea and met Mr and Mrs Harry Harrison. Harry, who wrote “Rock Diver”, looks as if he might have come from a long line of German generals and his voice is strictly from broken glass, but he is one of the nicest people I’ve met. His wife is a small, delicately beautiful woman who to my mind fits exactly the expression “a perfect doll”. They have a 3-year-old little boy, well-mannered and by American movie standards atypical, who was with them at the Convention. We talked mostly about men’s fashions and the IRA.

Arthur had to start work in the morning and was taking leave of us – Mal, Sheila, Steve and I, that was. He had brought the vodka and lime juice to give to us, stating that he was afraid Chuck might run amok on it. Mal immediately started pouring out farewell drinks into tooth glasses, and had two half-tumblers filled before we could convince him that we weren’t drinking that stuff. When even Sheila declined he knocked back both shots himself, stating that he didn’t want to throw it away in case it ate a hole in the sewer pipes. Arthur left and we went down to see the film, *Wonderbird*. [3]

Rory Faulkner:

That wonderful fantasy film from this side, *The Wonderbird*, was the feature of the evening. It is perfectly enchanting, being a sort of cross between Walt Disney and Charles Adams, with incredible vistas, endless stairs, and magically impossible characters. I have never seen a colour cartoon to equal it. [2]

Sid Birchby:

Eric Frank Russell and his wife Eileen enjoyed themselves too: it had taken twenty years to get him to a convention – his last had been Leeds, 1937 – but once there he seemed to be liking it. At 10pm on Sunday they left the hotel to go to their rooms at Piccadilly, several miles away. By 11:15 they were back for supper. Finally, well after midnight I escorted them to the Bayswater Road where, under the light of a beaming full moon, they set out to walk home, just for the joy of it. [4]

Rory Faulkner:

Since the auction which followed had to wait until 12 to get started, I did not attend this second session, but joined an invitational room party given by Ellis Mills – the usual type; liquor, small room, smoke, mild snogging, etc. A guitar appeared at some time, and we had a British rendition of all the American blues songs, folk songs, and jazz, mingled with songs from Australia, and all areas of the British Isles – a wonderful

education in international music! At 2:00 a.m. a few protests moved the gang to another room, and when I left at three they were still going strong. [2]

Arthur Thomson:

Ellis Mills threw a room party, originally intended for OMPA members, but by the time it got going most people at the con had drifted in at one time or another. Ellis had gotten hold of a plentiful supply of canned beer and several bottles of whiskey, all from the PX, I believe. Of course there were other room parties too, which accounts for the lack of conventioners around on the following morning. [5]

James White:

It had been a very successful party until things had got out of hand and we all assured Ellis of that. The main thing I remember from it was Mal and I and Silverberg demonstrating the art of the duello using the Psneer weapon: we made the momentous discovery that (a) the only defence against the psneer was to cross one's eyes and (b) the only person present who could psneer with his eyes crossed was Silverberg. Also at that party an intelligent discerning young American called Whyte – with a “y” – asked for my autograph and called me Sir. I became suddenly aware of my three brownish-grey hairs, but it was nice egoboo even so.

Later in the lounge we found ourselves in a group composed of Ethel Lindsay, Walter, Madeleine, Ellis Mills and a few hazy other people. We were carrying ourselves with the conscious superiority of persons who have shunned sleep for some 40 hours or more. We psneered a little, practising our technique. At this point Wally Weber arrived complete with camera and asked what we were doing. We told him it was a new and subtle weapon we were developing for beds and things, and he said he would like to photograph it. We psneered at full strength, in unison, into his flash.

Wally collapsed in a heap on the floor. Struggling weakly to his feet he held the camera to his ear and shook it gently. “Subtle?” Rattle, rattle. “Subtle. Hah hah.” It was about this time that the others took an interest in the sneer as a weapon and began to suggest developments; the long-range sneer, the shot-gun sneer, the delayed-action sneer, the Intercontinental Ballistic Sneer, the International Standard Sneer, preserved in perspex at the Smithsonian Institute and so on. The lowly sneer became the Psneer and the science of Psneerotics came into being. We explained it all to Bob Silverberg later and he solemnly avowed his intention of selling it to Campbell. [3]

- [1] *Lonconfidential* (December 1957, ed.
Chuck Harris)
- [2] *Science Fiction Parade* #6 (Fall 1957,
ed. Len Moffatt)
- [3] *Hyphen* #19 (January 1958, ed. Walt
Willis & Chuck Harris)
- [4] *Ploy* #11 (March 1958, ed. Ron Bennett)
- [5] *Science Fiction Parade* #7 (October
1957, ed. Len Moffatt)

Monday 9th September

1 – Drunk They Were and Bleary-Eyed

James White:

Round about 4am on Monday morning I began to feel definitely tired. I could tell because of the way I kept missing words – whole sentences sometimes – out of the conversation. By increasing the frequency with which my eyelids thudded shut, and by the greater feats of physical strength necessary to get them open again.

Except for Arthur Thomson it was the same group who had talked through the previous night and morning, though I think Mal said we were the only ones who had not been to sleep since Friday night. It was Wally Weber and Ellis Mills who, with 45 minutes and 2 hours sleep under their belts respectively and thus bright-eyed and alert, were making with the sparkling conversation, Mal and I being content merely to nod now and then. Fortunately we managed to stiffen up again before our faces hit the table. I tried everything to stay awake, even going as far as mixing a double Tonic and Disprin. A couple of times Mal and I dragged ourselves up to our room to sneer at the beds, but we stopped doing it about 4:30 because the beds were beginning to sneer back. Schultheis was snugly dead in bed again.

Round about 5 o'clock, so the bleary-eyed witnesses tell us, Messrs Ashworth and White were really having it tough. Apparently Mal would collapse forward and I would nudge him awake, then I would succumb and he would do the same for me... rather like those little Swiss figures that bow in and out of fancy barometers, Mal just couldn't go to bed because he had to catch a bus at 8am and he knew that if he once went to bed nothing or nobody would shift him out of it. I merely wanted to see another dawn breaking, which proves what a poetic soul I've got.

At a quarter to six, they say, I was walking up and down the lounge, obviously with the idea that it was easier to pretend to be awake while moving. At ten to six I was observed to pull aside the window drapes to reveal a sky which was still dark – but a decided grey. I went upstairs.

I'm told that a few minutes later Mal rolled out of his chair into a heap on the floor. Somebody pinned a notice to him reading "FAKEFAN"

and left word at the desk to wake him up for his bus.

I awoke four hours later with a note from Mal pinned to my chest denouncing me for having taken the room key to bed with me so that he had had to go to all sorts of trouble to break in. He added some stuff about how nice it was meeting me and the other members of Irish Fandom, and maybe at Kettering next year.... [1]

Arthur Thomson:

A few hardy souls were still on their feet after the dawn, but from the glazed look in their eyes they might just as well have been in bed. Several had not even seen their beds since the con started and they looked a little like the proverbial zombies. They walked and they talked, but both actions were disjointed and somewhat sluggish. Around nine and ten o'clock, people who had grabbed a few hours sleep started appearing. By eleven most people who were still at the con had come down from their rooms. Quite a few had booked out on Sunday, mostly British fans who had to be at work on Monday. [2]

Chuck Harris:

On Sunday night I came home to sleep, but I was back at the hotel in time to talk with Walt, Madeleine, and the insomniac Weber whilst they had breakfast. Dave Newman came past our table sporting only one half of the luxuriant moustache with which he'd started the convention. We looked at him blearily but sympathetically. "Tough luck, bhoy," I said. "These bloody souvenir-hunting Americans will whip anything that isn't nailed down."

Along with 21 other early risers we managed to make the Business Session at 11:00. The first item was the election of two new directors to the WSFS – the organisation which runs the World Conventions. Belle Dietz and Arthur Kingsley (N.Y.) had already been nominated, and Bob Madle then nominated Dave Newman. Belle, of course, was a stone-cold certainty, but I was surprised when Dave was elected to the other vacancy rather than Kingsley. As Joy Clarke pointed out, Dave, living in England, could never be much more than a figurehead, and she was agin the proposal. So was I, but he was still elected by one vote.

In a way, the Big Thing of the Business Session was a bit of an anti-climax. We'd gone there determined to make it South Gate in '58 or die in the attempt, but it turned out that everyone else had the same idea. South Gate was the only site proposed, and voting for it was just a formality. It was fun though to see every hand in the hall thrust up for it, and all the heads turning round to see if anyone had the temerity to dare make it

anything but unanimous. And – even though I shall never go – to scamper down the passage afterwards to try to be first to register Convention membership for next year. (We weren't first – but at least we tried to be.) [3]

Walt Willis:

A sense of destiny seemed to pervade the air as the great moment drew nearer. Chairman Ted Carnell announced that there was only one bid but that as a matter of form brief nominating and seconding speeches would be made. Those were made briefly and eloquently by Forry Ackerman and Rory Faulkner, and the Chairman called on those in favour to raise their hands. Everywhere hands shot into the air with an audible whoosh. There was no need to ask for contrary votes – it was obvious that everyone had at least one hand up, many had two, and I thought I saw someone with three...

As I felt, and other fans said to me afterwards, it was a great and moving experience to sit in a convention hall and actually vote for South Gate in '58 – awe-inspiring, as if one were living in a legend. It seemed somehow wonderfully fitting that after all these years and 6000 miles away, it should be here in London that the dream of South Gate should come to life, because London is a city of tradition and South Gate is very much a matter of tradition, as hallowed in the history of fandom as any in that of the mundane world.

Arthur Thomson drew a cartoon of congratulations for the South Gate team, which over 60 of those at the convention signed: "To Rick Sneary and the South Gate Crew with all best wishes from London 1957."

The afternoon sessions began with a sf quiz panel in which Forry Ackerman, Bob Madle and Sam Moskowitz fought for supremacy as foremost expert on the lore of sf and fandom. The standard of answers was evidence of either superhuman powers of recall or of prior collusion, but it was fine entertainment and enlivened by several witty asides, principally from Forry. [2]

Chuck Harris:

After lunch, 4e, SaM, and Bob Madle put on a little quiz show of their own. It was a three-cornered contest with each of them out for blood, and deliberately making the questions as hard as they could think up. Truly, it staggered me at the way they did find the answers, but it would be unworthy to suggest that it was cooked up beforehand. Anyway, cooked or

not, I don't think I shall ever forget Forry rattling off the titles and dates of all the *Frankenstein* films in sequence, or SaM, carefully and methodically, giving title and place of publication of every Weinbaum story ever written... and, after about six minutes, getting down to those that were published in fanzines. [3]

Forry Ackerman:

Sam Moskowitz, Bob Madle and myself, who for years at Cons have been playing the private game of Stomp the Experts (trying to stomp each other out of existence with brain-burning questions) volunteered to come out in the open and try to short-circuit each other's cerebrums. Publicly posed were such killer questions as "What was the middle name of Epaminondas T. Snooks?" (and, "Alright, but how do you spell Thucydides?"); "Name every story Stanley Grauman Weinbaum ever had published in the sci-fi field"; "Name the first 10 SF mags in the chronological order of their issuance"; "Name all the *Frankenstein* films!"; and similar kindergartenishly simple queries. Each of us stubbed our toes (or tentacles) once. [4]

Chuck Harris:

It finished as a draw, 9-9-9 points each, and I'd love to be around if they ever hold a return match. [3]

Walt Willis:

Sam Moskowitz delivered a remarkable speech summarising the results of a professional market survey of sf readers, one of the most startling conclusions of which was that the field is in effect supported by a hard core of a few thousand multiple buyers of magazines – i.e., fans. According to the statistics 9.8% buy 32 of all copies sold: if these reduced their purchasing to the average only five magazines could continue to exist. It was unfortunate that John W. Campbell was called out of the hall during this speech for a press interview, because many people felt he would have felt bound to deal with these disclosures instead of psionics. As it was however, the psionics session went on as scheduled and lasted for several interesting hours. One of the questioners and subsequent speakers from the floor of the hall was Eric Frank Russell, who made an unexpected and welcome visit to the convention, the first he had attended for many years. [2]

Chuck Harris:

Campbell's talk on psionics I couldn't stay for. My Convention was over and I had to go home. I collected my bag, said my few goodbyes and

left the hotel for the last time. I was dog-tired, I still had my cold, and I'd spent far more than I'd intended, but it was worth it. It was my first world con and I'd enjoyed all of it. I'd met people who had been nothing but names to me before, and I'd made new friends. As I said to Forry before I left, "It was a bloody pleasure, mate."

And it was. [3]

Bob Madle:

Sam and I had intended to look over Ken Slater's enormous book display which was located on the landing between the first and second floors of the hotel. This appeared to be a likely time to do it – as Ken was just about ready to pack up and call it a convention. While Sam pawed through the musty old tomes, I struck up a conversation with a couple of gentlemen who, in turn, mentioned that they enjoyed very much the questions and answers, as they were SF readers from the year one. Their names are John Briston and Mr. Wren (his first name eludes me). Their knowledge of SF amazed me and I asked them if they would care to join us in dinner and continue the conversation. Wren had previous plans, but Briston, a local Londonite, accepted and we had a good old gabfest on current SF as contrasted with Gernsbackian stuff. Forry Ackerman and his charming companion, Mary Dziechowski, joined us at the restaurant and added much to the conversation.

Sometime after I returned to the States I was quite pleased to receive a letter from John Briston, who expressed surprise that Sam and I, who were very well-known to him, should spend so much time with someone who had never attended a convention before and who, in fact, had never even had a letter in a lettercolumn. John didn't realise that both Sam and I are continuously looking for John's type: the general reader who has an intensive interest in SF, yet never entered fandom. In fact, we agree that entering fandom is a rare freak of chance, and there are thousands of genuinely interested readers of SF, all of whom are potential fans. Many of these potential fans send for fan magazines upon seeing them reviewed in prozines. And it is necessary that something in the fanzine they send for pertain to the field they know and love – science fiction. Otherwise they go back to their reading and collecting lost to fandom forever. [5]

[1] *Hyphen* #19 (January 1958, ed. Walt Willis & Chuck Harris)

[2] *Science Fiction Parade* #7 (October 1957, ed. Len Moffatt)

[3] *Lonconfidential* (December 1957, ed.

- Chuck Harris)
[4] *Imaginative Tales* (Vol 5 #2)
[5] *A Fakefan in London* (1958, ed. Bob
Madle)

Monday 9th September

2 – All Good Things...

