

HYP0-SPACE

TEN YEARS ON A SHOESTRING



- marking the 10th Anniversary of Hatfield PSIFA.

A *Hypo-Space* Special.

HYP0-SPACE

Polytechnic Science Fiction / Fantasy Association.



Ten Years On A Shoestring.

A 10th Anniversary *Hypo-Space* Special.

Editor: Tandfran.

Production: Tandfran Reprographics in
association with *Concatenation* Publications.

Research: Jonathan Cowie.

Setting: Richard Edwards.

Printing: Howard Jones, Birmingham.

Sales (after Easter 1989): Roger Robinson.

Principal Contributors include: Ramsey Campbell, Stuart Clark, Graham Connor, Chris Cooper, Arthur Cruttendon, Sue Harrison, Anthony Heathcote, Mat Irvine, Wilf (Jesse) James, Dave Lermitt, Bob Shaw, John Watkinson, Ken Slater, Richard & Marion van der Voort, Ian Watson. Archival Contributions: Pete Gilligan & Phil James.

Correspondence - matters pertaining to this issue: *Hypo-Space* Special, c/o *Concatenation*, 44 Brook St, Erith, Kent, DA8 1JQ. Please be patient if awaiting a reply as the editor is rarely in England, or even on planet. All correspondence will ultimately be dealt with.

Correspondence - matters pertaining to PSIFA: The President PSIFA, c/o The Students' Union, Hatfield Polytechnic, College Lane, Hatfield, Herts.

SALES (after Easter 1989): Copies @ £1 (inclusive of P&P) from: BECCON Publications, 75 Rosslyn Avenue, Harold Wood, Essex, England. Cheques & POs payable to "BECCON Publications" with order.

© Reverts to the contributors on publication. All views expressed herein are possibly those of the contributors and certainly nothing to do with the editor or production team. In keeping with early PSIFA publications, this booklet has not been proof read. All involved have absolutely nothing against Biggleswade which is a jolly nice place and Dave may go there for his hols.

YOU'RE WELCOME TO PSIFA.

If you are a Hatfield student, a visitor to the poly', or had the singular delight of a close encounter of the PSIFAn kind, then you are welcome to Hatfield SF! It's a bit like a black hole. Indeterminate boundary that just swallows anything coming close. It also does weird things to your sense of space and time - though PSIFAns will tell you that's just the SF&DA.


Anyway, it just happened that I was back on planet, in Britain, this Autumn of 1988 and dropped in on Jonathan C. Imagine my reaction when he reminded me that it was just *over* ten years since we met and that the majority of our relationship seemed to centre around PSIFA. It gave me a right turn I tell you. I had to do something.

"I need your word processor," I told him. "You go out and get some feedback, and don't be long, we have simply got to warn the World."

So this is it. Some may think this is a celebration of PSIFA's 10 years, a remembrance of a spaced-out decade, a solemnization of rituals long passed. Current PSIFAns might think this a tribute to the continuing generations, especially themselves, that have kept the torch (taper more like) held high for so long. Those new to the college and its group may possibly view of this as some kind of induction document. *All* are emphatically wrong!

Future generations, after the global apocalypse to come, reading this may gain insight into the insanity of our time. Only these last would come close, for this volume is in fact a warning! Be on your guard. Watch the skies. Ignore this tomelet at your peril. If you don't you could well end up having pickled synapses, an electric-blown Fantast-mobile, a will with the breaking strain of a Mars bar, or even, perish the thought, be flabber-globber-merated!

You don't believe it? Then read on....



Tandfran.

PS: See you at PSIFA's 18th, 21st, 50th and any other anniversary to come that we can possibly squeeze in.... Meanwhile if you're ever off planet, or even in Sri Lanka, then do drop in - it's the big white house with the aerial just outside the capitol on the coast road - you can't miss it.

POLYCON '79

Phil James speaks and Langford savagely edits (*sic*).

A review by Phil James of the first Shoestringcon (Polycon '79) that appeared in Ansible (No 4 - Nov '79) edited by the author and Hugo award winning fan writer Dave Langford.

"...I can't comment on the events of Friday night. Not being as omniscient as some, I can neither confirm nor deny that two *Battlestar Galactica* fans suffered a quite interestingly revolting fate at the hands of their peers when discovered reading the *Dispossessed* in the lavatory, or even that Ian Williams, making a surprise visit to the con, circled the building for several hours on a push-bike threatening to crash into a wall unless someone published his novel.

Arriving at Hatfield station, it took me about an hour to get to the Polytechnic; I was wearing my best pair of fannish - lounging - about - in - bars legs, unsuitable for cross-country work. The map was misleading - even hardened dungeon adventurers ended up in Bayfordbury or Hertford -- so I gave up and navigated by the hot October sun. One hour later, with visions of a tall cool glass of Harp awaiting me (*Ugh. Or perhaps Phil merely intended to pour it over his head - Dave L*), I reached the bar.

It was closed.

Instead I joined Martin Easterbrook and Margaret Austin (known to wits at her workplace as 'Jane' for a reason that escapes me at the moment) in the Elephant House, the con-hall, for Ken Bulmer's informal and interesting GoH speech. The hall was decorated with the *Polycon* logo and so much aluminium foil that co-GoH Mat Irvine confessed to feeling like an oven-ready turkey. Mat gave a very good talk on his work in the BBC Special effects Department: series like *Dr Who*, *Spaceships of the Mind* and *Blake's 7* were naturally highlighted, but contrary to popular belief he spends most of his time designing new radio controlled underwear display units for *Are You Being Served?*

Spent some time watching *Forbidden Planet*; ended up in the bar, which reminded me of a Doc Smith space dreadnaught -- surrounded by a force-field broken only by a large port through which a coruscating stream of ravening pints of real ale passed continuously, and a smaller side-port which opened intermittently to emit steaming quanta of pasties and wave-packets of crisps.

Inevitably, since (*Shoestringcon 1*) *Polycon* comes so soon after, there will be unfair comparisons between it and the (1979, UK hosted, World convention) *Seacon*. The Worldcon had Filthy Pierre's wind-powered synthesizer whereas all *Polycon* could manage was Jake Grigg's musical calculator. *Seacon* had expensive keg rubbish whereas *Polycon* had only two or three cheap real ales.... It is true that *Polycon's* support was somewhat muted as wallets across the land recovered from *Seacon*... Pleasant, unhurried, and after *Seacon* a more personal, intimate way of spending the weekend. The committee, after recovering from falling off the back of the convention stage, can feel reasonably pleased with its efforts.

Reprinted with permission from Dave Langford.

PSIFA SHOESTRINGCONS 1979 - 1988.

Time	Convention	Guest of Honour
Autumn 1979	Shoestringcon 1 : Polycon '79	Ken Bulmer & Mat Irvine
Autumn 1980	Shoestringcon 2 : Polycon 2	Ian Watson & 2000AD
Spring 1981	Shoestringcon 3 : PSIFAcon	Rob Holdstock
Autumn 1982	Shoestringcon 4 : Economy	Bob Shaw
Autumn 1983	Shoestringcon 5 : FTLcon	Iain Nicolson
Autumn 1984	Shoestringcon 6 : Ib Con	Geoff Ryman
Autumn 1985	Shoestringcon 7 : Knocon	Pete Milligan
Autumn 1986	Shoestringcon 8 : Articon	Bryon Talbot
Autumn 1987	Shoestringcon 9 : Necroninecon	Ramsey Campbell
Autumn 1988	Shoestringcon 10: Decaid	Gwyneth Jones & Lorna Mitchell

(Decaid raised £1,000 for the British Heart Foundation, Greenpeace and the Terrence Higgin's Trust).