James White:

Through the business session that morning, the question panel and the psionics talk – handled interestingly by John W. Campbell with occasional witty interjections by the redoubtable Eric Frank Russell – there was a feeling of breaking up. People had left and were leaving constantly. It was a sorry time. Some people were different, of course. Arthur Thomson had found that the convention had made him unfit for work and had rejoined the proceedings early on Monday morning. [1]

Walt Willis:

As the end grew nearer the convention seemed to get better and better, for during the evening Ted Tubb took over the auction. He had been scheduled to auctioneer previously but had been unable to attend because of domestic difficulties and many people had been very disappointed, especially those British fans who, like me, had lauded Ted as one of the major attractions of an English Convention. However, he made a last minute appearance and at once struck his highest form. Word went round the lounges like a bush telegram and the Convention Hall filled rapidly. The inspired Tubb... so inspired that he frequently went on selling items after they had been bought and had to be assisted by Ken Slater to deal with the actual crude commercial side of the auction... was hastily recorded on tape, some of the official business being erased to make room. [2]

Michael Moorcock:

Ted Tubb looked his usual dashing self. I learned all I knew about auctioneering from Ted... and selling “Adana” printing machines, for that matter. He worked just around the corner from me when I was doing *Tarzan Adventures*. I was in Brook Street and he was in Grays Inn Road. I used to drop in and listen to him selling machines. I once invented a whole district of London by “stretching” the area between GIR and Hatton Garden and popping it in there as Brookgate. The really funny thing was that some who read the book in question (*King of the City*) then spoke of “Brookgate” as if they’d known it all their lives. [3]

James White:

At about 7pm the Bulmers, the Willises and myself left the hotel to visit Brockham House, Arthur and Olive having invited us there for supper. We had a very good time, but as I found myself nodding constantly when I forgot to keep pinching myself, I pleaded fatigue and left, planning to be back at the hotel in bed about 11:30.

Hah! Frank and Belle Dietz had invited me to their party and I thought it only polite to tell them I was sorry I couldn't go. But to apologise I had to join the party, and after I'd done that I found I most definitely did not want to leave again. There were some films of American conventions shown, then Ted Carnell's movies taken while he was over there last year. He also showed an unfinished travel-type film he was working on featuring the sights of London, which displayed a photographing and film editing ability which shook me. [1]

Arthur Thomson:

The parties started up again that evening in the various rooms. Frank and Belle Dietz threw one, which for a time crowded out one of the downstairs lounges. It finally broke up late – or early, the next morning, depending on how long one had stayed the course, and degenerated into small individual room get-togethers of two or three persons and a couple of bottles. Towards dawn a sort of awed hush descended on the Kings Court Hotel as we realised the 15th World Science Fiction Convention was over. [2]

James White:

After all my good resolutions it was 4:30 when I went to my room. Steve Schultheis, who had also been at the party, was just going to sleep. I kept him half awake until 5:30 telling me what had happened during my absence at the Thomson's. I must have been very tired because I can't read my notes now, but apparently a lot of people said nice things about the Committee, there was a little presentation to Frank and Belle Dietz, and Harry Harrison appeared with some sort of petition involving the payment of Dave and Ruth Kyle's fare home as a wedding present. Ted Tubb conducted his one and only auction of the Convention, I'm really sorry I missed that.

On second thought I'm not sure that the Convention did end on Monday night. The time Wally Weber and I lost ourselves in Oxford Circus station and searched in vain for Hither Green (a surface station) in the Underground system, even going so far as to try to buy a ticket there, was of a piece with the happenings at the Con. When we returned from the Bulmers' that Tuesday there were still groups of fans in the hotel lounge,

talking and laughing far into the night, and on Wednesday morning, an hour before I was due to fly home, I met some fans for the very first time. A week later, as I was starting to write this, Rory Faulkner, Boyd Raeburn and Steve Schultheis were in Belfast. There were parties in Oblique House, the Berrysidence and the White House. At ours Rory shocked and delighted us by sneering with her eyes crossed, the only pity being that Silverberg was not present to make a contest out of it. Even now the spirit, the feeling, hangs on. One keeps expecting someone – a late returning American fan perhaps – to drop in on us suddenly; then the Fifteenth World Science Fiction convention, the very best convention ever, will flare up again.... [1]

Walt Willis:

To really sum up the mood of the convention, which was unique in so many complex ways, you want something to evoke not only its casual, relaxed, friendly atmosphere but its climactic, historic quality. And it should contain references to the fantastic environment, like the unreconstructed hotel and staff and that corridor-like convention hall so obviously made by knocking several small rooms together. (I don't know what the one at the end had been, but my seat had a hole in the middle.) But the most important impression was how wonderfully the European and American fans bleshed* together. Towards the end I asked Vince Clarke what had struck him most strongly and his answer was "how wonderful it is to talk to people I've never seen, and have them understand because they have the same background." That was just the way I remember feeling at the Chicon. After a few minutes it was hard to believe these people were nominally foreigners. We felt we'd known them all our lives... or at least, we wanted to. Some day, we must all meet again. The best thing is that we can say that not from the usual post-con frustration of having failed to talk to the people you wanted to meet, but because those people are now friends whom you want to meet again. Partly thanks to the Programme Committee and partly thanks to that much-maligned hotel (bless you, Bobbie Wild) the affair was a stupendous social success. [1]

* "Blesh": a portmanteau of "blend" and "mesh" used to describe the linking of the multi-person Gestalt in *More Than Human* by Theodore Sturgeon.

Everything ended late that evening and people drifted away to various points in England and the Continent. In the week subsequent to the LONCON, many North American fans travelled around the country [and] to fan centres from Belfast to Bad Homburg, cementing new friendships

made at the convention. To British fandom, by far the greatest thing about the convention was the transatlantic fans, who made a very fine impression. We'll miss them. [2]

Sid Birchby:

A few thoughts on the convention generally. It was the best I have ever been to.... And I think most people had a good time. Rory Faulkner in particular said she was overwhelmed. She'd appeared on BBC TV, been seated at the VIP table for the Luncheon, ceremonially enrolled in the Order of St. Fantony, met Eric Russell, got his autograph. Everything she'd dreamed of, and more, had come true.

As far as I'm concerned, that sort of thing justifies fandom. [4]

[1] *Hyphen* #19 (January 1958, ed. Walt Willis & Chuck Harris)

[2] *Science Fiction Parade* #7 (October 1957, ed. Len Moffatt)

[3] *Prolapse* #6 (April 2007, ed. Peter Weston)

[4] *Ploy* #11 (March 1958, ed. Ron Bennett)

Tuesday 10th September 1957

Tolkien and the Taffman

Bob Madle:

[Tuesday morning] I had breakfast with the Clarkes and Steve Schultheis. Joy and Vince told me not to wander far from the hotel, as we would soon be leaving for Inchmery in a rented van. The rented van was to carry piles of books, magazines, tape equipment and like that back home.

The news that I intended to spend the weekend with the Liverpool mob had, apparently spread rapidly, for I had three separate and distinct offers of companionship: Steve Schultheis, GDA operator for the State of Ohio; Will Jenkins, the fan and then-President of the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society; and Sheldon Deretchin, New York fan, to whom we later applied the affectionate appellation, “Boy Ugh!”* The more, the merrier, thought I, and so I informed Dave Newman to prepare for a real orgy the coming weekend. Dave said, “Fear not. I shall obtain sufficient quarters for thee and thy cohorts”. So saying, he provided me also with traveling information from London to Liverpool, making definite arrangements so we could be met at the train station Friday afternoon.

** As Ron Bennett later remembered, “Shel was very well known over here for his zany ‘Boy Ugh’ costume at the 1957 London WorldCon...” [1]*

By this time, the van had arrived, and we were off for Inchmery. “We” being Joy, Sandy, the driver, and yours truly – Vince had hastened home so there would be somebody to greet us. He later confided that he had really left early so he could do some house-cleaning preparatory to the arrival of the TAFF delegate. They take TAFF delegates seriously at Inchmery – even old relic types.

We were finally off, with two of us bouncing about in the back of the van on forever-shifting piles of *Astoundings*. Suddenly the van started to make all sorts of weird noises, jerked spasmodically, and stopped. The driver informed us that it appeared that the van had broken down and to wait right there while he relayed this information to headquarters and that they would have a replacement van there in practically no time. Disembarking, we found ourselves somewhere uptown in London – right in front of a gigantic monument. Unfortunately, I neglected to discover to what or to whom the monument was dedicated. However, I shall always

remember that imposing structure of granite as being the monument dedicated to “Where the Van Broke Down On Its Way to Inchmery”.

After about fifteen minutes, the driver informed us it would take longer than he had anticipated. So we proceeded to take colour photos of each other. I also walked up to the main drag – positioned myself in the middle of the street and took a photo of a smiling bobby, who condescendingly posed for me. After all, what is a trip to London without a photo of a bobby? I also got in a couple of a rather large stream called The Tems, or something like that.

The replacement van finally arrived and we managed to make it to Inchmery, the abode of the Clarkes and Sanderson. The affable trio lived in a second-floor apartment, with the main room functioning as kitchen, living room, library and reproduction (of fanzines, that is) department. Science fiction magazines, tape recorders, mimeographs, and typewriters were to be found everywhere. Behind the dining table was the majority of Vince’s collection, which included early *Wonders*, *Amazings*, et cetera. They were so filed that it is conceivable that if an especially heavy truck were to go down the street while someone was eating his Wheaties, he might find his bowl partially covered with old *Wonder* Flakies. Anyway, the room had a real fannish atmosphere and Joy, Vince and Sandy made me feel at home immediately. As a matter of fact, Sandy was so kind that he gave me his bedroom and slept on the folding bed amidst all the magazines, tape recorders and typewriters.

It seemed that we had been home only a few minutes when Joy came in with a gigantic, steaming bowl of omelette, which was the most delicious omelette I had ever tasted. It seems that Joy is noted for her omelettes and, apparently, is also noted for fattening up her guests. Joy was forever placing food of some sort on the table – even to a full meal at midnight: No wonder I gained about ten pounds during my stay in England. Of course, several gallons per day of various hues of beer (light to dark) had something to do with it also.

Following dinner we listened to a very lengthy tape from Bob Bloch and Dean Grennell – most of which consisted of Bloch recounting his adventures at the Clevention. Then we all said nice things to Bloch and Grennell. I remember saying that Inchmery Fandom was sercon, and had old *Wonders* in their kitchen to prove it. I used (and use) the term “sercon” to mean “serious-constructive” in the broad sense, and not in the manner of implying scorn, as defined by Tucker and Raeburn. It seems that even if “sercon” did originally mean something else, like many other words and terms, general usage has resulted in it meaning “serious-constructive”.

That evening we had visitors. For this was the evening of “The Meeting at the Summit”. The visitors were Walt and Madeleine Willis and Ken and Pamela Bulmer. This group, plus our quartet, made a jolly combined meeting of eight. The meeting was Ken’s baby, and he had planned this so-called “Meeting at the Summit” to be somewhat different than what it finally materialised as. Ken’s original plan was to have a meeting at the Loncon of himself, Walt and me. Ken had suggested that I invite several people who shared my opinions anent TAFF to attend. (He suggested Moskowitz and Ackerman.) This was so I wouldn’t feel completely outnumbered in any TAFF discussion. However, plans of mice and men gang aft agley – and the meeting did not occur at the Loncon.

It was obvious from the start that the meeting would be a success, as everyone was happy and glowing and in compromising moods. The various facets of TAFF were hashed over, such as who may vote, who may be nominated, and who is a fan. My fading memory indicates that Joy and Vince were rather neutral about the whole thing, with Walt and me expressing somewhat conflicting views at times. In general, Walt’s definition of an SF fan was far more rigid than mine. Walt wanted to limit the voting to fanzine fans, publishers, and/or writers – while I wanted to include anyone who was interested enough in science fiction to communicate with others in some manner, be it correspondence, attending conventions, or joining local fan clubs. A compromise was reached whereby members of fan organisations of all types would be eligible; also eligible would be anyone who had subscribed to a fanzine. I felt these concessions were fair, and was fully satisfied.

Those of you who do not know Walt personally would find him to be a very enjoyable person – even though you might not agree with him at times. Walt is tall, handsome and seems to have a determined glare in his eyes, a glare which appears to give one the impression that this young man has a mission in life. His mission that evening was to keep TAFF from going to the dogs – oops – convention fans and, I suppose, he knew that I represented a science fiction fandom much larger and more inclusive than fanzine fandom. Anyway, after much friendly discussion, a blueprint for TAFF was drawn up and agreed to. This blueprint was written up and published by Ken Bulmer in his OMPazine, *Steam*. [2]

This was not the only meeting to occur on that Tuesday. Though the convention was now over there was still one final event to go. At some point during the day, the SF Luncheon Club (which was initially composed of John Wyndham, Frank Cooper, Ken Chapman and Les Flood) held a restaurant lunch at the

Criterion Club in London's Piccadilly. This was a private affair, not open to the general membership of the convention or officially associated with it, whose purpose was to present the International Fantasy Award for Best Novel of 1956 to J.R.R. Tolkien for his then just completed Lord of the Rings trilogy. This had been voted the winner by an international panel of judges which included Forrest J Ackerman, Anthony Boucher, P. Schuyler Miller, Ted Carnell, and August Derleth. Tolkien did not attend the Worldcon itself, but he was talked into attending the luncheon. As Les Flood later recalled in a 2002 letter to Rog Peyton:

Jumping ahead to 1956 (regrettably the last award) and to the point of this letter, the fiction winner was J.R.R. Tolkien, whose *Return of the King* had just completed the trilogy at the beginning of the world-wide acclaim which followed. As I.F.A secretary I managed to convince C.S. Lewis, another Oxford don and not unknown for his own fantasy books, to cajole his great friend Tolkien (both great ale drinkers) to attend a celebratory luncheon we were giving in his honour. [3]

It's also possible that Lewis's wife, Joy Davidman, had as much to do with this as Flood since she had once been part of the London Circle of SF fans and a Thursday night regular at the White Horse and the Globe.