Shoestringcon 1 Committee.

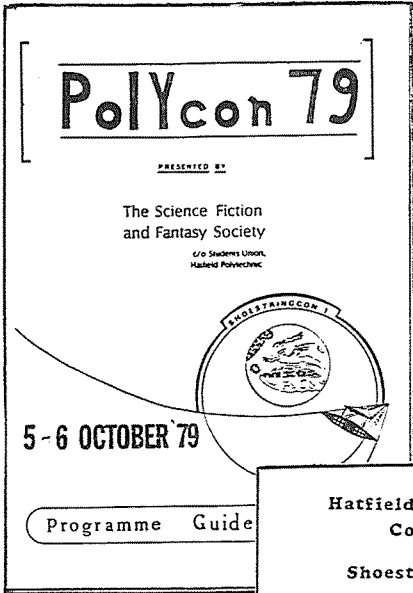
John Watkinson (Chair).
Jonathan Cowie (Officer liaison).
Pete Gilligan (Secretary).
Anthony Heathcote (Assistant to Chair & banner).
Liz Burak (Gopher co-ordination).
Pete Smith (Tech').

PSIFA 1st (1978/9) Year Committee.

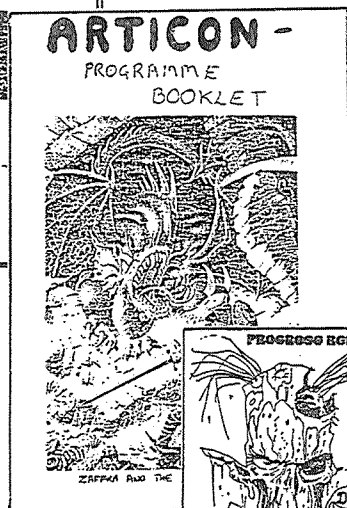
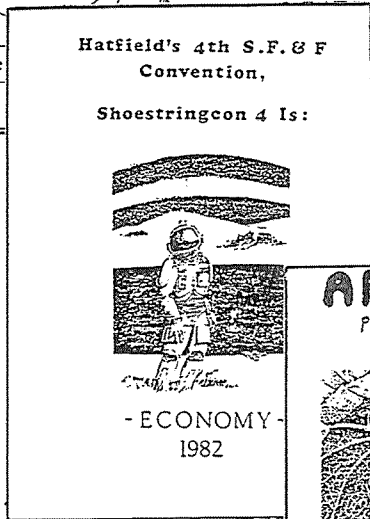
Steve Foard.....President & Founder Member.
Jonathan Cowie.....Vice Pres' " " " " "
Winston Dobres.....Secretary.
Andy Hope.....Treasurer.
Dave Willis.....Publicity.
Pete Gilligan.....Media Officer.
John Watkinson.....Con Officer (ex-officio).

SHOESTRINGCONS

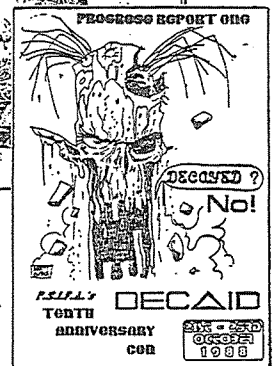
Shoestringcon 1 programme book.



Shoestringcon 4 programme book.



Shoestringcon 8 programme book.



Shoestringcon 10 progress report 1.

The Shoestringcon: Polycon Story.

By Pete Gilligna (the well known typing error) from the programme book for the first of PSIFA's conventions.

How does a convention happen? What deep thought and soul searching goes into the decision to attempt such an undertaking? Does the word committee conjure visions of hatchet faced, serious men and women peering at charts and lists in an atmosphere of military precision? The answer can be summed up in a mere monosyllable. The two letter suffice. *No!*

No, no and again definitely not. Emphatically and unequivocally not. At least not in the case of *Polycon '79* that's for sure. This convention has been subtitled *ShoestringCon* partly because our budget's limited but also because our common-sense must be on a Shoestring too.

The entire fiasco is due to the unbounded enthusiasm of Jonathan Cowie and the incipient alcoholism of most of the rest of the group (*Pete must have meant Jonathan's alcoholism and the group's enthusiasm - Tand' 1988*). The story starts in a pub on the Hatfield Road in St Albans. *PSIFA*, that's us the Hat. Poly. crowd, were engaged in deep serious and momentous discussion with the St Albans group, STAFFEN. The topic in hand was, of course, that old perennial: "Whose round is it?"

As usual numerous diversionary tactics were being employed. John Watkinson was hiding in the little boys room, adjusting his dress, when Jonathan Cowie dragged a complete red herring in and said: "Let's have a convention!"

A superb tactic, a true masterstroke. At least it got him off the hook of being the next round buyer. At the sound of this notion we sat entranced, bemused, rapt in silent wonder. At least that's what it could have been, on the other hand it might have been just too many pints of Wethereds.

As John Watkinson was still otherwise engaged he was unanimously voted Con Officer, or conned officer as he would have it. On his return he accepted this signal honour in good part. I think his watering at the springs of Baccus may have had something to do with this. STAFFEN were ecstatic. Wouldn't you be at the prospect of some other poor mugs organising a con in your back garden?

From then on *Polycon* just grew.

And that's all we had to do. I got suckered in as Secretary. My moral fibre has the breaking strain of a Mars bar. Others have rallied around with offers of help and encouragement. But special thanks to the following without whom none of this would have been possible or necessary:

Liz for making the Gronk. Harrow group especially Mike and Cathy. The staff of 2000AD. All the backroom people we take for granted - girls in the Union office, Poly reprographics, Media services, snack bar staff, the porters, Mark Gander of the film soc. Also: Pat Thomas, Paddy Sweeny at the bar, the SU exec, the Elephant for his house and all too numerous to mention who gave time, energy, sweat, blood and money to make all this happen.

HYPO-SPACE

Hypo-Space is PSIFA's bi-termly newsletter, once a year appearing as a more voluminous annual of fan art, fiction and student skiffy humour.

Its name is derived from *Hypo* which had absolutely nothing to do with PSIFA, *Hypo* being the students' general organ of news up to 1981 (when for some strange reason *Hypo* died which is of little concern to PSIFA save for its members who mourn the passing of such a lively student newspaper). This student mag' was, though, fun and *Hypo* got its name from being *Hype* of the polytechnic. When PSIFA first blasted into the cosmos in 1978 it unashamedly ripped of the title and the logo (*above*) from the only other regular student publication then produced. Well why not, that's the kind of guys the early PSIFAns were - plenty of energy, bugger-all style.

Hypo-Space's first editors were the intimitable Jonathan Cowie and, yours truly, modest mega-being, Tandfran. That was, of course, up to number 10 (though the duo returned for #19 and Tand' for this issue). During this time the editorial policy largely consisted of telling the World what PSIFA had done, was doing and was about to do. This meant that each story could be told at least three times and cunningly gave rise to the total and utter myth that PSIFA was active. Present day students now know that this could not have been the case....

Dave Patterson, the only person in this piece to be mysteriously italicised, then took over for #11-16 and #18. Dave introduced the concept of legibility to the zine. This was only partly due to the Students' Union ditching its offset litho which had for many years been nursed along, latterly with spare *motor-bike* parts. The real reason probably had more to do with Dave wishing to ensure good publicity for his Film and Theatre Ents (FATE) SF trips. Turned on by a PSIFA outing to the *Dark They Were* bookshop (now unfortunately closed) and *Alien* film trip, Dave set about organising outings to exotic showings be they techno' (laser), film, drama, whatever. Latterly these concentrated on premiere performances. Dave was able to give ample notice through *Hypo-Space* and with turn-outs peaking at over 90 attendees (two coach loads to the premiere month showing of *Return of the Jedi*) he was able to harvest a rich selection of reviews for PSIFA's zine.

Neil James became editor for issues #21 - 24. Neil went by the pseudonym 'Fluke' for a reason which escaped most readers and which probably had nothing at all to do with platyhelminthes. He brought a certain sixties feel to the zine which reflected PSIFA's SF&DA wing.

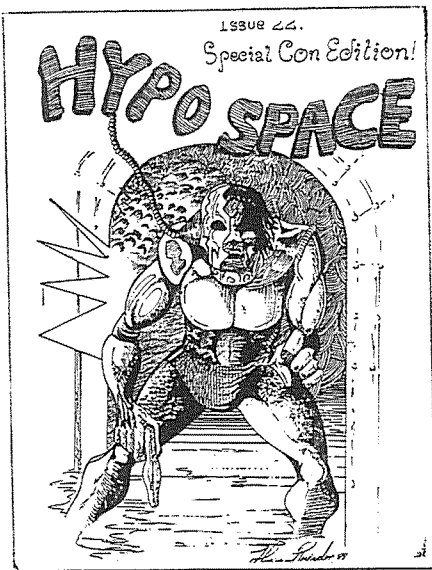
Issues #26 - 27, and #34 were produced by Jaine Fennel. Jaine had this habit of drawing chess boards as if tripping on acid. The effect marked *Hypo-Space's* sojourn into modernistic art as chequered spaceships and futuristic hardware filled gaps in the text. Jaine was one of the few editors to combine this work with being an officer for the society as well as chairing one of the group's conventions.

Martin Stewart & John Rhodes took over for issues #29-30. Their watchword was clear layouts and plenty of fan fiction. The covers were particularly striking, and the artwork combined with layout marked a local high point in the zine's image.

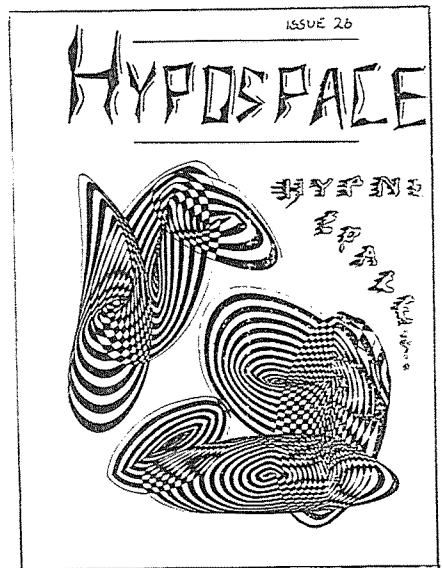
Suzanna Raymond and Martin Stewart boosted the fiction content for the zine for issues #31-33. Whether this was because there were few PSIFA activities outside vid' watching to report, or because of the growth in the writers' workshop we shall probably never know. Suzanna's and Raymond's issues were, though, well produced as basic desk-top publishing procedures became increasingly used.

Stewart Clark edited issue #35, the latest to reach PSIFA's Swiss-vaulted time files. Stewart writes for *Starburst* which probably, some would say, explains a lot. It did certainly mean that media news was fairly topical and that in itself brought in other areas of SF interest than the student fan fiction which for a time seemed to have a strangle-hold on the publication.

Hypo-Space has varied with the student generations in the society. Each editor brought his or her strengths to the zine. One thing, though, has changed. When PSIFA started, the zine was scratched onto stencils and duplicated. The first generation thought it nifty to adapt the college computer's mainframe WP package to simple desk-top publishing. Now the perishers seem to have their own micros! If they could transport their production equipment back to the first PSIFAns' era then minds would have been blown. What will the next ten years result in? *Hypo-Space* with half-tone photos and wrap around text? Hologram pics even! The question is, can we wait the decade?



Hypo-Space #22 edited by Fluke.



Hypo-Space #26 edited by Jaime Fenuel.

PSIFA AFTER SHOESTRINGCON 1.

After PSIFA's first convention, life for the Society returned to normal. As to what that was, here is an outline of its diary, for the Autumn and Spring 1979/80, compiled from the files. It is not a complete catalogue!

SEPTEMBER 1979

Wed 26th Freshers' Introduction to PSIFA - 7.00pm. QUIZ - 7.30pm.

OCTOBER

Wed 3rd Pre-Shoestringcon brief.

Thurs 4th Outing to One Tun - London SF Circle.

Fri 5th - Shoestringcon 1 : POLYCON. GoHs: Ken Bulmer & Mat Irvine.

Sun 7th Bookroom courtesy of Bookshop East Sheen and Fantast Medway.

Mon 8th STAFFEN (Peacock pub St Albans).

Wed 17th PSIFA AGM & Film

Wed 24th SEACON - Worldcon '79 - Slide Show. - 14 PSIFAns on a field trip.

Wed 31st Spacesuits: Past, Present & Future - visiting speaker Dave Lermitt.

Sat 27th WEST END FIELD TRIP - Dark They Were bookshop, Graham's
Kebab place opposite Spankorama, Wine bar, then 'ALIEN'.

NOVEMBER

Fri 2nd - 4th FIELD TRIP to NOVACON - Brum SF Group annual convention.

Thurs 8th Outing to One Tun - London SF Circle.

Wed 7th Happenings Stranger Than Fiction - talk by Andy Blackburn.

Wed 14th Extra-Terrestrial Beings - talk by guest astronomer Dr Kitchin.

Sat 17th FATE - (inaugural event) to 'Rocky Horror' & Lasarium.

Wed 21st QUIZ - by Pete Pigott.

Sun 25th Writers' Workshop.

Wed 28th (Details of meeting unclear in files but it was in F409).

DECEMBER

Wed 5th (Details of meeting unclear in PSIFA files).

Thurs 6th Outing to One Tun - London SF Circle.

Sat 8th Xmas Social.

C H R I S T M A S V A C A T I O N .

JANUARY 1980

Wed 9th QUIZ - Neil & Ian.

Thurs 10th The Exorcist - joint meeting with Film Soc'.

Mon 14th STAFFEN (Outing to St Albans SF Group - Peacock pub).