Those known to be present at the luncheon included Flood, Carnell, Ackerman, Arthur C. Clarke, Tolkien's publisher Stanley Unwin, and Clemence Dane (aka Winifred Ashton) a playwright and novelist who in the mid-1950s edited a series of science fictional "Novels of Tomorrow" (and who attended the final meeting at the White Horse before the London Circle moved to the Globe). It was she who apparently presented the award to Tolkien. Les Flood again:

The committee had decided that the trophy should be a handsome desk ornament in the symbolic shape of a spaceship (pre-Trek style, and not always appropriate!).... Unfortunately there was no photographer present on this occasion but I relish the memory of the bemused expression on the distinguished man's face when receiving the spaceship. [3]

This particular year the metal IFA rocketships were used for both the IFA and the Hugos, the design of these being based – according to Ted Carnell – on the ship shown on the Chesley

Bonestell cover for the February 1951 issue of Galaxy (see below). Carnell later recalled the luncheon in a Yandro article on the IFA:

Tolkien, incidentally, protested quite strongly about receiving the award in 1957 and was not at all keen to travel to London to receive it. He did appear, however, and seemed completely vague as to what the whole thing was about and was only too pleased to retreat to his college and apparently forget all about the occasion. [4]

[1] *Skyrack* #50 (March 1963, ed. Ron Bennett)

[2] *A Fake Fan in London* by Bob Madle (TAFF Report, 1957)

[3] Letter from Les Flood to Rog Peyton (2002)

[4] *Yandro* #122 (March 1963, ed. Buck & Juanita Coulson)



Galaxy, February 1951

September 1957

Making Merry with Inchmery

Bob Madle:

Wednesday 11th:

When I arose I found waiting for me, in addition to Joy and Vince (Sandy was uptown – at work, I believe – he’s a soldier stationed in London), a letter from Don Ford. Don was worried about the reception I was receiving in England, so I immediately sat down and wrote a note to him saying that Dick Eney, himself, couldn’t have received a better or more hospitable reception. Yes, TAFF seemed to be in for some smooth sailing on calm waters during the next two years, thought I.

The morning was consumed by long discussions on science fiction and fandom. Joy is a voracious reader and is more up-to-date on contemporary science fiction than is Vince. On the other hand, Vince is an old-time collector and has a collection that goes back just about to the beginning. He has an excellent memory for the old-time stuff and we had a good time exchanging comments and views. As I mentioned in an earlier chapter, Vince proved himself to be a “sercon” fan – and here I am using my definition, which is certainly meant to be complimentary. In fact, Vince is my definition of “The Compleat Fan” – reader, collector, corresponder, club member, convention-goer, fanzine writer and fanzine publisher! I sincerely feel that to be a 100% “Compleat Fan” one must have participated, to a certain extent, in all the facets of fandom mentioned above. However, participation in any one of the facets makes one a science fiction fan, as far as I’m concerned.

We spent some time going through the Inchmery fanzine collection, and I came across a gigantic issue of a fanzine called *Eye* – 164 pages, with our Vince as editor, along with Ted Tubb and Stuart Mackenzie. This must certainly be one of the largest (if not the largest) fanzine ever published. I also looked over the early issues of *Hyphen*, many of which I do not have. The morning flew by rapidly and soon it was time for another delicious lunch. The rest of the afternoon, I spent writing up the convention for “Inside Science Fiction” (the department that appeared in *Science Fiction Quarterly*, not Ron Smith’s fanzine).

My typewriter pounding was interrupted by Joy, who excitedly said I had a long distance call from Leeds. I dashed downstairs, picked up the

phone, and prosaically said “Hello”. A voice, heavily laden with a cultured British accent said, “Hello, Bob, Mike Rosenblum here!” J. Michael Rosenblum, an old correspondent of mine from pre-war days, had heard from Ron Bennett that I was going to be in Liverpool over the coming weekend and suggested that I come over to Leeds (only about 100 miles from Liverpool) and spend a couple of days with him. It was certainly a pleasure hearing from someone out of the dim, distant past and I told Mike I would call him from Liverpool on Saturday morning, giving him a definite reply. J. Michael Rosenblum is one of the real old-time fans, one who has devoted many years to science fiction, and, like Vince, has participated in all phases of science fiction and fandom. I would say, however, that collecting has always been his number one interest – and he has one of the most extensive collections extant.

Thursday 12th:

Joy is an expert on English culture and traditions and she wanted to make sure the TAFF candidate, just once, spent some time on something other than fans and science fiction. And so she planned the trip to Knole. The trip (which took care of most of Thursday) included a long bus ride through the beautiful rustic English countryside. It takes a trip like this to make one realise that he is covering ground that is so steeped with history that it is almost as if one were reliving the past. One little town was pointed out to me by Vince as being the birthplace of Shakespeare. The Knole is a huge and ancient castle located in Kent, some 35 or 40 miles from London. It is one of the principal historical landmarks of the area and, although its beginnings are obscure, it is said to date back to the reign of King John, in the early part of the 13th century. The Knole is a massive and sombre structure, built of gray ragstone. It is also said that its 7 courtyards correspond to the days of the week, its 52 staircases to the weeks of the year, and its 365 rooms to the days of the year. In other words, what I am trying to say is, “This shack is like real big!”

Joy, Vince, Sandy and I spent several hours going through the place from stem to stern – or from courtyard to bedroom. The lecturer quite adeptly covered The Knole’s history – and it sounded like a history of England. Such names as Queen Mary, Henry VIII, Anne Boleyn, John Dryden, Queen Elizabeth and John Donne were dropped at various intervals. And, I believe, the names of Thomas More and Jonathan Swift were also mentioned as having some affiliation with The Knole. (This adds a science fictional flavour to The Knole after all!)

After leaving The Knole, we had a delicious repast in a quaint restaurant in the nearby town. This entire town gave me the impression of

having existed without change for 500 years. In fact, it reminded me of the old *Weird Tales* type of story about the ancient city that appears only once every thousand years. Yes, I know there was a play with that plot, too – *Brigadoon* was its name. But *Weird Tales* did it first.

We arrived back in London just in time to make the last few hours of the London Circle meeting. All of the Americans were still in town, so there was quite a massive gathering at the Globe. At this stage of the game, one London Circle meeting seems to flow into other London Circle meetings. However, I do remember that there must have been about forty fans present in various parts of the bar. And I do remember having enjoyable chats with Arthur C. Clarke, Sam Youd (John Christopher), John F. Burke, Ron Buckmaster, and several others before the witching hour arrived.

And so, back to Inchmery – with a new series of fannish adventures to start on the morrow.

Friday 13th dawned bright and early – I am told. However, no one at Inchmery was aware of it. We had had a full day on the 12th and had planned not to rise too early. We weren't up and about too long before Joy had prepared another of her delicious dinners and, following this, we were all off to the train station to catch the Liverpool Limited. (I was to catch it, but Inchmery Fandom came along to see that I did.)

As mentioned, the trip to Liverpool appeared so enticing that I had three offers of companionship: Steve Schultheis, fandom's Adolphe Menjou; Will Jenkins, the fan who is not to be confused with the Murray Leinster Will Jenkins; and Sheldon Deretchin of New York, a convention-goer and sometime fanzine publisher.

By the time Joy, Vince, Sandy and I dashed into the station, it was rather close to train time, and my colleagues had already arrived and, in fact, had become quite concerned about my lack of arrival. Also present to send us off in grand style was Tony Klein, a young, good-looking London fan of about early voting age. I had noticed that Tony and Ron Bennett had one thing in common – Lynn Berman, Ted Carnell's Girl Friday. At Globe meetings and during the Loncon they both showered her with attention and, I suppose, could be considered friendly rivals.

The train finally took off with several jerks, and we were on our way.

– excerpted from *A Fake Fan in London* (1957), which details Madle's adventures in Liverpool and beyond.

Saturday 14th September 1957

The Germans

Forry Ackerman:

A highpoint of the Convention (all agreed) was the personal triumph of a New Personality. A 16 year old superboy from Germany scored a great individual success. His name – and one to conjure with in the future of World Fandom – Rainer Eisfeld. Only 16. I couldn't get over it. I thought of myself at 22, six years older than he and in my native land, going to my first convention, a trembling mass of scared green jello, afraid of the sound of my own voice, almost inarticulate and terrified that I would be so much as called upon to stand and be recognised... And here was young Rainer, a mere teenager, his first time in this (to him) foreign land of England, speaking a language not his own, and delivering a personally written and translated speech so well from memory that very few persons present, I'm sure, suspected it was other than extemporaneous, so great was Eisfeld's command of the language and of himself! The Dynamo of Deutschland, I have just thought of dubbing him. I want to see this boy a candidate for the Trans Atlantic Fan Fund, and in January of 1959 some lucky American family can have the pleasure of Rainer's company for a year when he comes to the USA on an exchange student scholarship basis. All he'll need (that he won't be able to pay for in cash) will be minimum. Maybe you'd like someone to teach you (or your kids) German? There are many interesting possibilities. I never regretted taking Japanfan No. 1, Tetsu Yano, into my home for five months; I envy whoever gets Rainer Eisfeld!

The following week in Germany the first big three-day Germanicon (officially the BIGGERCON) was held. Five of us Amerifans managed to make it. I was invited to be Guest of Honour, and I would like my hosts to know that the reception I received impressed me like a hero's welcome.
[1]

Julian Parr:

The First German Science Fiction Convention was held September 14-16, 1957 in the Trades Union Hall of Bad Homburg, a health resort near Frankfurt.

Not so. The first German Science Fiction Convention was held in

Wetzlar over the weekend of 14th/15th January 1956, with Parr in attendance. Wetzlar was home to Germany's first active female fan, Anne Steul, who organised it. She also attended LONCON.

Over 200 persons attended: 184 of the 730 paid-up members of the Science-Fiction Club Deutschland (SFCD) including strong delegations from Berlin, Austria and Switzerland; and a number of guests – wives and parents of members, and representatives of three German publishing firms: Pabel, Weiss, and Bevin. Foreign guests of honour included Forrest J Ackerman (SFCD Hon. President, holding membership card No. 8), together with two US femme-fans Mary and Valeria [Dziechowski and Anjoorian], Frederick Prophet and George Nims Raybin (officers of the World SF Society), Cylvia Margulies of Satellite Science Fiction, Erwin Scudla (President of the Utopia Club Austria); and Greg and Jim Benford (editors of the fan mag *Void*).

The main item on the programme was the annual general meeting of the SFCD, which had just entered its third year of existence. Forry Ackerman was re-elected (unopposed) as Hon. President, your correspondent as Foreign Correspondent, and very progressive author-fan Baron Jesco von Puttkamer [joined] Wolfgang Jeschke on the editorial board of *Ad Astra* which was thus recognised as an SFCD organ to be distributed by the Club.

The three-day programme included a report on the World Con by Rainer Eisfeld (leader of the Bonn Chapter); talks on Development of the SFCD (Ernsting), "SF Publishing" (a Pabel manager), "SF Writing" (Puttkamer), History Of Astronomy (Heide), and "The 4th-Dimensional Space-Time Continuum" (Fritz).

A high spot was Ackerman's presentation of the "Hugo" prizes for the best German SF in 1955 and 1956, both to "Clark Darlton" (Ernsting). There was a long informal discussion period and an auction of film stills, books, cover paintings and a collection of fan mags donated by the Benford twins, who were about to leave for the States.

Each morning a film was shown: *Conquest of Space*, *War of the Worlds* and *Shock (Quatermass Experiment)*. On Monday afternoon there was a bus tour to the nearby Saalburg, a restored Roman fort and museum. The whole of the con programme was free to members; costs ran up to about DM 900 (\$15.00 or 76 Pounds), met by the auction proceeds (about DM 400), a Pabel donation (DM 200), the rest coming from Club funds. The Hall was decorated by displays of pictures, models, etc, prepared by the Frankfurt Chapter; Ernst Richter presented a magnificent 7 foot model

photon rocket; and the Berlin Chapter made the mark by having a real live robot wandering around selling their own fan mag, *Terra*. [2]

Forry Ackerman:

Surely my cup of egobrew was filled to overflowing with the constant requests for autographs, posed pictures with people, gifts, services, and the responses to my speeches (as attempted by myself in broken German or expertly translated by Rainer Eisfeld). I did not know what was going on when I made my (truly) extemporaneous farewell speech and in addition to applauding they all stamped their feet; it was later explained to me this was their equivalent of the standing applause, the ultimate accolade, and for this expression of appreciation I shall always be grateful. Ernsting, Scheer, Fries, von Puttkamer, Scudla, Spiegl, Rohr, usw – danke!

Rainer Eisfeld gave a detailed report on the Worldcon. Jesco von Puttkamer (a real Baron), who looked to us the literary writer most likely to bring German sci-fi to the attention of translation markets, gave a talk which evoked much laughter. Wolf Detlef Rohr and K.H. Scheer received awards for their outstanding space operas, and “Clark Darlton” (Walter Ernsting) was sent two Hugo-plaques by Hugo Gernsback himself in recognition of Ernsting’s capture two years in a row of the Best German S.F. Novel popularity poll. Hans Fries, a John Drew Barrymore with beard, master-minded the loudest and funniest SF auction I have ever witnessed in any language.

The Gorfans took me utterly and completely by surprise when they presented me with the most exquisite alarm clock I have ever seen, a silver and gold replica of the globe that splits in half to reveal a gorgeous timepiece. A thing of beauty and a joy forever. [1]

Julian Parr:

No doubt the proceedings sound rather dry and sercon to fannish readers, but, considering the circumstances – the serious split [in the SFCD membership] and the first SFCD election – I think this could not be avoided. As a first effort the event deserves praise (it was organised by Bigenheimer). It was certainly a valuable step towards creating a real fandom in Germany. [2]

[1] *Imaginative Tales* (Vol 5 #2)

[2] *Science Fiction Times* #288 (February 1958, ed. Taurasi)

Friday 20th September 1957

Homeward Bound

For our still-vacationing American visitors, there were parties and visits for several weeks after Loncon but eventually, after a final meeting at the Globe on Thursday 19th September, it was time for them to depart.

Bob Madle:

Steve and I grabbed a quick bite and headed for the Globe and the London Circle meeting, perhaps the last we would ever attend. We were early, but a few had preceded us. Mike Moorcock, youthful editor of the English *Tarzan Comics* magazine, was sitting there munching a hot dog and gulping beer. Les Cloud [Les Flood, maybe?], oldtime fan, was present. Young Tony Klein and Sheldon (Boy Ugh!) Deretchin could be seen swapping jokes. And when Walter H. Gillings walked in, I knew him immediately from a photo I had seen of him taken in 1937. Believe it or not, he's still the same dignified, mustached individual. We had a jolly time imbibing beer and talking over old times. But, like all London Circle meetings, this one had to end. And I was beginning to notice that my slight cold was, apparently, developing into something else.

The next morning was the morning we all knew would come, whether we wanted it to or not. It was like real plane-catching time and all the British-types were at the terminal to see us off. I was feeling kind of low and bought me a little hip-flask of joy juice to nibble on during the long flight back.

Everybody bade everybody sad adieu. Even quiet Robert Abernathy (the big famous pro-type Abernathy) was chatting away. Bob is one of those fellows who doesn't have much to say – but he can certainly turn out a good story. [1]

Brian Aldiss:

The fanzines will be full of reports on the London Con; the Americans made it for us: we hope we made it for them. But have any of you intrepid KLMers stopped to think what it felt like over here directly you had gone?