Wed 16th The Esoteric Journey - visiting speaker.

Thurs 17th Wargaming.

Sat 19th FATE - Outing to 'Life of Brian' & 'Star Trek'.

Mon 21st Con-organising meeting - Shoestringcon 2?

Wed 23rd DARK STAR (bring cans).

Thurs 24th SOLARIS - play by visiting group courtesy Drama Soc'.

Sun 27th Writers' Workshop.

I N T E R S E M E S T E R E X A M S .

FEBRUARY

Thurs 7th Outing to One Tun - London SF Circle.

Mon 11 - 15th MOONROCK EXHIBITION by Geology Dept (& PSIFAns Paul MeIon).

Mon 11th STAFFEN (post-exam celebration - Peacock pub St Albans).

Wed 13th Day the Earth Stood Still (joint meeting with film soc).

Thurs 14th Wargaming.

Mon 18th VISITING AUTHOR R L Fanthorpe - meeting with STAFFEN, venue Hatfield.

Wed 20th CALL MY BLUFF (bring cans).

Wed 27th ANNUAL BANQUET - Guest 2000AD's Tharg, alias AALN 1 cum Alan Grant.

MARCH

Sun 2nd Writers' Workshop

Wed 5th BARBARELLA (bring cans).

Thurs 6th Outing to One Tun - London SF Circle.

Sat 8th FATE - Outing to 'Time After Time', 'Apocalypse Now' & Lasarium.

Wed 12th SF & Fantasy Wargames - talk by Dave G Lermitt(t).

Wed 19th BOOKSHOP EAST SHEEN - Outing on half day, specially open for PSIFA.

Wed 26th CHARADES - Bring cans 'n things.

E A S T E R V A C A T I O N - Field Trip to ALBACON, 1980 Eastercon (Glasgow).

RADIO FREE ENTROPY. 301m Campus Radio Hatfield.

Wednesdays, 1979/80.

When Bof Plerman, Joc Wieno (*real original pseudonym huh?*) and Jedediah Cortex (or rather one of his clones) took over the orbiting Salyut as a base for their smuggling primitive artifacts to galactic, xeno-antique dealers, there was bound to be trouble. Of course the galactic community needed to be given a reason for all this Earth orbit activity; a cover was required. What better than to claim to be culturally stimulating the locals - and so *Radio Free Entropy* was borne.

With the techno brillo of Randy Tantra, soon Hatfield was reverberating to roving con reports...

Karl Wagner, GoH Fantasycon 5, Feb '79: "Fantastic! Well, the beer's good, the people are good and I'm sloshed!" With such in-depth genre analyses how could *Free Entropy* fail.

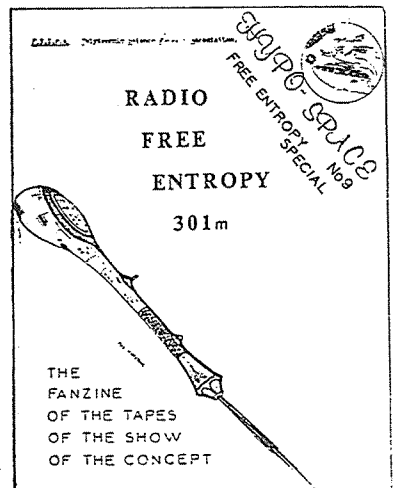
Then at the Worldcon in '79 *Radio Free Entropy* was interviewing *Capital Radio* as they in turn were being interviewed by the same! Both reports were broadcasted by the respective stations. Would that *Free Entropy* claim a higher quality of other material but no. *Capital* kindly allowed *Radio Free Entropy* to broadcast 30 episodes of the ultimate space hero. Yes, with a lock of tousled hair falling over a bronzed forehead, bulging biceps, legs like a gazelle and bionic blood, *Captain Kremon* zapped around Hatfield at the speed of sound.

Then there was the time when *Free Entropy* interviewed Ray Bradbury (the real one from Birmingham), Tully Zetford, Pam Bulmer and Chris Priest. Chris' views on where to hold conventions didn't half upset a few Scots.

Free Entropy also provided roving reports. Bof's from Halley's comet as it (then) hurtled past Uranus, was particularly illuminating. He not only explained the popularity of Halley's as a seasonal resort for helium II beings but also blew the lid on the planetary ring business as an art form.

Typical of the many interviews carried out was the one with a certain Pete Gilligan promoting the first ever *Shoestringcon*, and it is with this that we end this bulletin from *Radio Free Entropy*, 301 metres, broadcasting from the Salyut to Hatfield...

RADIO
FREE
ENTROPY
301m



Hypo-Space #9 Free Entropy Special.

RADIO FREE ENTROPY

We join the, only slightly edited, interview after Pete has ranted on about Ray Bradbury as opposed to the convention's Guest of Honour...

Pete: Oh, yes I was talking about Ken Bulmer wasn't I. Well Ray is a very interesting chappie, but Ken, Ken is a very versatile sort of fellow. He produces work which encompasses the entire field of what perhaps is more fairly described as speculative fiction, or alternative fiction in that he produces work of comparatively hard SF in a semi-soggy sort of way. I mean some of his stuff is hard. Perhaps I'm doing him an injustice, but he has also been known to have written high... Well not high fantasy, sort of middle grade fantasy. You know, swords and sorceries, swashing and buckling, rape and pillage, hand maidens in chains, muscular thews pulsating gently while the whips rise and crash...

Radio Free Entropy unsheduled advert break. Then...

Entropy: And what else will there be at the convention.

Pete: Films including *Alphaville*, which is light on SF but heavy on message. *Soylent Green* based on a little piece by Harry Harrison. Exceptional author, damn good chappie. Bit of (censored) there, but he's not that bad.

Entropy: Anything on the science side?

Pete: Oh yes, yes. We have slides from the current SolIII space shots - the outer planets. We have some of the moon, the early primitive stuff, then the later primitive stuff, outer planets and the like.

Entropy: Not bad. So what about the average person who wants to get books?

Pete: (A brief but sharp inhalation). Yes, well we have extremely good facilities - oh, excuse me (brief exhalation). There will two specialist bookshops. THE bookshop of course, the *East Sheen* and they will be bringing new books for those who like their tortuous torments unsullied by sticky fingers. For those with less money, or who have a yen for sticky fingered copies, the *Fantast* from Wisbech are coming along and of course they are well known for their second hand books. It is just possible that one might be able to pick up a rare edition at a cheap rate.... unlikely, though it is possible.

Free Entropy: So how would one set about attending this convention?

Pete: I'd beam down to the poly', approach some members of the SF society, perhaps in person or by sticking a message in their pigeon-hole.

Free Entropy: About this pigeon-hole?

Pete: I believe it's in the corridor on the way to the bar, which is some sort of watering hole where these humans consume this strange molecule. They seem to find it eupho...

Free Entropy: So what about this pigeon-hole?

Pete: Oh yes, the pigeon-hole. They are these wire thingies and each has a tray with a letter. One simply searches for 'P', I think; 'P' for PSIFA - Polytechnic Science Fiction/Fantasy Association... something like that... er...

Free Entropy: (undertone) 's'... 's'...