As soon as the lunch at the airport was finished, you were sucked into immigration. For you, it was farewell to the shillings and tanners, those

endless red busses, those savage, bearded faces, those filthy cigarettes we find so smokeable, those cups of muddy coffee which give us our wonderful English complexions.

For us – well, two grim-faced Customs men held me back as, kicking and struggling, I exchanged one last vital word (on the subject of science fiction) with the Kyles, Forry, Val [Anjoorian], Lee, Mary and Steve [Schultheis and Dziechowski]. The fact that I could not pronounce the surnames of the last two made no difference to the warmth of my feelings. And here and now, in the interests of Anglo-American unity, let's make it clear that anyone at all in the States, with no exceptions, may weep on my shoulder at any time they care to name, provided they look and behave like Ruth Kyle.

The British contingent now made its downhearted, shame-faced, lame-brained way to a point of vantage from which you Americans might be observed to cross from the Customs sheds to the KLM plane. We consisted, for the record, of Ted Carnell, with wife and daughter and movie camera complete with continuous belt of film, Ken Bulmer, Daphne Buckmaster, Bert Campbell (Late Editor of *Authentic*), Vince and Joy Clarke, Sandy, and Brian Lewis, the artist – oh, and me, though I would rather have been lying disguised as a record of “Dirty Old Town” in the luggage rack of your plane.

You now came out of the sheds, where you had been inspected, disinfected and stamped “U.S.A. Fondle Carefully”, and climbed into the bus which would take you over the tarmac to the plane. You were only some two hundred yards away, so we had quite a clear view of you. At once, a doubledecker bus, two Comets flown over specially from Dar-es-Salaam, a fire engine and the Airport Controller's bicycle were parked in front of us. So you made your way to the plane unobserved. We nearly caught a glimpse of you ascending the gangway, but six men ran up and hastily built a radio station with control tower in front of us.

However, when your plane taxied to the take-off runway, we had a fine view of it. Those faces at that window – Sam Moskowitz and Bob Madle surely? Or perhaps it was Art Kyle – or hadn't he got on at all? And whose was that tiny figure running madly at the speed of light after the plane? Yes, that was me, friends, but I never made it: these KLM jobs are too fast. Finally, after a comprehensive tour round London Airport, you were airborne, your plane lifting irrevocably into the grey haze with which we shroud our country from alien eyes.

That was our worst moment. We watched and watched till the spots before our eyes formed star-spangled banners in the air, and then we

turned away. Ken Bulmer reassumed the false beard he had been waving. Mastering our emotions, English-fashion, we deposited our chewing gum and went to have a cup of English-fashion tea. Avidly drinking, I saw the leaves in my cup form up into the shape of a phallic symbol; of course, I know these things are really only space ships, so I took heart and felt slightly better.

Well, we had to get back to routine. I had to return to Oxford (the others were just simple local boys, Londoners all). The cold draughts of everyday life were blowing again. We caught a bus into town; it took an hour to get from Bushey, where the airport is, into central London. We talked of you all the time – in fact, we were so engrossed we accidentally let Bert Campbell buy all the tickets. The most fruitful and practical suggestion emerging from this discussion was a proposal to move the Azores over into mid-Atlantic for the establishment thereon of a permanent, time- and money-proof Convention site, with the finest features of both our great democracies (i.e. Coca Cola and espresso coffee) available at all hours.

Finally we reached Hammersmith Broadway, and the conductor helped us off the bus. We picked ourselves up from the grimy pavements and made for the Underground (tube, subway) station. There this great and happy Fifteenth Convention finally broke up. “South Gate in ’58”, we shouted, more in sorrow than anger. The names of the stations were a blur as I headed alone for Paddington... Goldhawk Road, White City, Ladbroke Grove, Royal Oak.... Around me was this shabby, battered weedy, dusty, grand old city which had been so glad to welcome you all here. Ah, me, nothing will look the same again – not even the corpse-faced prostitutes under the sodium-vapour lights of the Bayswater Road. So I reached Paddington mainline station, feeling both sentimental and semi-mental.

I had ten minutes to spare before my train left. The carriages were crowded with Oxford faces, most seats were taken. It was 4:45 on a warm afternoon. I’d been walking about all day – to say nothing of the preceding sleepless night. The loveliest thing in the world, I thought, next to being headed for New York in a charter plane, would be to cool my aching feet. Going along to the toilet, which packs all mod. con. into a room no bigger than Val’s suitcase, I took off shoes and socks and thrust my feet under the spout where it says “Not Drinking Water”. It felt wonderful.

The dryer was an elaborate mechanical business, into whose sides you thrust a penny and get out eighteen inches of roller towel. It hung shining overhead. My feet don’t extend that far. Slipping out of my jacket, I climbed nimbly up onto the jakes and the wash basin. Steadying myself

precariously with one hand on the window, I inserted a penny in the gadget and jerked out a coil of towel. Then, flexing my muscles, I stuck out a foot to dry it. At that moment, the train started with a jolt....

So I say farewell, as I hang downward, caught up in the folds of a British Railway towel. It is my sincerest hope that travel has similarly reoriented all of you, turning your preconceived notions upside down. Adieu for now, and thanks for the memories. We'll meet again someday, once I've really found my feet again. [2]

Rory Faulkner:

From what I hear, most of the fans at the Worldcon finished up with the Asian flu, followed by a prolonged siege of GAFIA. I know that's what happened to me – I debarked from the Queen Mary already stricken, collapsed at my nephew's home in N.Y. and spent five horrible days there whilst my mind left my perishing body and wandered off past Betelgeuse and back. Was only glad that the bug waited until I got back to the U.S.A, and did not spoil my visit to GB! I saw the telecast of our rat-race while in Belfast at Walt's – never realised till then what an old bag I looked like. Seeing yourself on TV is a sure cure for any conceit one has left at 69!

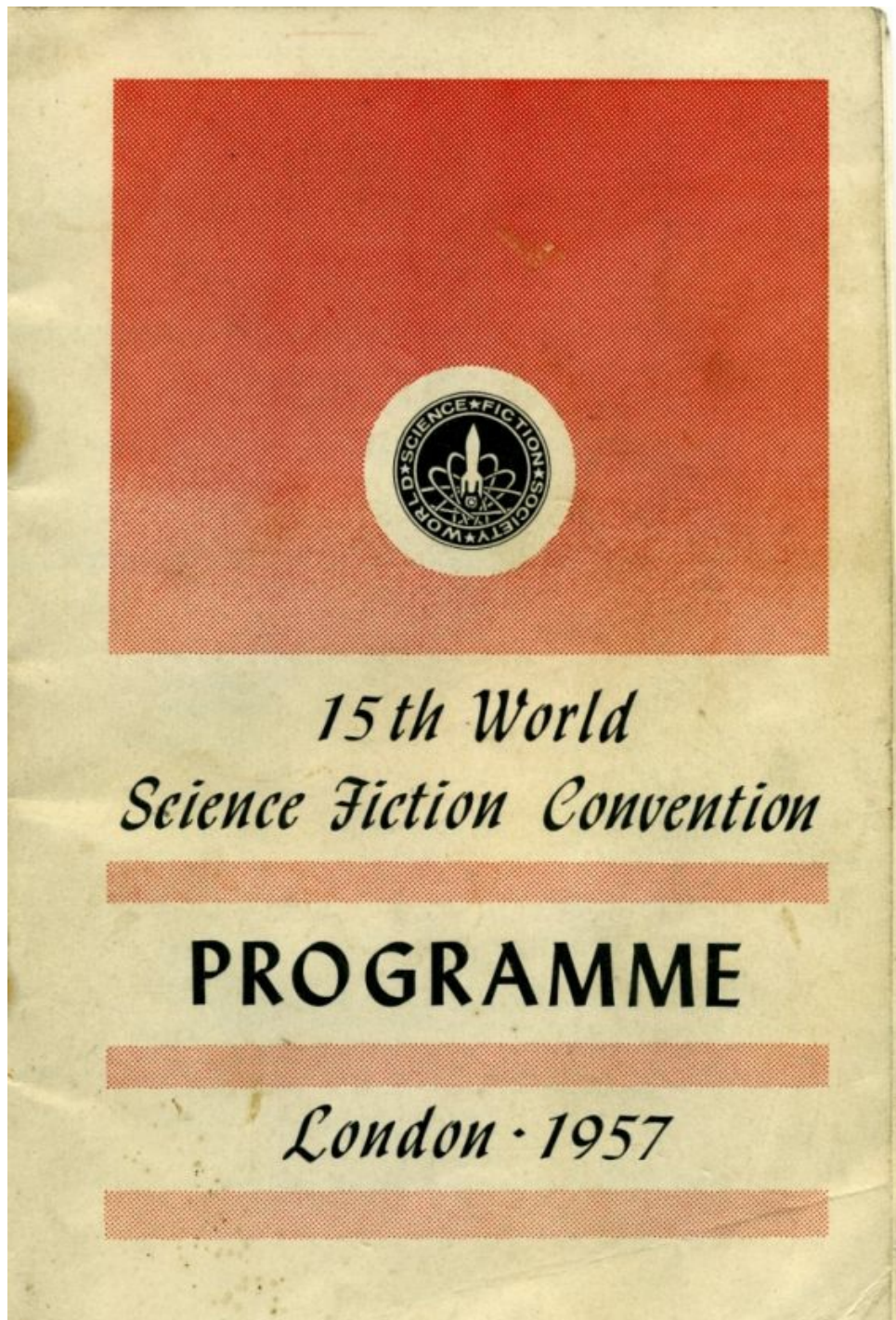
The warmth and kindness of you British fans really floored me. I never expected such red-carpet treatment as you all gave me. I fell in love with England, and her people I met there, and it was not like being in a strange land – it was like coming home after a long absence. I guess ancestral memories awoke! [3]

[1] *A Fake Fan in London* by Bob Madle
(TAFF Report, 1957)

[2] *Sphere* #? (September/October 1957, ed.
Joe Christoff)

[3] *Triode* #14 (July 1958, ed. Jeeves &
Bentcliffe)

Aftermath



October 1957

The Verdict

Ted Carnell:

Time dims memories, but I feel that it will be a long while before this year's 15th World Science Fiction Convention will fade from the memories of those 250 delegates who attended or the ink fades from the record books. As delegates departed from the King's Court Hotel and a measure of peace and sanity returned to the overworked staff, the consensus of opinion was "It was a *wonderful* Convention!" Visiting Americans, including Guest of Honour John W. Campbell, Jr., and his wife, were unanimous in declaring that for efficiency and friendliness, humour and seriousness, excellent programming with all the right things happening at the right time, London had put on the finest Convention yet held.

This was the "Little Big One" – "little" only because there were never more than 200 delegates at any one session, but "big" in everything else. And this after an opposition delegate in New York last year has said that in his opinion London was not ready for a World Convention! It is a fine tribute to the entire London Committee that so many overseas delegates voiced their enthusiasm during and after the Convention itself.

[...]

Eric Frank Russell's comment to myself after the four-day session ended, seems to adequately sum up the Convention as a whole – "What struck me as distinctly outstanding is the way in which it went over with a lovely air of casualness and informality." A remark endorsed by every one who attended. [1]

Calling the attendees delegates was or would become a traditional little white lie to make conventions sound more important to the outside world, while generally annoying the fans themselves. Compare the occasional later practice of shortening the British Science Fiction Association Awards to the British Science Fiction Awards.

Walt Willis:

The one thing that really surprised me about [US fans], seeing them side by side with British fandom, was how well they were dressed. We

were a shabby-looking lot, I must say. Even James White's sartorial perfection (and he's a professional in the new clothes racket) was dimmed beside the magnificence of Steve Schultheis in his more than-immaculate blue suit made of a cloth I haven't seen the like of outside the lining of expensive chocolate boxes. I remember Arthur Thomson telling me in awed tones of Steve sorting through his file of trousers. He would take out a pair which looked to Arthur to be practically still in their cellophane, run a finger along the crease and then, it being but the work of a moment to wipe the blood from his hand, drop it on the floor saying "Better have those cleaned and pressed." And then there was Beau Raeburn with his spectrum of sports clothes... I don't know, maybe it's something to do with the fact that I was an adolescent in the Thirties, when the correct dress for the young intellectual was what we thought of as casual, which usually meant baggy flannels and a sports coat with pockets bulging with books. Obviously, times have changed; but of all the habits of modern teenagers, dressing up as Edwardian dandies is the only one I find incomprehensible. Why, when I was that age there were so many things I wanted to buy – books, records, radio parts, a motor bike (never did get that) – that I regarded spending money on clothes as just throwing it away. I still do, I suppose, but Boyd Raeburn's clothes shook me. I'd like to wear things like that if I could. Usually good clothes, when I have to wear them, make me feel constrained, but his looked comfortable and casual.

Which reminds me of another thing I noticed about the Americans, how careful they were with money. I don't mean they were mean, just that they seemed to be careful to avoid throwing it around ostentatiously the way some Americans abroad have been criticised for. They positioned themselves on our standard of living, as it were, with the result that going about with them was just like going about with British fans... sort of comfortable. They fitted in.

There were, of course, a lot of individual impressions – Silverberg's dry sense of humour, so exactly like Bob Shaw's and a perfect foil for James White; Boyd Raeburn's impeccable manners; Wally Weber's unobtrusive wit and likability; Sam Moskowitz's geniality; Steve Schultheis's flair for fantastic fannish humour; and so on – but that was the main one. They fitted in. It was as if for all those years there had been gaps in British fandom which we'd never noticed, just the size and shape of each one of them, and at the Worldcon, suddenly... CLICK! there they were in place. We're going to miss them. Roll on Gay Paris in '63. [2]

The Convention was not notable so much for its programme as for its social success. The programme was loosely scheduled and designed to

allow maximum time for conversation and allowance for unseen circumstances. Both were taken full advantage of.

There were no rows, thefts, damages or other hooliganism. Instead there were four solid days and nights of quiet and congenial talk among constantly re-forming small groups, as a result of which many new friendships were made. The visitors from America and Canada made a notably fine impression on the British fans, being almost without exception quiet, courteous, and unassuming, as well as interesting and intelligent. One felt at the time, and feels it more strongly every day, that this convention did not end on the 9th September. Not just in the sense that many Americans in the following days dispersed all round Europe visiting local fan groups from Belfast to Bad Homburg, but in the sense that it started off a new era in fandom.

It was the first real world convention, and it has given birth to the first real world fandom. At least I feel that after this every national convention, on either side of the Atlantic, will seem to anyone who attended the Worldcon to be somehow incomplete.

The Convention was not a success financially, the Committee being at the last moment forced to pay an unexpected demand by the hotel management for £100 (\$280) in respect of alleged reservations unclaimed, but no actual loss was sustained. There were also unsatisfactory features from the accommodation point of view, the premises being in the course of much-needed reconstruction during the convention, but on the other hand it was, to those to whom minor inconveniences assumed proper proportions, a memorable occasion and, in its quiet way, climactic. It represented the culmination of the revival of European fandom which has been gaining force since 1948 and of the tendency towards integration with American fandom which began soon afterwards. When seen in retrospective it will, I think, be seen as a triumph for both. [3]

Willis delivered this verdict in October, but this wasn't the only thing he wrote about that month:

Isn't it funny how life always ad libs? You think up all the ways a thing can possibly happen and write them down and classify them and check through them again and again to make sure you've covered every possible twist... and then the Event comes along and Fate throws away the script and somehow manages to do the unexpected after all. I guess it proves the Universe is a live show, which is a good thing – I'd hate to be a telerecording – but it is sort of unsettling, isn't it?

I'm thinking of the beginnings of space flight as we're watching them

now... or The Dawn of The Space Age as those neofannish newspapers persist in calling it. For the last thirty years and more all us high power inventive geniuses in science fiction have been working out the various ways in which this situation we have nowadays might have come about. And now here it is and it's happened in a way not one of us foresaw. What's more – and this is the most surprising thing of all – we now see quite clearly that it just couldn't have happened any other way.

I don't mean the satellites, of course. I mean something far more astonishing and important – the acceptance by the public of the sciencefictional creed that man's destiny lies in space. Now that we've won there's no harm in admitting here among ourselves that we hadn't much of a case. There is no economic or military value of traveling to the Moon and the planets: nothing we could find there would be worth the cost of fetching it home and colonisation is a logistic absurdity. The brutal truth is that we have been goldbricking the world. We have been trying to hoodwink the public into throwing away billions of dollars of their money just so we could check up on Bonestell. It was a con game, the biggest ever, and it hadn't a chance of coming off without a miracle. Well, the miracle came along: the Russians beat America into space. That was the finest thing that ever happened.

It may not have looked that way at the time, but you can imagine what would have happened in the old probability-world where America had the monopoly of big-time scientific progress. In due course a few American basketballs would have been tossed up casually according to plan, there would have been some mild interest and a few more Sunday supplement articles about the International Geophysical Year, the satellites would have come down again, and that would have been that. Finish. Back to intercontinental ballistic missiles and other nice, sensible ways of spending money. But instead we had shock! Mystery! High drama! NEWS! A strange Russian moon bleeping among the stars, sending back uncanny messages. NEWS!

First, the lack of detailed information and human interest angles on the strange satellite forced the journalists to fall back on what they already had on file about space flight – mostly starry-eyed propaganda from us faaans – and on statements from space-happy Russians. That set up the mental climate. Then the reporters started looking around for follow-up material and there it was staring them in the face. One nation playing idly with satellites was nothing; but an international contest – astronomical basketball with the goal in full view of the biggest crowd ever – clear the front page! Or, better still, call it a race. There's nothing like a race for

news. There's the winning post up there... that big yellow disc.

But you can't come right out and say the nation should squander all that money just to salve its injured pride and make good copy for the press. The goal has to be mad to look worth while. So all of a sudden all the newsmen became indistinguishable from science fiction fans. They proclaimed that the start of space flight was comparable to the discovery of fire and the invention of the wheel and its development the greatest thing in Man's future. The few diehards who dissented were mocked as fuddyduddies, the way we used to be mocked as crackpots. So now we have the two greatest nations in the world ((sic)) hellbent for the Moon and Mars. The race may have started for the wrong reasons but they're rapidly being rationalised into the right ones, borrowed from Us, and by the time we get there, with luck everyone will realise that the only race that mattered all along was that of Man.

We're off! [4]

After briefly soaring into the heavens, fannish eyes soon returned to Earthly matters....

Joy Clarke:

The other week we received a worried letter from one very revered OMPAn regarding Sandy's not resigning the Treasurership of the 1957 Worldcon to Sneary because we were still in debt. Well, we sadly regretted the passing of *Contact*, whose place as a fan newszine has been taken rather inefficiently by *Fanac*. At least with *Contact* you could be sure the "news" was accurate (rather difficult with *Fanac*). If anyone else is worried about that little snippet of "news" at the top of this page, then let's recount the facts. (1) Sandy was never Treasurer – see the Programme booklet for 1957 wherein it states specifically he was Accountant, therefore he could hardly refuse to resign a post he never held. (2) The Solacon Committee *in toto* took over on the specified date, i.e. the 1st November 1957. And how am I so sure? Well, besides being part of the Publicity Committee, I signed the final account as rendered to the US Tax Department, as Assistant to the Accountant. So that's *that* little item of "news" down the drain. Then again, the Falascas informed us that *Fanac* completely misquoted their letters – upon which Sandy's first assessment of their attitude was based (these were the only data available at the time – *Fandom's Burden* hadn't then been received). So when you read your *Fanac*, use salt in good strong doses. [5]

[1] *New Worlds* #64 (October 1957, ed. Carnell)

- [2] *Oops! #24* (January 1958, ed. Gregg Calkins)
- [3] *Contact #9* (October 1957, ed. Bennett, Jansen et al.)
- [4] *Oops! #23* (November 1957, ed. Gregg Calkins)
- [5] *The Lesser Flea #11* (Autumn 1958, ed. Joy K. Clarke)

January 1958

The Financial Shortfall

In the aftermath of the convention, it became clear there was a financial hole. Part of this was caused by some US fans not covering their rooms when deciding to book into other hotels on seeing the conditions in the King's Court. Some, but not all.

Vince Clarke:

When the committee booked the Hotel, the Manager was French, bearded, and brimming over with *joie de vivre*. He entered thoroughly into the spirit of things. Drunk with excitement, he even tried reading SF, to get prepared for fans. He thought an SF Con was devoted to sf.

Unfortunately, some weeks before the Con the Hotel changed hands, and the new Manager was a mundane type. Professionally willing, but not co-operative in a friendly way, we felt. Come the Con; on the Saturday night Secretary Bobbie Wild was casually informed that fans for whom we'd reserved beds hadn't booked in. As we'd booked all available beds offered, this was a shock. Omitting details, about 16% of the booking for three nights failed to show up. Worse, although the old Manager had understood we'd booked for three nights, the new, on the basis of a preliminary letter of enquiry, wanted payment for the full hotel for a fourth night also.

To be presented with an unforeseen bill for £160 on the last day of an otherwise successful Con is a mite unsettling. We paid £100 under protest, went back to our various homes to sort things out. We can establish that the Hotel *wasn't* booked for four nights, also through some incredible confusion on their books we're due for about £30 back – if we can get it. Letters to the Hotel have produced no answers, and the matter is in the hands of a solicitor (lawyer to the US readership).

We've managed to collect from many of those who didn't appear, or in some cases have sufficient reasons for not asking for recompense. On the basis of hard cash we scraped through without being in debt or going around with the hat, but that's all. None of the debts of honour have been settled, including a considerable sum representing London Circle funds which had been placed at the disposal of the Committee, and none of the Committee members have been reimbursed for expenditure at the Con.

That's the position as of the middle of January, verified with Bobbie.,

But... we did have fun – and made sure it was SOUTH GATE IN '58. [1]

£100 was a lot of money in 1957, so this was not a trivial matter, particularly if this sum had ended up having to be covered out of the pockets of the Committee. A full financial report was published the following year in the SOLACON Programme Book. There was however some delay in passing the accounts on to SOLACON.

Sandy Sanderson:

[Rick] Sneary became the Treasurer in November, 1957 and I handed over the books in the early months of 1958. They would have been handed over with the Treasurership but I thought it unfair to give Sneary the job of collecting outstanding money in England and paying outstanding bills in England from a distance of some 6,000 miles. It wasn't as though there was a large balance to be carried over that the Solacon Committee could have used in those early months. Anyway, everything went to Sneary some time ago. I requested Frank Dietz to make every effort to collect monies due to the WSFS in America in the hope that our out of pocket expenses could be at least partly covered. When the Solacon Committee decided to cancel that idea I forwarded the unpaid expense lists to Sneary also (he had asked me to) and said they might pay them. As a matter of interest the Solacon Committee has said that they won't and personally I don't give a damn. Sneary has been Treasurer since November 1st 1957. [2]

1957 Worldcon Financial Report (from Solacon Programme Book, 1958):

RECEIPTS	£	s	d
Balance from New York Con	10	18	11
Sale of WSFS Pins	14	1	6
Dues, 553 Members	280	14	–
Receipts from Raffle	5	17	6
Receipts for Lunch	101	5	–
Ads in Programme Booklet	61	8	–
From Airport-Coach Passengers	1	1	–
For Display Tables	1	10	–
Auction	55	16	5
Donations	54	18	–
London Circle Loan	33	16	3
Total	621	6	7
	(\$1,739.72)		

EXPENSES	£	s	d
-----------------	---	---	---

Publicity	38	9	–
Journals	130	2	1
Trophies	37	10	–
Press Conference	4	16	3
Film	14	13	–
Transport	14	11	–
Guest of Honour Hotel Expense	8	1	–
TAFF Representative " "	4	–	–
Insurance	7	–	–
Baby Sitter	6	–	–
Hotel	191	9	–
Programme	121	13	5
Postage	37	18	10
Solicitor	3	13	6
Miscellaneous	1	9	6
Total	621	6	7

Sandy Sanderson:

The London Circle was overwhelmed by a donation to its funds from Don Ford and Cincinnati Group, the result of an auction of *New Worlds* covers and Group fund hand out, a very generous gesture designed to replace money officially loaned by the Circle to '57 Worldcon. With this cash in hand it is hoped to finalise plans for obtaining club rooms in Town and make them the centre of London Fandom in preference to the criticised public house meetings at the "Globe". This will be the first time the oldest post-war group in Britain has been "organised" to this extent and it's thanks to US fandom for the opportunity. [3]

The clubroom idea came to nothing and London fandom would soon splinter, alas.

For those interested in reading more about the financial shortfall, Sanderson goes into greater detail here: <https://fiawol.org.uk/FanStuff/THEN%20Archive/1957Worldcon/Sandy.htm>.

[1] *Hyphen* #19 (January 1958, ed. Willis, Chuck Harris)

[2] *Aporrheta* #2 (August 1958, ed. Sanderson)

[3] *Ground Zero* #3 (December 1958, ed. Frank & Belle Dietz, George Nims Raybin)

September 1959

The Lawsuit

Dick Eney:

1) The Plane Trip

When the 1957 Convention was given to London, Dave Kyle organised a group trip to the con by American fans, chartering a plane for the purpose. He described himself as “President, London Trip Fund of the WSFS Inc” when it appeared that airlines would not accept an individual’s charter for a speculative group of travelers.

Other members of the WSFS (chiefly the Dietzes and Raybin) holding that this made the society itself liable, tried to set up a committee, including themselves with Kyle, which would have official standing to deal with the London Trip Fund. (Previously they had met with Dave unofficially, as advisers.) The London Con-committee authorised this, tho Kyle continued to handle all business arrangements, such as the one that made necessary a switch of airlines from Pan-American to KLM when PA couldn’t guarantee a return flight.

Trouble really began in April, when Ted Carnell of London, who’d written Ruth Landis – who was acting as Kyle’s secretary – for a list of those passengers who paid either entirely or in part for the trip and got no reply, asked the other committee members to see her in person. The Dietzes called on her and by persistence persuaded her to supply a partial list of names, an action which Kyle resented, calling it an “infamous inquisition”. Later George Nims Raybin suggested that he – Raybin – be listed as co-signer at the Chemical Corn Exchange Bank, where the London Trip funds were deposited, “in case of emergency”. (Dave lives in Potsdam, outside New York City.) Personality clashes between the two factions also seem to have played a part in creating bad feeling before the trip.

After the trip resentment mounted over the number of nonfans on the plane and over the action of some plane-trippers in leaving the con hotel early, sticking the committee with the balance of their guaranteed room-booking; a certain amount of ill-feeling rose when Dave and Ruth Kyle (née Landis – they took the trip as a honeymoon) were given the sum (\$5 from each passenger, deposited to secure the flight) originally supposed to be refunded to the trip-makers; and it was alleged that this ill-feeling was

at the bottom of the lawsuit that eventually broke up the WSFS Inc.

2) The World Science Fiction Society, Incorporated.

The Philcon II in 1953 had rumblings of a “permanent convention organisation”, and at the NYCon II (1956) this group was actually voted into authority. It was alleged that incorporation was necessary to prevent local fans being sued for debts in case the convention ran into the red – a real danger, with the Big Convention movement – since it could declare itself bankrupt when its funds were exhausted, under the laws governing corporations, while individuals could be sued for their personal funds if debts exhausted the Con-committee’s resources. Though a well-taken point, the fact that the NYCon II and the Loncon following it both ran into debt without rescue from the WSFS casts doubt on the value of this feature. Certain dragooning tactics used in getting the Incorporation adopted as sponsoring organisation of the NYCon II (mostly George Nims Raybin’s public remark that iff’n the attendees en masse didn’t vote for that measure at the business session the society would gather a group of Con-committee members who would put it into effect anyway) were strongly resented at the time and later.

The WSFS in addition to other duties was supposed to “help with convention planning and production, acting as a reservoir of experience”. It is reported to have given a good deal of valuable assistance to the Loncon. Its bylaws regularised some important fannish convention practices, such as the Rotation plan. Though the language of the organisation’s charter was suspected of concealing crafty legalisms by which the WSFS directors could “take over fandom” (i.e. dictate to convention committees) neither London nor South Gate had any complaints to make about officiousness.

After the Plane Trip hooraw, and, some alleged, as a result of the animosities therefrom arising, the New York WSFS officers (Frank Dietz, Recorder-Historian; Belle Dietz, Secretary; George Nims Raybin, Legal Officer) dunned Dave Kyle for about \$100 in funds outstanding since the NYCon II, and, receiving no satisfaction, attached his bank account. Kyle brought suit for damages to his reputation in the amount of \$25,000, the attachment and a libellous article by one “Edsel McCune” in fanzine *Metrofan* being important exhibits. (To make things clearer, this “Edsel McCune” was not the original owner of the pen-name.) The other three filed counter-suit for the same amount and a series of articles, most of which probably were actionable if the truth were known, were produced by each side. Kyle cited some of these and raised his claim to \$35,000, while the Dietzes and Raybin offered to let Kyle designate a lawyer to handle

their end of the suit. Dave refused this offer, since taking over would let him end the matter as he pleased but make him liable for all the court charges (several hundred dollars) accumulated to date.