Pete: ..'P'.. 'S'... 'S'?... er..

Free Entropy: (undertone) 's'... 's'...

Pete: Something.. or is it society.. or... 'P''S'..'F'?..'S'?... Oh!

I see. Yes! Frightfully sorry old bean, we can edit this bit out can't we. 'S' dear humanoid. 'S' is the relevant letter. 'S' for SF Society....

(Fade and cut to studio amid great excitement as interviewee and interviewer realise what the other is talking about).

EVEN AFTER A DECADE DON'T WORRY!

I gusted at - I think my memory serves correct - the very first of the Hatfield cons. The memory is also a bit hazy as to what exactly happened (something to do with all that alcohol? - no never....).

However I do recall turning up at the front desk to ask where should I be or something similar, only to be asked "had I registered?". This caused, I recall, slight embarrassment as I had to reply something along the lines of being a guest I didn't realise I had to...! However to cover the confusion the lady manning the (is one allowed to say 'manning'?) the desk decided that a guest's welfare ought to be taken into consideration, so the next question was "had I somewhere to stay?". However this too could not solicit a straightforward reply as all I could say was "no need, I live five minutes down the road..."

After that things did sort themselves out and I trust that my off-beat type of talk went down OK - see even after a decade I still worry!!

Best wishes to all....

Mat Irvine.

(A special effects artiste, Mat does things to squeazy bottles for the BBC. He has worked on Blake's 7 and Dr Who as well as science fact programmes such as Horizon and The Sky At Night).

FLABBER-GLOBER-MERATED.

Well I was flabber-globber-merated when reminded that PSIFA is now 10 years old. What fresh-faced, semi-naive 'young uns' we all were then!

I will be coming along, with wifey-poo, to celebrate the occasion. I still have my membership card somewhere...

Yes I was a founding first generation member of PSIFA. Cobwebs shroud the memories of those days like a rainbow soaked in creosote. I think I left them somewhere near the left-hand corner of my brain, in an old cabinet labelled 'alternative realities nos 4096-8192'. The neural path which leads there is littered by hundreds of back-progs of *2000AD* and quagmires of draft Abbot. Methinks this path may be a little difficult to re-trace and will take more time than JC's chronon budget provides.... <take a ten minute break while I get there> ah, here we are, now lets see what's in the top draw...

It happened one night in the T.V. room of the Elephant House. In those days, *Star Trek* was still pretty exciting stuff and provided excellent bait for the likes of myself...

On the door of the TV room was a note: *Come to the Font*, it said. *Let's form an SF group*, it said. *After Star Trek has finished*, came the final persuasion.

So the nucleus of PSIFA was spontaneously formed out of the primeval chaos of a few bubbling enthusiasts. This concentrated energy exploded into numerous creative dimensions as we proceeded to lay the foundations of PSIFA's infamous reputation.

FEEDBACK

There is no space to recall the myriad of events we organised, nor reminisce those late night socials (- *This next bit editorially censored - Sorry John but the members concerned are concerned* -). Yes, fun we certainly had. Like Captain Apollo in *Dark Star*, "there is so much I have forgotten," and I look forward to meeting old friends and sharing memories.

Wishing PSIFA's 10th *Shoestringcon* the success it so richly deserves.

John Watkinson.

(John Watkinson was arguably the first member of PSIFA having encountered JC, as recounted above, who had been sent by co-founder Steve Foard to check out Star Trek. (Steve: Well I've got to prepare this SU grant application). John Watkinson was in his final year during PSIFA's first. He chaired the committee for the first Shoestringcon).

SOME EARLY THOUGHTS.

A rare meeting in a London pub with Jonathan Cowie revealed his idea for a 10th anniversary zine for PSIFA. "You will write something for it," he demanded. "But not more than 200 words". (A cross between two drabbles and four mini-sagas). But that was typical of the early PSIFA days. There was a lot going on! A hell of a lot, and a hard core of people who directed and delegated.

Regular feature, apart from the Wednesday meetings, included FATE trips, the Radio *Free Entropy* programmes, *Hypo-Spaces*, con-going en-masse!) and of course our own *Shoestringcons*. There was a mega-volume of effort put in by just about all. I remember the early (*Shoestringcon*) *Polycon* meetings, many of which were held at the "Radlett Branch" (my flat with John Watkinson and Graham Connor). College based conventions had hitherto a poor reputation - we couldn't afford to fail.

Why was there so much success? Probably because we all wanted it. We all enjoyed what was going on and were prepared to put in the effort required to force events to happen, not that it seemed like effort at the time. It's great to think PSIFA is still strong - enjoy your second decade.

Anthony Heathcote.

(Anthony Heathcote was on the committee for the first Shoestringcon (Polycon '79). He was PSIFA's first official photographer. He went on (with Jonathan Cowie) to join the committee for the first two BECCONS the first of which had nearly a third of its attendance composed of students and members of the Hatfield, Warwick and Keele (original Unicon) U' groups.)

MEMORIES OF HATFIELD.

Strange tricks memory plays on one.. or two... or even more.

According to Jonathan Cowie, some time back in 1979 when Susie (my daughter) and I attended *Shoestringcon 1: Polycon '9* one of the first things we

did was to assemble a party of like-spirited fans to go in search of liquid refreshment using the *Fantast* Bedford Bookmobile for transport. However I recall this as a search for 'food', solid food (the refectory having just closed when we arrived) with the possibility of liquid refreshment just an added carrot. I mean there was the future promise of the Students' Union operating a bar, or some such.

Apart from everything else, I have a distinct recollection of a Chinese take-away on our itinerary. *Stopping* at the take-away was fatal! Mysteriously it took away the Bookmobile's lighting system, and so we had to return to the Elephant House with people leaning out of the vehicle's windows advising me of our distance from the kerb, and other navigational data, whilst the sole source of illumination fore and aft was a diminutive flashlight held against the windscreen. Luckily we passed no traffic nor were we overtaken by any.

The next day I called out the A.A. (having pushed the vehicle out onto the road outside the car park (for technical reasons the A.A. won't come if you are not 'on the road')). When the A.A. chap finally came he just started the engine on the switch, and everything else seemed to work okay. Later I found a loose plug contact behind the dash which was giving rise to the intermittent trouble.

That over I enjoyed the rest of the con.

Next *Shoestringcon* Susie and I both went - but she came from the south whilst I arrived from the north. Shortly after I got set up I was called to the 'phone; Susie had broken down somewhere near Abbots Langley and I had to go out and fetch her in. Marion and Richard finished putting things out for me and looked after my stall in addition to their own.

I've not been to a *Shoestringcon* since - and any time I've had to drive through Hatfield I've kept my fingers crossed. Of course today they have the place ready mined, and I travel down the M11 Londonward...

Fingers crossed for your 10th.

Ken Slater.

(Ken Slater is perhaps the Science Fiction community's most genial SF book pedlar who has been pushing his gear long before most of today's dealers could say 'Space Odyssey'. His attitude towards new fans, and up 'n coming groups yet to make their mark, is typified by his supporting PSIFA's first two conventions. He is well known for being the proverbial good guy. Last year (1987) he and his wife, Joyce, were Fan Guest of Honour at the UK hosted World SF Convention).



FEEDBACK

ENTHUSIASM STATUS LIMITLESS!

I have a lot to thank PSIFA for. Without it I probably wouldn't have encountered the marvellous *2000AD* comic which I continue to read with delight. More importantly I wouldn't have had the chance to be involved in a radio show. *Radio Free Entropy* was magnificently chaotic and full of enthusiasm. Taped interviews, music, comment even a live debate between the Lords of Law and Chaos arbitrated by Elric. Those were the days of Bof Plerman, Joc Weino, Jededia Cortex.

Little can be said of the quality of the events organised by PSIFA but the enthusiasm was so limitless, we just all got carried away.

Here's to another 10.

Graham Connor.

(Graham was one of the dreaded trio from Warwick that sort of landed up with PSIFA.

Actually I can't say anything about the guy that will not sound either trite or cliched. I could embarass him by saying that he is one of the few true scientists I've met, he's also done drama, won professionally judged SF writing competitions, quietly shown films at several conventions (most recently at 50th anniversary Eastercon BECCON), produced fanzines and in PSIFA's early years (1978-82) assisted in many of its activities, notwithstanding the chairing of Shoestringcon 2. Throughout it all has masterfully kept his finger firmly on the old nuclear button.... Anyway, I could embarass him by saying that and more, so perhaps it would be best to keep silent.

If you bump into him at Decaid, buy the man a pint!

ODE TO PSIFA.

What can I say about the Elephant House,
Visited once by myself and spouse?
(And daughter too, but she doesn't rhyme.)
Memory is somewhat blunted by time.
Or is it the beer that causes these lapses,
The advertised *alcohol* pickling the synapses?
Ah Hatfield, sweet Hatfield, the Poly so jolly,
For your tenth celebration hang out the holly!

Best Wishes,

Ian Watson

(Ian Watson, author of The Very Slow Time Machine and Alien Embassy to name but two of his titles, was Guest of Honour at PSIFA's second convention in 1980. Unfortunately for some, the mixture of the con committee and Ian resulted in a somewhat lengthy ethanolic lunch and an even lengthier delay in

the Saturday afternoon programme during which it was discovered that the caffeine content of an Ele' Ho coffee was less than the polystyrene cup it came in - Tharg told us that! For once PSIFAns had met their match in Ian.)

THE TEQUILA FLOWED TO SUNRISE.

I was almost, but not quite, at PSIFA's founding meeting. My only feeble excuse for not participating from day one was that I was on industrial placement at the time. I was delighted, on my return to Hatfield, to discover that PSIFA had been born within the previous few months. It was already well on its way through a boisterous puberty and heading for maturity (although it never got grown-up and boring). I immediately joined the society and began to participate fully in its many, and highly varied, activities.

As is more often the case with new life, PSIFA surged into being, growing rapidly in all directions, with the sort of vigour that is usually difficult to maintain (fortunately PSIFA seems to have proved an exception). It is not exaggerating to say that PSIFA had something for everyone: talks, films, banquets, games, vids, trips to conventions, West-end cinemas & theatres, cocktail parties (where the Tequila flowed till sunrise), its own radio show - *Free Entropy*, and much more - I still remember the doormouse. Then with PSIFA less than a year old the decision was taken to hold a convention...

Full of the enthusiasm that permeated PSIFA, and overflowing with fannish spirit as a result of the British (1979) World SF Convention (*Seacon*), there was more life in that first PSIFA convention than a lot of the 35+ cons I've been to since. Almost like a scaled down Worldcon, it had a bit of everything, and it worked! It may have occasionally been over-ambitious but nobody bothered to stop enjoying themselves long enough to notice. Several of my closest friends are people I first met at *Shoestringcon 1*.

From that auspicious start, PSIFA has continued to the present day. It's had its ups and downs (mostly ups I'm glad to say) but as long as it continues to acquire new blood the outlook is healthy. So I'm going to enjoy *Decaid* and I'll also look forward to seeing you at PSIFA's 20th con *when*, not *if*, it happens.

Chris Cooper.

(Chris Cooper was a computer science student at Hatfield. In his spare time he was on the Ents crew setting up gigs and discos for the Students' Union. Having found PSIFA he got involved and inevitably came to conventions. Today national conrunners all welcome the sight of Chris', seems like, seven foot frame lurching towards them as Chris is respected as a hard working gopher and ops man. He also is into real ale but then so were most of the first PSIFAns.)

The Tequila reference is to PSIFA's official society cocktail - Tequila Sunrise. How it actually came to be so is lost in the waterways of times but the Font bar did agree to try it out and if it sold, take it onboard. They had to re-order the very next delivery. Perhaps PSIFA's Tequila Sunrise's most infamous moment was at the first Scottish hosted UK Eastercon (Albacon) when the barman made twenty Sunrises in a row.)

WE REMEMBER HATFIELD.

The first convention was the time that we saw the Elephant House, and our main memory is that of a steward rushing up to save a VCR from being dissected, only to find that the vandal was the media Guest of Honour, Mat Irvine, doing running repairs with the aid of a gas lighter, a Swiss Army penknife and a bent hairpin. Afterward it was reckoned that the VCR was reckoned to work better than it had for weeks.

That was also the con where nearly the entire membership crowded into the video room to watch *Dr Who*. Those were indeed the days.

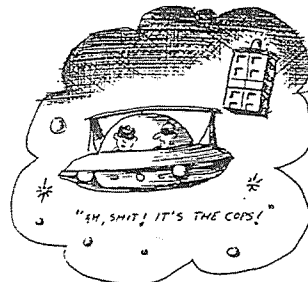
The second convention we remember mainly for Marion's slipped disc, she could only stand or lie down. Then there was Ken Slater's daughter who rang to say that her car had broken down and Ken rushed off to rescue her, leaving us and a few students to put his stall together. We suspect that this was also the con where the GoH was taken out to sample the local brew *before* he made his speech and he had to be assisted up to the platform. He still made one of the better GoH speeches we have heard.

Artcon was more recent. Bryon Talbot told us of his days in Art School where graphics were forbidden and only abstract approved. We still have the multi-armed and eyed artist made in the DIY Art Show and christened Bryon after the GoH. We also remember grabbing Geoff Ryman for an impromptu signing session.

We must be getting old judging by the way the years are running together, but we do remember the delicious Chinese food at the banquet and the premiere of the *Empire Strikes Back*. *Happy tenth birthday to our favorite SF group.*

Richard & Marion van der Voort.

(Richard & Marion run, what first generation PSIFAns know as The Bookshop East Sheen, which is now At The Sign Of The Dragon Bookshop around the corner and near Mortlake Station (BR) in south west London. Not only have Richard and Marion provided a bookstall at many Shoestringcons but they provided contacts and support in PSIFA's early days. They have always been ready to help the society and PSIFAns new to (non-Hatfield) convention-going have been made welcome by the East Sheen stall. Many old PSIFAns will recall their shop remaining open on its half day closing specially for a PSIFA field trip, and the video session they hosted after - this was at a time before home videos were common and video shops were almost unheard of outside of central London. Richard and Marion have also been Society Guests at a PSIFA annual banquet).