Meanwhile, back in fandom, various others had taken an interest in the matter, the Falascas reacting by attacking the legality of the whole WSFS as at that time constituted and alleging irregularities in the Incorporation's operation that would get it in trouble if it ever came under the scrutiny of the courts. Inchmery Fandom and some others rallied to the support of WSFS and the Dietzes, but the majority reaction appeared to be active or barely suppressed nausea at the goings-on in New York. Motivations for the last appear to have been (1) dislike of legal action on the general principle that fandom is too esoteric for a fair judgement to be reached by a mundane court or jury, and (2) horror at the size of the damages claimed, \$25,000 being more than sufficient to throw the average fan into debt for a decade. Such feelings easily passed into opposition to the existence of the WSFS.

To make it easier for the contenders to back down, Kyle was accused of vindictiveness in maintaining his suit, while the "Unholy Three" were accused of "trying to wiggle out from under a bad case" in not maintaining theirs. Since withdrawal by either side would undoubtedly be followed by denunciations for having admitted to a bad case, the lawsuits appear to be in an insoluble dilemma.

As mentioned above, disgust at these carryings-on, which were generally linked to the name of WSFS, easily became the source of opposition to the existence of the corporation. The Falascas and the Berkeley Bhoys were generally the spreaders of anti-WSFS and down-with-lawsuits sentiments, though they had enthusiastic seconding. During 1958, fandom's intent to fight against the WSFS at the SoLACon became so evident that the con committee decided not to associate the convention with the WSFS, a decision which Anna Moffatt announced amid tremendous cheers at the business session. A resolution was passed there calling for dissolution of the WSFS by the directors. (Since the SoLACon wasn't WSFS-sponsored a resolution, which was probably set to go, "that the WSFS be dissolved", couldn't be introduced.)

On the shock and horror generated by a genuine lawsuit occurring in fandom, Jack Speer comments: "It's funny how laymen react to a claim of damage, such as \$25,000, as if the claim settled something. I often have clients telling me to sue somebody for all he's worth, just as if the plaintiff could decide how much the verdict should be."

– *Fancyclopedia* #2, and Supplement (1959)

& 1960, ed. Eney)

October 1959

Schism

Fanzine production slowed in the year following LONCON, a common phenomenon back then among those involved in running Worldcons, as they usually needed time to recover afterwards. Regardless of the host city and primary organising fan group, Worldcons in the UK have usually been an effort involving people from all parts of Britain. Such pulling together in that common cause can have the effect – and certainly did in 1957 – of “papering over the cracks” and temporarily putting ongoing conflicts on hold. Unfortunately, as soon as the con was over and our foreign visitors had departed, these returned to the fore. A case in point: there continued to be bad feeling over how TAFF was being run and this was directly responsible for Chuck Harris quitting fandom. Related to this, the joky pre-con slogan “snog in the fog” made a reappearance that almost led to Walt Willis himself leaving fandom. As fan historian Harry Warner, Jr., recorded:

Rick Sneary woke up one day and realized that the South Gate in '58 worldcon bid was becoming reality against all probabilities, so he decided to go for broke. “One of our dreams is to bring you and Madeleine over for the convention,” he wrote to Walter. “It is a crazy fannish type idea, just as South Gate in '58 was, and yet one means almost as much as the other.” Rick announced the campaign for the Second Coming of Willis, together with the debut of Madeleine in the United States, in mid-1957. Unfortunately, Mrs. G.M. Carr, a Seattle fan with a knack for getting involved in fusses, ruined everything. “Snog in the Fog” had become the unofficial slogan for the forthcoming 1957 London worldcon. Ron Bennett had been criticizing the phrase, and Willis in the ninth issue of *Ploy* also suggested playing down the “snog” angle: “If we’re not careful, some of those sex-starved Americans will ask for their money back if we don’t run the con like a brothel.” The hyperbole was similar to several hundred thousand other words of exaggeration for effect that Walter had written. Still, Mrs. Carr not only took it or pretended to take it literally, she also accused Willis of having been the individual in the United Kingdom who had sent her

anonymously several issues of *The Reporter*. She had never seen that American publication before and called it a “disgrace to our nation.” Finally, she charged that Willis had participated in a whispering campaign about Bob Madle’s victory in a TAFF campaign. Early in 1958, Walter announced that he wouldn’t accept the South Gate trip, attributing his decision to Madeleine’s interesting condition and to babysitter complications. Later he admitted that while these were valid reasons for his decision, Mrs. Carr’s attack was “the most depressing” factor in his failure to accept the trip. “With consummate timing,” he wrote, “G.M. Carr took the chance to publish her allegations that I was anti-American and an embittered loser over TAFF, coupled with sneers at the Outlanders for having invited me. It was obviously impossible for me to accept money from Americans when many fans believed I despised them, or to appear to be competing against TAFF when they thought me a frustrated dictator.” [1]

Through much of the 1950s there had been a degree of animosity between fans in the North and those in London, but there had also been tensions within London fandom itself. Believing these to be at least in part caused by seeing too much of each other, the Londoners decided in April 1959 that the London Circle’s weekly meetings at the Globe should be reduced to meetings on the first Thursday of the month only and that the Circle should organise itself along the same lines as Northern fans, with annual dues, membership cards and the like. It was hoped this would strengthen group identity. At first it looked as if it might, but the hope was short-lived. The London Symposium of 3rd/4th October that year was a convention in all but name and it was here on the second day that a number of people resigned from the London Circle. And so London fandom schismed, the dissident group styling themselves the Science Fiction Club of London (SFCoL). Centred around the Inchmery trio, this group soon attracted others to it, but Inchmery was not long for this world. In mid-1960, Joy Clarke left Vince for Sandy Sanderson and the pair moved to the US. Vince Clarke’s departure from fandom followed soon afterwards; but not before he published *Ex-Inchmery Fan Diary*, in which he revealed the beginnings of the affair:

...in the autumn of ’56 Harold Peter Sanderson, Sergeant in the RAPC, BNF in fandom, was posted back to England and came to lodge with us. We took on an extra bedroom, and he shared

the rest of the quarters with us. He was bound up then in the affairs of a married woman himself; for some time we saw little of him as he was out so often escorting her around the town in the evenings. But, in the summer of '57, she rejected him. He showed gloom, bought Sinatra records by the dozen and listened to the melancholy strains of vanished love for hours. "Darling," said Joy in front of another fan, "I think the best way to make him forget Frankie is to make him fall in love with me." I had an inward pang, but... "Oh, you needn't worry about me and Sandy, sweetheart. He's so *immature*. You're the only one for me." And later... "People are puzzled about us and Sandy... they don't realise the love we have for each other." So the '57 World Con films show Joy in Sandy's arms, Sandy kissing Joy, and myself taking no notice.

Space where you can insert any epithet that occurs to you.

[2]

It would be the Science Fiction Club of London that later organised the next UK Worldcon in 1965, chaired by SFCoL member Ella Parker – arguably the most important British fan of the 1960s. But that, as they say, is a story for another time....

•

The above is all covered in more detail in *Then*.

[1] *A Wealth of Fable* by Harry Warner, Jr.
(Fanhistorica Press, 1976-1977; revised
1992)

[2] *Ex-Inchmery Fan Diary* (July 1960, ed.
Vince Clarke)

Appendices

WORLD SCIENCE FICTION SOCIETY, INC.

1957



15th

World Science Fiction
Convention

INAUGURAL LUNCHEON
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7th
1. 15 P.M.

KINGS COURT HOTEL,
LEINSTER GARDENS,
LONDON. W. 2

Appendix 1

The Official Programme

September 6

Friday Evening

9 p.m. – Main Hall

A Call to Order with a difference

Spotlight

This session will be brief, so if you are late you will probably miss it altogether

The rest of the evening will be devoted to meeting old and new friends, although there will be certain minor interruptions which you will be told about as they occur

You are advised to watch the Bulletin Boards as often as possible for on-the-spot information

September 7

Saturday Morning

11 a.m. – Main Hall

Mersey and Deeside Productions present

A Pot-Pourri of Jazz (part 1)

Saturday Afternoon

1:00 p.m. for 1:15 p.m. – Dining Room

the convention luncheon

At the conclusion of the meal the doors will be opened for those who were unable to attend earlier, so that all delegates may listen to the main speeches. There will be numerous speakers, many of them international, contributing some of the best speeches of the entire Convention. Be certain you do not miss this session.

Beverages will be obtainable throughout this period, and you will be able to drink in comfort (we hope) and listen with ease

Saturday Evening

8:15 p.m. – Main Hall
A sort of Opening
Intervention One

8:30 p.m. – Main Hall
Presentation of the 1956/57
Achievement Awards
and other miscellaneous business
For further details, watch the Bulletin Boards

9:00 p.m. – Main Hall
A talk
Britain's First Planetarium
By Mr. R. Edds – Public Relations Officer of Madame Tussaud's Ltd

9:30 p.m. – Main Hall
The First Auction session
Going.....!
Auctioneers: Ted Tubb and Pete Daniels
Bring your own money!

10:15 p.m.
Intermission

10:45 p.m. – Main Hall
When you are invited to come to the
Costume Party
Dancing, Bar, Buffet, until the small hours

12:00 p.m. – Midnight
Fancy Dress Parade and Judging
Prizes will be awarded in the following categories:
Hired Costumes
(a) Best Male
(a) Best Female
Home-Made Costumes
(a) Best Scientifictional
(a) Most original and/or Fannish
After a suitable period the prizes will be presented

September 8

Sunday Morning

11 a.m. – Main Hall

For those who are conscious, we present

A Pot-Pourri of Jazz (part 2)

If you cannot find your bed – you may be around for this!

Sunday Afternoon

2:15 p.m. – Main Hall

Another sort of Opening

Intervention Two

2:30 a.m. – Main Hall

Presenting

The Ceremony of St. Fantony

featuring Knight Grand Master Eric Jones and Knight Armourer
Robert Richardson with a full supporting cast from the Cheltenham
Science Fiction Circle

3:00 p.m. – Main Hall

MaD Productions and the Cheltenham SF Circle present

Fanfaces

A programme of amateur 8mm cine films in colour and monochrome

4:00 p.m. – TV Lounge

Commencement of

Grand International Tea-Drinking Contest

For information regarding entries see the Bulletin Boards. The Rules
of the Contest are printed elsewhere in this booklet*

* See "[Sunday 8th September: 2 – Tea](#)". This item was cancelled.

4:20 p.m. – Main Hall

Harry Powers and the Gestalters invite you to

A Demonstration of Hypnotism

With fannish undertones

Sunday Evening

8:15 p.m. – Main Hall

Yet another sort of Opening!

Intervention Three

8:30 p.m. – A taped programme

Taperama

Produced by one of Britain's leading fan groups

9:00 p.m. – Main Hall

A unique opportunity to see the magnificent animated fantasy film

Mr. Wonderbird

Special Award Winner of the Venice Film Festival

This will be followed immediately by:

Going.....!!

The Second Auction session

Auctioneers: Ted Tubb and A Guest

Bring anybody's money!

11:00 p.m. –

End of Session

The hall will be available for private (or public) ventures after the end of the official sessions. Apply to the Programme Committee

September 9

Monday Morning

11 a.m. – Main Hall

A panel of well-known SF personalities will answer YOUR questions

Science Fiction Forum

If you have a topic that needs airing, tell the Programme Committee and they will try and include it in the Programme. Alternatively, apply to the Programme Committee for a suggested list of awkward questions

3:15 p.m. – Main Hall

John W. Campbell Jr will talk on

Psionics

and then Officiate at a three-cornered discussion, the other protagonists being Eric Jones and Pete Daniels

Monday Evening

8:15 p.m. – Main Hall

Still *another* sort of opening!

Intervention Four

8:30 p.m. – Main Hall

A programme where anything might happen

Fantasy Free

– and probably will!

8:30 p.m. – TV Lounge

A second showing of the 8mm Film Programme

Fanfaces

9:30 p.m. – Main Hall

The final Auction

Gone.....!!!

when the Auctioneers will try and sell you everything that is left
including such bric-a-brac as Tower Bridge, Nelson's Column and
Cleopatra's Needle

10:15 p.m. – Main Hall

Valediction

– Programme Book (September 1957)

Appendix 2

Membership List

Of the 496 listed below, 286 attended the convention.

(S) = Scotland; (W) = Wales; (—) = attendee who joined after printing of Programme Booklet. (There were almost certainly more of these.)

British Members (180):

- 380. Gillian Adams
- 280. Brian W. Aldiss
- 224. Pauline Anderson
- 015. Frank Arnold
- (—). Mal Ashworth
- (—). Sheila Ashworth
- 467. B. Avient (W)
- 297. B.A. Baker
- 411. Alan Bale
- (—). J.G. Ballard
- 161. Ron Bennett
- 154. Eric Bentcliffe
- 229. William Bentley
- 306. Sid Birchby
- 477. Graham Bishop
- 377. John Boland
- 471. Philippa Boland
- 167. Irene Boothroyd
- 172. H.M. Boxer
- 435. J.H. Briston
- 012. Fred Brown
- 010. John Brunner
- 190. Daphne Buckmaster
- 191. Ron L. Buckmaster
- 004. Ken Bulmer
- 005. Pamela Bulmer
- 249. Brian Burgess
- (—). H.J. Campbell
- 369. John Campbell

003. E.J. “Ted” Carnell
220. Harry Carr
185. J. Cawthorn
152. P. Chappell
430. L.F. Childs
266. Arthur C. Clarke
228. Harry Clements
379. Edmund Cooney
018. David Cohen
030. Danny Cohen
031. Peter Campbell
409. Patrick Chamberlain
382. Meredith Chatterton
032. K.W. Cowley
006. Vince Clarke
007. Joy Clarke
371. W.O. Daniels
466. E.F. Denby
308. Karl Dollner
017. Philip Duerr
014. Charles Duncombe
221. Peter Emery
454. Paul Enever
262. Cyril Evans
208. Frances Evans
223. C. Riche-Evans
157. Patrick Everest
178. B.G. Evers
300. Audrey B. Eversfield
465. Leslie Flood
376. Keith Freeman
408. Robert G. Gardner
375. Dr W. Arthur Gibson (S)
389. William H. Godwin
176. H. Gomberg
370. J. Greenfield
256. Barnard A. Guidi
(—). Ron Hall
028. Peter Hamilton (S)
(—). Joan Hammett