BOOZE, CHINESE FOOD, & CARDBOARD CUT-OUT ROBOTS.

The name *PSIFA* will always remind me of lots of booze, chinese food (why were the banquets always at chinese restaurants?) and Dave Lermitt's car Aggie.

My memories of *PSIFA* are very hazy - probably because of the large amounts of alcohol inbibed. Of the weekly meetings, all I can remember is seeing *Dark Star* a million times, and Pete Gilligan telling me all about how Prestel worked after he had given a talk - I haven't a clue what the talk was about!

The first, and only, time I have ever been photographed for the press was at one of the *PSIFA Shoestringcons*. I had my picture taken twice, once with Rob Holdstock and once with *PSIFA's* cardboard cut-out robot - please draw your own conclusions!

Probably the best thing I got out of *PSIFA* was that it introduced me to conventions. My first real convention was *BECCON '81*. A whole crowd of us went from *PSIFA*. The *PSIFA* room party was something never to be forgotten. I had a great time and am now a regular convention goer - all thanks to *PSIFA*.

Sue Harrison.

(Sue Harrison is not, contrary to popular belief, Australian. However for a while she seemed to be perpetually leaving the Polytechnic and, like a boomerang, returning on different courses. As she mentions above, she was a regular on the various PSIFA field trips to conventions. The BECCON '81 trip did see PSIFA contribute in a major way to the event. Not only were two PSIFAns on the committee but the PSIFA 6 hour room-party was calculated to have seen over a third of BECCON's attendance. The food especially prepared, PSIFA even brought its own room lighting system. Party supplies were topped up by a kind donation of the Doreys who were getting married at the time - no not 'the' Doreys (former Chairman of the BSFA) but a couple who happened to be having their reception at the BECCON hotel at the time. Sue has taken such synchronicity in her stride and still, being a glutton for brain-punishment, frequents the major conventions.)

BELGIAN BEER, BANQUETS & ROYALTY.

Why should *all* my memories of *PSIFA* seem to centre around alcohol?

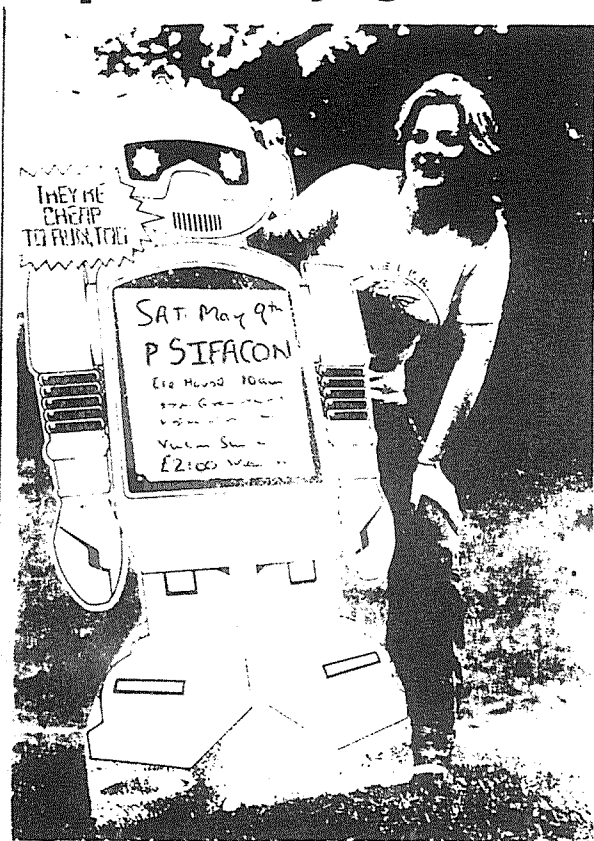
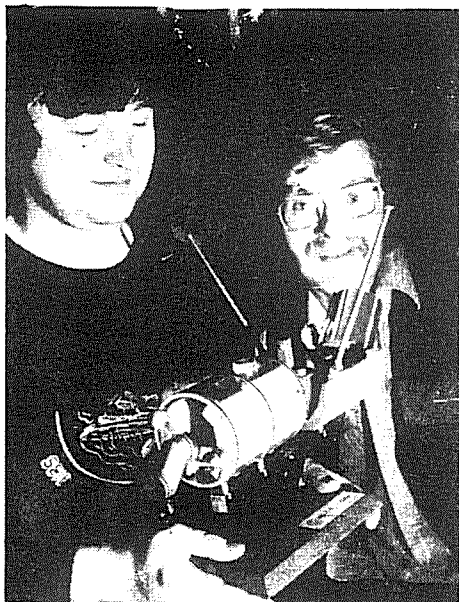
Sitting in the Font bar with Bob Shaw - the *Shoestringcon* GoH, a number of fans and an irate bar manager - because I brought in some Belgian beer (and Stroh) for tasting. Again in the Font, preparing my entry for the Pan-Galactic-Gargle-Blaster competition; and the faces of the panel of judges as they tasted it and various other mixtures.

Ah - one that isn't! A *PSIFA* banquet, waiting for the new Hon member to give his speech. Oh damn! Yes, and arguing about which wine to have! Sorry.

Safe with this one. The Gronk enthroned in his reserved seat at the Royal

THE
PRESS
BUBBLES
ON.

Inspired by ghosts



Sue Harrison, aged 22, a maths student, with a poster advertising the convention

● *Anthony Heathcote and John Watkinson of the Hatfield Poly Sci-fi Society with a model space lab at Polycon 2.*

The plan is to send out a space yacht—manned by SSS members to Eros and cut it up with lasers and bring it back chunk by chunk.

There were more down to earth displays at Polycon 2 including a rejuvenated Dan Dare. Artistic portrayals of space stations and machinery from the future proliferated at the event, which ran from Friday night to Sunday afternoon.

HATFIELD POLYTECHNIC



INSPIRATION for author Robert Holdstock comes from the ghosts of the past.

He senses their presence as he walks the ancient Roman paths near his home.

But the bearded 32-year-old writer insists he is not psychic.

"I can feel the ghosts," he says. "The people who lived there all those years ago have left their spirits which still remain today."

Mr Holdstock, who spoke to students at a weekend science fiction convention at Hatfield Polytechnic, is a novelist and short story writer.

His writing — which he terms science fiction and fantasy — is grounded in history.

"I try to use science fiction to explain man's origins," he said. "What interests me is the way in which the past is inherited by all of us. One of my novels, *Necromancer*, puts forward the theory that even statues and stone heads can trap the spirits of the people who built them."

He spends much of his time in St Albans. "It is one of the most chilling and eerie areas in the country," he said.

"I often walk through Verulamium Park where you can actually feel the ridges of the Roman houses underneath your feet.

"There is an immense feeling of the past in the city. I've lived in Hertfordshire for only five years but I feel as if I belong here."

Mr Holdstock, who is married and lives in Peters Avenue, London Colney, started his writing career while studying a doctorate at the London School of Hygiene.

Science fiction remains his first love. But most of his income comes from writing children's books.

His ambition is to buy a house in Verulam Road in St Albans. "That's where I want to live — right at the heart of where it all happened centuries ago," he said.

premiere of an SF film, with Dave Lermitt nearly in full Scot's regalia.
There are many memories of some very good times.