289. Dr. Paul Hammett
384. Peter Hammerton
213. Chuck Harris
235. Bill Harrison
227. Doris Harrison
(—). Bill Harry
023. Ewan Hedger
203. Arthur Hillman (W)
388. J.H. Humphries
276. Alan Hunter
385. John Hynam (aka Kippax)
295. P.P. Imbusch
168. E.R. James
025. Terry Jeeves
151. Eddie Jones
022. Eric Jones
202. Margaret Jones
199. Keith T. Johnson
158. Ken Johnson
428. Marjorie Keller (later Brunner)
218. Hal Kennedy
462. Graham Kingsley
434. M. Kingsley
174. Victor Le Blond (S)
265. Bert Lewis
453. Brian Lewis
475. Doreen Lewthwaite
184. Helen Leyton
011. Ethel Lindsay (S)
024. Nigel Lindsay
160. J.G. Linwood
368. George Locke
216. George Lye
159. Peter H. Mabey
175. Thomas L. MacDonald
206. J. Marigny
211. Shirley Marriott
217. Jim Marshall
186. S.V. May
287. Ivor Mayne

155. Ken T. McIntyre
 034. Archie Mercer
 181. J. Micklethwaite
 236. Frank Milnes
 237. Patricia Milnes
 480. Miss Leslie Minard
 307. Mike Moorcock
 169. Dan Morgan
 171. L. Morris
 173. J.H. Munns
 204. J.R. Needham
 205. Mrs. J.R. Needham
 020. David Newman
 299. John Newman
 234. Stanley Nuttall
 (—). Peter Ogden
 177. D. Oldham
 153. J.R. Owen (W)
 029. David Page
 (—). Peter Phillips
 407. N. Pinner
 301. Robert Presslie
 481. Wm. E.H. Price (W)
 008. James Rattigan
 009. Dorothy Rattigan
 305. Peter Reaney
 (—). Bob Richardson
 366. L.P. Rogers
 019. John Roles
 232. Michael Rosenblum
 (—). Mrs Eileen Russell
 (—). Eric Frank Russell
 197. Sandy Sanderson
 212. Laurence Sandfield
 260. S.F. Book Club
 170. J.N. Sharma
 207. Ina Shorrock
 021. Norman Shorrock
 263. Frank Simpson
 219. Ken Skelton

026. Ken Slater
264. Ken Smith
414. F.R. Smith
230. Ted Taylor
469. Peter Taylor
423. R.J. Tilley
424. Mrs. R.J. Tilley
476. K.W. Tolman
250. Arthur Thomson
367. Wyville S. Thomson
296. Tony Thorne
(—). Ted Tubb
209. Con Turner
210. Mrs. C. Turner
156. Mike Wallace
298. Norman Wansborough
233. Norman Weedall
425. Doris M. Weldon
383. A. Wenham
016. Peter West
180. Cyril Whittaker
013. Roberta Wild
226. Harry Wilkins
179. Jack Wilson
365. Peter Wilson
033. Helen Winick
304. Lan Wright
458. P.B. Wring
002. John Wyndham
(—) Sam Youd
225. Kathleen Youden
215. Audrey Young

American Members (277):

353. Robert Abernathy
108. Forrest J. Ackerman
374. Steve Ager
406. George Allen
079. Frank Andrasovsky
401. Valeria K. Anjoorian
259. Fred W. Arnold

061. Ralph Bailey
332. Betty Ballantine
333. Ian Ballantine
436. Carl L. Barber
356. Gray Barker
286. Landell Bartlett
459. Greg Benford
460. Jim Benford
347. Zelda Benoit
325. M.I. Benson
098. William F. Bentlake
090. Edward E. Bielfeldt
278. Robert Bloch
396. Jean Bryant Bogert
273. John Boggess
449. John Borchert
251. Anthony Boucher
104. Vera de Bra
105. Warren de Bra
118. Leigh Brackett
358. Catherine M. Brennan
339. Kay Brickman
135. Kevin O'Brien
136. Robert Briney
071. James F. Broderick
357. Jacqueline G. Brooks
330. Robert D. Cahn
001. John W. Campbell
(—). Peggy Campbell
076. Dennie R. Campbell
147. Jean Carroll
319. Phyllis Carter
335. Montrell Chandler
302. John Champion
126. Ben Chorost
110. J.A. Christoff
334. Bernard Shir-Cliff
194. Martha Cohen
429. Robert Colbert
092. George L. Cole

080. W.R. Cole
134. Sidney Coleman
473. James Cooper, Jr.
099. Dr. Donald L. Corbett
387. Wm. J. Cox
050. Dan Curran
054. Sandy Cuttrell
363. Audrey Deane
077. Thomas A. Denny
341. Sheldon J. Deretchin
192. Belle C. Dietz
038. Franklin M. Dietz
060. Nellie R. Dillingham
123. William L. Donahue
442. Arlene Donovan
381. Sally Dunn
113. Mary Dziechowski
117. Dick Ellington
200. Harlan Ellison
201. Charlotte Ellison
120. Lloyd A. Eshbach
321. Hazel R. Fahringer
109. Thompson R. Fahringer
359. Nicholas Falasca
360. Noreen Falasca
292. Rory Faulkner
094. Donn N. Filetti
312. Sherman Fishman
040. Eva Firestone
261. T.E. Forbes
457. Don Ford
326. Andrew Frey
132. Alderson Fry
148. Randy Garrett
470. Michael Gates
400. Sidney Gerson
129. Alice Goodwin
127. George Goodwin
143. Jim Goodwin
093. Judith Grad

354. Mary Graham
035. Lewis J. Grant
336. Pauline Grimm
335. Rosalyn Gutstein
313. Ian S. Lindfield-Hall
119. Edmond Hamilton
067. William L. Hamling
068. Frances Hamling
412. Jack Harbold
310. W.H. Hardy
254. Harry Harrison
255. Joan Harrison
464. Dale Hart
344. Harriet Hausman
322. Margery Hawthorne
338. Christine E. Haycock (later Moskowitz)
318. George R. Heap
331. Helen S. Heap
166. Lars-Erik Helin
340. Nella Hellinger
070. Rusty Hevelin
058. Stephen J. Hilbert
432. Melvin B. Hipwell
146. John Hitchcock
410. Ralph M. Holland
039. Stuart S. Hoffman
047. Bret Hooper
139. Peter H. Hope
183. W.S. Houston
072. Allan Howard
088. Gordon N. Huber
196. Charles H. Infinity
073. Ben Jason
101. William J. Jenkins
294. Jerry Josties
056. Lyle Keasler
443. Ben Keifer
085. George J. Kelly
290. Earl Kemp
291. Nancy Kemp

437. Al King
372. George Kircos
268. Betty Kujawa
314. Dr. Ernest Kun
446. Arthur C. Kyle
447. Constance Kyle
045. David A. Kyle
046. Ruth E. Kyle
279. Allen K. Lang
463. James Lawrence
402. Charles G. Leedham
403. Betty Leedham
361. Kathleen Leerburger
362. Benedict Leerburger
413. Alan J. Lewis
055. Audrey Lovatt
189. "The Lunarians" *
441. Eva Lusk
103. Harold Lynch
048. Ian T. Macauley
193. David MacDonald
431. Daniel MacPhail
083. Robert A. Madle
395. Paul C. Manchester
398. Cylvia K. Margulies
142. John E. Maroney
111. Edmund Maske III
303. Massena Foundation
138. Albert E. Maves
461. Jerome Mendel
041. Wm. J. Merrill III
042. Pamela Merrill
095. William C. McCain
133. Winifred McGill
355. Donald L. McCulty
364. George Metzger
440. May Middleton
474. Donald Miller
214. Ellis T. Mills
164. Harold Moellendick

271. Len J. Moffatt
272. Anna Sinclair Moffatt
390. Roderic A. Monsen
327. Pearl Moskowitz
316. Sam Moskowitz
(—). Ray Nelson
439. Howard Neuberger
405. David Nillo
472. William M. Noe II
049. Perry Norris
087. Karl Olsen
270. Ruth O'Rourke
144. Bob Pavlat
448. Kenneth T. Pearlman
222. Trina Perlson
275. Bea Peterson
253. John Victor Peterson
114. Elaine Phillips
293. H. Beam Piper
311. Audrey Plimpton
315. Charles A. Phelps
115. Max Phillips
438. R. Roger Pierce
195. David Pollard
404. Maurice Powell
064. Frank R. Prieto
065. George W. Price
348. Robert Lee Prickett
349. Mrs. R. Lee Prickett
059. Friederick Prophet
051. Thomas Purdom
324. Evonne Rae
097. Donald G. Ray
112. George Nims Raybin
043. Gerry de la Ree
044. Helen de la Ree
089. Lester del Rey
091. Evelyn del Rey
285. Mack Reynolds
165. Robert H. Richardson

342. Joan Rock
074. Jock Root
267. D.H. Sailors
096. Sue E. Sanderson
130. Hans Stefan Santesson
248. Joseph A. Sarno
131. Harvey J. Satley
100. Stephen F. Schultheis
(—). Warren Scott
075. Arthur Sennea
086. Lyn Shanas
036. Lee Hoffman Shaw
037. Larry Shaw
066. Mona Lee Shines
052. Barbara Silverberg
053. Robert Silverberg
057. Roger Sims
(—). Lee Sirat
444. Stan Skirvin
445. Joan Skirvin
269. Coral Smith
121. Edward E. Smith
122. Jeannie M. Smith
198. Rick Sneary
240. Bill Sokol
258. Larry Sokol
140. Mary Lalene Spilsbury
252. Ben Stark
284. Mildred C. Smith
320. Corwin F. Stickney
323. Evelyn E. Smith
328. Herbert S. Schofield
329. Nancy Sherry
337. Lee Sirat
345. Robert Sheckley
346. Ziva Sheckley
350. Barbara Schmidt
351. Adolf Schmidt
352. Eric Schmidt
386. Sue Stanley

393. Jack H. Speer
394. Harriet Segman
397. Milton Spahn
281. Steve Takacs
282. Ronnie Takacs
063. James V. Taurasi
106. Charles Thornton
107. Oswald Train
137. Lee Anne Tremper
145. Bob Tucker
150. Joseph M. Vallin
062. Ray Van Houten
343. Catherine Verrastro
187. Volmeyer High School SF Society
433. Eleanor S. Walker
125. John G. Wanderer
450. Randy Warman
116. Pat Warner
081. Wally Weber
124. Jerome Wenker
149. Ernest A. Wheatley
078. Gertrude Whittum
069. David H. Williams
317. Jack Williamson
283. Richard Wilson
084. Ruse Winterbotham
141. Mary June Wolf
(—). Stan Woolston
102. Jack S. Zeitz
309. John Zola

** The then-newest New York City SF club, "The Lunarians", held its inaugural meeting on 18th November 1956 with ten fans in attendance. President was Dave Kyle; Treasurer Franklin M. Dietz; and Secretary Belle Dietz.*

Australian Members (14):

246. Dr. David Barnett
427. Mervyn R. Binns
243. Michael Cannon
244. Lillian Chalmers

418. Mrs. J. Joyce
420. K. Sterling Macoboy
416. G.R. Meyer
242. Vol Molesworth
415. Mrs Patricia Platt
245. Bruce H. Purdy
421. Warren Somerville
247. Alan South
241. Graham B. Stone
419. Keith Thiselton

Irish Members – North & South (6):

452. George Charters
288. Mrs. V. Douglas
274. T. Hiley O'Neill
277. James White
027. Walter Willis
451. Madeleine Willis

Canadian Members (6):

378. Robert Bidwell
082. Arthur Hayes
128. P. Howard Lyons
163. William V. McQuaid
426. Anders Petersen
373. Boyd Raeburn

German Members (6):

478. Dr. med. E. Disselhoff
479. Frau H. Dieselhoff
468. Rainer Eisfeld
(—). Thomas Meikle
231. Julian Parr
182. Anne Steul

Swedish Members (3):

422. Alvar Appeltofft
188. Lars Helander
257. Leif Helgesson

Other Members (5):

162. Jan Jansen – Belgium
238. T.W. Leng – N. Borneo

- 239. Mrs. D. Leng – N. Borneo
- 391. Evelyn Adams Whyte – Switzerland
- 392. Andrew Adams Whyte – Switzerland

Appendix 3

Two Worldcons, Worlds Apart – Robert Silverberg

Reprinted from *Asimov's Science Fiction*, July 2005.

In a few months the World Science Fiction Convention will return to the British Isles; and, Lord willing, so will I, 48 years after my first visit to that green and pleasant land.

I think I know what I can expect from the 2005 Worldcon that is to be held soon in Glasgow – an experience much like the one I had at the first Glasgow Worldcon ten years before, only rather more so. My recollections of Glasgow in 1995 include a pleasant stay on the nineteenth floor of the lofty Hilton Hotel, a bit of whisky in my breakfast oatmeal and haggis for lunch, a daily jaunt across town to the shimmering, glassy convention center, and having, amid the great throngs of convention-goers, old friends and new, a whirlwind series of encounters not only with British fans and writers but with delegates from former Soviet-bloc countries like Latvia and Poland and the Czech Republic and Ukraine, and visitors from Russia itself, all of them still rarities in the early post-Communist years. At the end of the day there was dinner in one of Glasgow's superb restaurants, and a party at one of the hotels, and perhaps a drop or two of the single malt before bedtime. This time, I suppose, everything will be bigger, shinier, throngier, whirlwindier. I do hope to stay at the Hilton again and to find that the single-malt product is still available, and I will gladly sit down to dine on haggis when the opportunity is presented.

One thing is sure, though: whatever the 2005 Glasgow convention will be like, it won't be remotely similar to the first British Worldcon of all, the one that was held in London in September of 1957. That convention now seems to have taken place in some alternate universe. Those of you whose Worldcon experience is confined to the last ten or fifteen such events would be flabbergasted by the differences between a modern con and that primordial one.

We can start with the attendance figures. I have attended all five of the previous British Worldcons, and I must be one of just ten or twenty people who can make that claim, because there were merely 268 people present at that first one in 1957. (268 attendees, yes: not a typographical

error. There will be individual panels at the upcoming Glasgow affair, or autographing lines for the more popular pros, that will have more people than that in attendance.) Attrition of one kind or another must have claimed most of those 268 along the way, and those of us who remember the quaint event out in Leinster Gardens are growing very sparse by now.

Quaint is the right word for it. The venue was the Kings Court Hotel, a very modest affair of Victorian or Edwardian vintage a mile west of Marble Arch. It was my first trip overseas, and London's architecture, primarily of 19th-century origin, looked downright medieval to someone like me who had grown up in the high-rise glamor of 20th-century New York. The Kings Court in particular seemed like something out of the middle ages to me. Everyone who attended the convention stayed in that tiny squalid hostelry except for those who commuted from their London homes. All the convention events, such as they were, took place there too, in one small ballroom. (Certain other convention events, the unscheduled kind, took place in the nearby lounge, where beverages of all kinds flowed freely and uninhibited British fans put on displays of public affection that the staid, puritanical American attendees beheld in bemused astonishment.)

The cost of a room at the Kings Court was one pound a night, including breakfast. Let me repeat that, too: *one pound a night*, which then was the equivalent of \$1.40. You must make allowances, of course, for the carnage that half a century of inflation has wreaked on good old sterling: in those days a reasonable salary for a shopgirl or a young clerk was six or seven hundred pounds a year, a local ride on the Underground was sixpence – 2.5p in modern British money – and newspapers cost a penny except for posh ones like the *Times*, which might have been tuppence then. Even so, a pound a night for a hotel room was on the low side for the era, so low that when my wife and I hopped over to Paris for a few days during our trip, we simply kept our London room rather than go to the bother of putting our things in storage during our absence.

Of course, the Kings Court was somewhat less than lavish. That pound-a-night fee didn't include heat in one's room, for example. If you wanted that, you fed one-shilling pieces (think 10p. coins) into a meter on the wall. The Americans at the con, perhaps a third of the total attendance, were utterly unfamiliar with that kind of arrangement, but we quickly learned to keep a stockpile of shillings on hand to get us through the night. Another little hotel amenity to which we Americans were accustomed was a private bath and toilet in each room; but no, no, austerity was still the watchword in an England not yet fully recovered from the hardships of the

war, and the Kings Court provided just one or two such chambers on each floor, giving us a nice little lesson in old-world privation.

Then there was the matter of breakfast: toast, cornflakes, sausages, eggs. No problem there, except that the toast was prepared the night before and set out on each table in little metal racks, along with bowls of corn flakes. The layout of the hotel was such that the most convenient route from our rooms to the meeting-hall in the evening was through the dining room, but the first time we tried it we were met with anguished cries from the hotel staff: "Please don't walk through here! You'll get dust in the cornflakes!" That became a watchword for the attendees all weekend.

As for the attendees, those brave 268 of the Worldcon Pleistocene who tiptoed past the cornflakes, they included a good many whose names are still familiar today. Among the writers present were Brian Aldiss, Harry Harrison, Arthur C. Clarke, James White, H. Ken Bulmer, E.C. Tubb, John Wyndham, Michael Moorcock, Eric Frank Russell, William F. Temple, H. Beam Piper, and Sam Youd ("John Christopher"). John Brunner – whose death at the 1995 Glasgow convention cast such a tragic pall over that con – was there too, a slender lad of 23. The formidable John W. Campbell, greatest of SF magazine editors, was the Loncon guest of honour. His British counterpart, E.J. ("Ted") Carnell of *New Worlds*, was the convention chairman. Everyone who was anyone in British fandom was on hand, of course, and a good many American fans, too, most of them passengers aboard a chartered flight organised by David A. Kyle of New York.

You would think that the programme would have been a busy one, with that many of the era's best-known professionals there. You would be wrong. The day of the round-the-clock multi-track convention programme was still far in the future. The one and only event of Loncon's first day, Friday, September 6, was a brief opening ceremony in the evening, followed by a party. Saturday morning nothing was scheduled except a concert of recorded jazz. In the afternoon came the official convention luncheon, featuring brief speeches by many of the con's celebrities – an event made notorious when the famous American fan Forrest J Ackerman, who had arrived wearing a string necktie of a type commonly worn in the Western United States but unknown in England, was turned away at the door. "The ceremony is to begin with a toast to Her Majesty," Forrie was told. "Gentlemen must wear neckties." His protests that he *was* wearing a necktie were unavailing. (I suppose it's still possible to imagine a ceremony at a modern British convention that includes a toast to the Queen, but one for which neckties of any sort are mandatory is

unthinkable today.)

The Hugos were handed out on Saturday night – a brief ceremony, because only three were given, one for best American magazine (Campbell's *Astounding Science Fiction*), one for best British magazine (Carnell's *New Worlds*), and one to *Science-Fiction Times*, the *Locus* of its day. With that rite out of the way, an official of Madame Tussaud's waxworks spoke for half an hour about Britain's first planetarium, and an auction of old SF magazines and magazine illustrations filled in the time until 10:45, when a costume ball got going in the minuscule main hall, followed by the traditional masquerade and judging of the costumes. Sunday's programme was equally light – more jazz in the morning and the showing of amateur films in the afternoon and a hypnotism demonstration (in which I failed utterly to go into a trance, though some British fans proved hilariously more susceptible). Then, at night, came a film showing (*Mr. Wonderbird*) and another auction for collectors.

Monday, the last day, provided the one and only panel of the entire convention – a question-and-answer session featuring half a dozen of the attending pros. After that, John Campbell delivered his guest of honour speech (on psionics, of course, the latest of his many pseudo-scientific obsessions), and the rest of the day was devoted to the sort of mild noodling around (more amateur films, another auction) that had filled most of the weekend.

Not much of a programme, no. I can't remember much about my own role in it, aside from sitting in on the hypnotism session. I think I was part of that Monday panel, but maybe not. It was all a long time ago and the fifty Worldcons I've attended have begun to blur together beyond repair.

My keenest memories of Loncon I have to do with alcohol. Not that I'm a hard-drinking man – which is, in fact, the point. The first episode occurred at a pub called the Globe in Hatton Garden, where on Thursday nights the London SF crowd was wont to gather. Ted Carnell took me to the meeting the night before the con opened, and, when in an injudicious moment I expressed curiosity about British beer, everybody there insisted on buying the young American writer his special favourite. Politely, I tried them all, going way beyond my capacity, and then, at the end of the evening, John Brunner said, grinning diabolically, "But you haven't had barley wine yet, have you?" And coolly foisted a bottle of that high-proof ale on me, a lethal topper that sent me reeling off into the night.

At the convention itself I was inducted into the Order of St. Fantony, a mysterious cult operated by Cheltenham fandom. At the climax of the ceremony the new inductees – I was one of about five – were handed a tall

glass of a clear fluid that was described as “water from the sacred well of St. Fantony” and instructed to drain it at a gulp. Which we did; but what the glass contained, I learned a few stunned moments later, was something called Polish white spirits – 140-proof vodka. Ah, yes, a quaint little convention.

Quaint, too, were the bizarre sodium lights that cast an eerie orange-yellow glow over the nearby streets of the Bayswater Road and over the prostitutes who thronged there. Prostitution is not unknown in America, of course, but the streetwalking kind was uncommon back in that distant age, and I had never seen any right out in the open before. The poor girls were not exactly looking their best under those yellow-orange lights, to put it mildly, and for me the sight of them was, well, a nicely alien experience.

Long, long ago, that London Worldcon. I do expect that things will be quite different in Glasgow, where the convention will be ten times as big and the streetlamps won’t glow orange. Hold the Polish white spirits and pass the haggis, please.

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Appendix 4

Further Reading and Photos

Some convention reports excerpted in this ebook can be read in full elsewhere. Here is a selection of longer examples:

- Ron Bennett – “The King’s Court Affair” in *Innuendo* #6, edited by Terry Carr.
<https://fanac.org/fanzines/Innuendo/Innuendo06.pdf#page=14>
- Sid Birchby – “Worldcon – London ’57” in *Ploy* #11, March 1958, edited by Ron Bennett.
<https://fanac.org/fanzines/Ploy/Ploy11-05.html>
- Chuck Harris – “Lonconfidential”, December 1957, edited by Chuck Harris; also reprinted in *Creative Random Harris* (Ansible Editions ebook, 2021).
http://fanac.org/fanzines/Trip_and_Con_Reports/Trip_and_Con_Reports02.pdf
- James White – “The Quinze-y Report” in *Hyphen* #19, January 1958, edited by Walt Willis and Chuck Harris; also reprinted in *The White Papers* (NESFA Press, 1996).
<https://fanac.org/fanzines/Hyphen/Hyphen19.pdf>
- Walt Willis – “The Harp that Once or Twice” columns in *Oops!a* #23 and #24, November 1957 and January 1958, edited by Gregg Calkins.
<https://www.fanac.org/fanzines/Oops!a/Oops!a23.pdf#page=10>
<https://www.fanac.org/fanzines/Oops!a/Oops!a24.pdf#page=11>

Links to images in this ebook:

- [Loncon press invitation](#)
- [Ad in NyCon II programme book, 1956](#)
- [Ad in *The Journal* vol XIV #3, June 1956](#)
- [Ad in *The Journal* vol XIV #2, March 1956](#)
- [Ad in *New Worlds* #63, September 1957](#)
- [The King’s Court Hotel](#)
- [Aldiss and \(twice\) Ballard at Loncon](#)
- [Galaxy, February 1951](#)
- [Loncon programme book](#)
- [Loncon lunch menu](#)

- [New Worlds #63, September 1957](#)

A large number of photos taken at the 1957 Worldcon can be viewed at Rob Hansen's web pages about Loncon. The second link below demonstrates that the hotel itself was inconsistent about whether Kings Court takes an apostrophe: compare the brochure with the bill and receipt. The third link is to the official Programme Book and the fourth lists further known reports in addition to the above.

- <http://fiawol.org.uk/FanStuff/THEN%20Archive/1957Worldcon/LonWorld.htm>
- <http://fiawol.org.uk/FanStuff/THEN%20Archive/1957Worldcon/hotel.htm>
- <http://fiawol.org.uk/FanStuff/THEN%20Archive/1957Worldcon/ProgBk.htm>
- <http://fiawol.org.uk/FanStuff/THEN%20Archive/1957Worldcon/LonWorld7.htm#4.NAM>

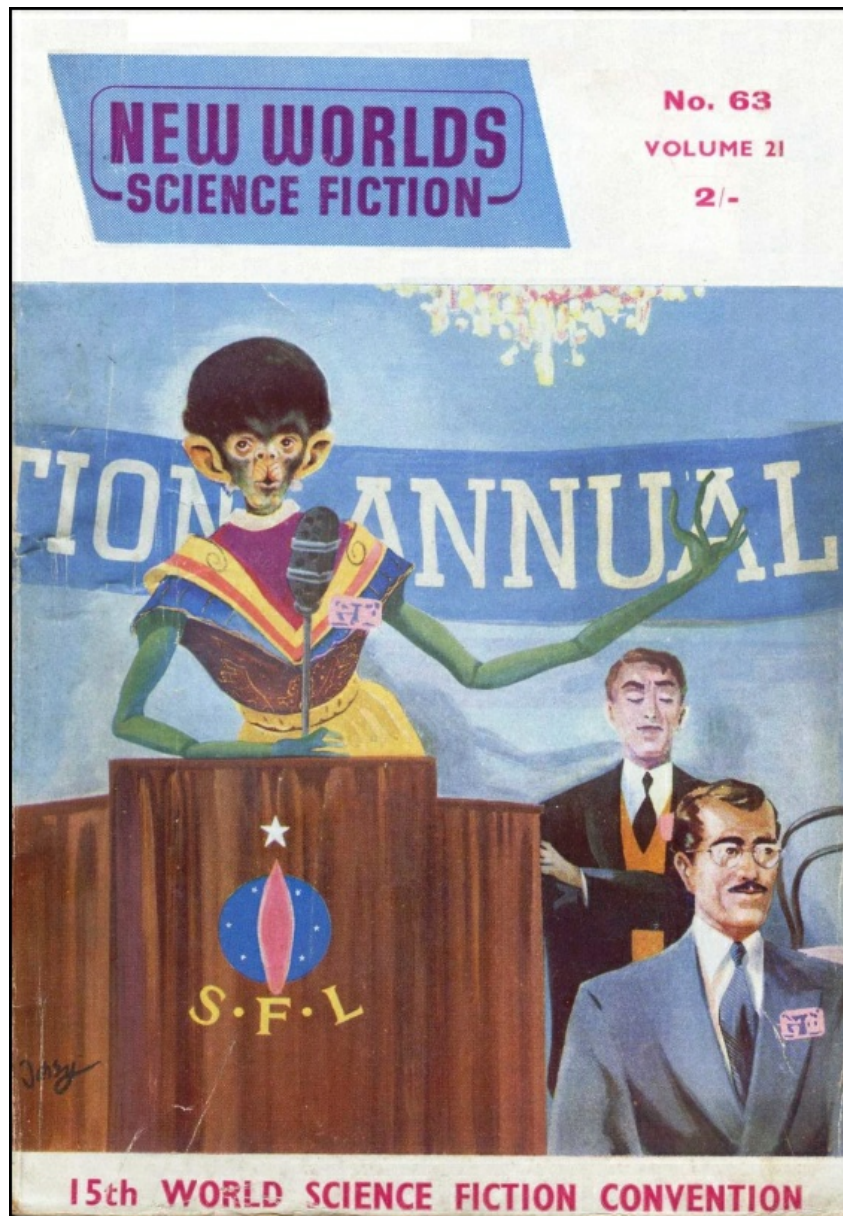
A 90-second clip from a news report on the con was posted online by ITN Archive in September 2022. It was (inevitably) filmed during the masquerade/fancy dress. This can be viewed at the link below:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fBAwkB-QP1Q>

Fans appearing in the video include the following:

- 0.00 Jean Bogert with zap gun at start.
- 0.05 Man with glasses looks like Sandy Sandfield.
- 0.06 Norman Shorrocks visible over shoulder of man in mask.
- 0.12 Eric Jones interviewed.
- 0.25 Ron Buckmaster interviewed.
- 0.50 Frank and Belle Dietz interviewed in alien costumes. Round-faced teenager in the background is Mike Moorcock.
- 1.18 Man with moustache at right rear is Ken McIntyre.

The ITN interviewer is Lynne Reid Banks, later a best-selling author whose books included children's fantasy though not sf. It's a shame that none of the interviews filmed for the BBC by Alan Whicker have ever shown up.



New Worlds #63, September 1957. E.J. Carnell at right.

The End

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September 1956 The First Press Release	
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April 1957 Cytricon III	
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July 1957 Summer Update	
July 1957 Guest of Honour Announced	
August 1957 The Final Minutes	
August 1957 A Fan-Tastic Honeymoon	
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September 1957 The Netherlands	
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Friday 6th September 3 – Chairman's Address	
Friday 6th September 4 – Opening Ceremony	
Saturday 7th September 1 – The Banquet	
Saturday 7th September 2 – The Case of the Missing Gavel	
Saturday 7th September 3 – Music and Masquerades	
Sunday 8th September 1 – Booze, Breakfast, and Saint Fantony	

Sunday 8th September 2 – Tea
Sunday 8th September 3 – Into the Night
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Monday 9th September 2 – All Good Things...
Tuesday 10th September 1957 Tolkien and the Taffman
September 1957 Making Merry with Inchmery
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