1/2 r.

(1/2r - Arthur Cruttendon is a local SF fan of many years standing. You could probably fit a couple of PSIFA 10th anniversaries into his time-span in fandom. Arthur is PSIFA's own walking reference library on fan history and has always been available to provide PSIFA with any background information that it might require - an invaluable service considering the rapid throughput of students each year.

The Gronk, a creature from the Stontium Dog comic strip, is PSIFA's mascot with permission of the 2000AD comic).

SHIFTING CURTAINS IN DIM AND DISTANT AEONS.

Way, way back through the shifting curtains of past years, far into the regions of time that are no more, in dim and distant aeons that now slumber in dusty repose - which is a science fiction writer's way of saying "quite a while ago" - I had the honour to be a guest at one of the famous Hatfield Polytechnic conventions. It was a bloody good week-end! The surroundings were pleasant, the company was stimulating, we talked a lot about SF and drank a lot of good booze.

What more could you ask of a convention committee?

I'll tell you.

You could ask them to do it all over again. Being obliging souls, PSIFA have given us the chance to have a re-run of our excellent fannish week-ends at Hatfield - and I'm looking forward to it already.

See you there!.

Bob Shaw.

(Bob Shaw was GoH at Shoestringcon 4: Economy. He is one of Britain's most active contemporary SF authors whose titles include: 'A Wreath of Stars' (Pan), 'The Ceres Solution' (Granada), the humorous 'Who Goes There' (Ace), the slow-glass novel 'Other Days, Other Eyes' (Pan) and the 1975 British Science Fiction Award winning novel 'Orbitsville' (Gollancz - hdbk, Pan - pbk)).

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT.

I arrived at Hatfield Polytechnic in 1983 - an oddball mature student aged 47. My subjects were Computing and German in Combined Studies. In 1984 I was elected to the post of President of PSIFA (fix! fix!), and contributed in a small way during my term. I will always be grateful to PSIFA for introducing me to fandom and enabling me to make hundreds of friends who share my interests. This year I was invited to two cons in Scandanavia as a "Special Surprise Guest" - as a Swedish speaking English fan. Now as I write this piece, I have

FEEDBACK

one of the Norwegian fans I met at KringCon in Oslo staying with me. Now I am learning Norwegian as a Norwegian fan, Rolf, at this moment investigates the intricacies of my Z88.

Wilf (Jesse) James.

(Jesse's time with PSIFA launched him into the SF community and he can now be found continually popping up at this convention and that, getting involved in some small project of the moment that happens to take his fancy. He regularly goes to three or four conventions a year and, apart from the Eastercon, has a soft spot for the Scottish gatherings).

THROWING RICE.

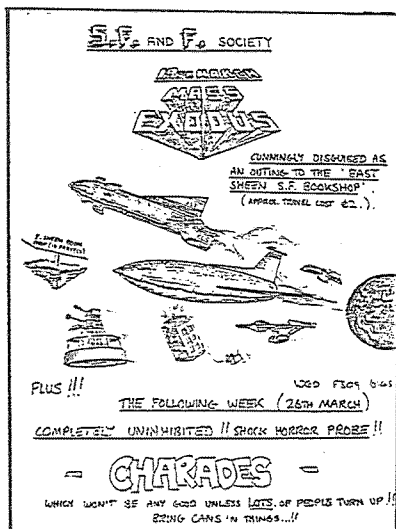
My weekend as a guest of *Shoestringcon 9 - Necroninecon* took me back to my days as a student - a curious experience, since I never was one. Perhaps I mean that my personal '60s were in the early '70s, and the audience at PSIFA reminded me of me as I was then. Since those were the days that led me to take up writing full-time, I felt very much at home, and much appreciated the care the PSIFA folk, Jaime in particular, took of me. I especially remember the search for the van with the pitta sandwiches, not to mention the way the audience threw rice for me to eat, or was that supposed to be part of the show? But then all my needs were taken care of, and I suspect my consciousness may never be quite the same, not since I learned I'd been the editor of *Halls of Horror*.

My best wishes to PSIFA and all who may attend!

Ramsey Campbell.

(Ramsey Campbell, author, journalist and broadcaster was GoH at PSIFA'S ninth Shoestringcon where he had a late night encounter with the SF&DA - and that tells PSIFAns enough about the man. His writing is mainly in the field of fantasy and horror, rather than SF, and his works include 'The Hungry Moon' (Arrow)).

PSIFA Event Poster circa 1980.



The Gronk, official P.S.I.F.A. mascot. From 2000AD; each Saturday.

TARGET DATE: 1998.

by Stuart Clark.

As current editor of *Hypo-Space* I have become well versed with the way PSIFA has evolved over the last 10 years, especially the zine *Hypo-Space*. Considering the way that it started life as a typed newsletter, it has come a long way. The publication I now manage is a fully word-processed, desk-top published affair - surely that was science fiction ten years ago! Considering that, it makes you wonder what *Hypo-Space* will be like in ten years from now!

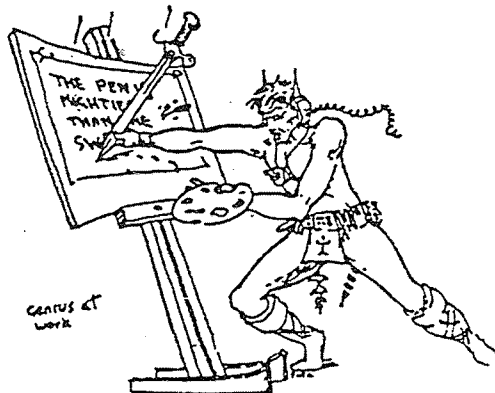
When asked to edit *Hypo-Space*, my first thought was 'why me?' 'Probably because I regularly write for *Starburst*,' I found myself answering. Chastising myself for holding a conversation with my alter ego, I decided to give it a bash, probably with my head when the going got tough. And tough it has got on several occasions but I'm glad I said 'yes' because it is fun!

PSIFA over the years has waxed and waned constantly and is arguably in a waning period at the moment. Certainly in terms of attendance figures, the turn outs have been rather low sometimes. The hard-core attendees, however, bristle with enthusiasm for SF and its allied genres. Recent meetings have featured slide shows, talks and lectures, role playing experiences and the ever faithful stand-by - videos.

With an influx of new blood every October, PSIFA finds itself revitalised and ready for another year of enjoying and, in its own small way, contributing to SF. What is necessary to these new PSIFAns, though, is events such as *Decaid* where they can meet older PSIFAns and fully understand the background and history of what they are involved in. That way, be it big or small, PSIFA will always remain one of the best SF groups around.

Stuart Clark.

(Stuart Clark is the current (1988) editor of the PSIFA's news-zine and occasional journal, *Hypo-Space*. His family home is local, in Welwyn Garden City, and he is a computer person in 'real life').



Problem Page.

CLIQUES & CLICHES. *Towards An Open Society*

Not a new type of RPG - it's *real* life.

by *Dave Lermit(t)*.

After reading the Society's copy of the latest (summer '88) publications of the Biggleswade Shark Fishing Association, I noted their bemoaning their lack of popularity and inability to cover the broad spectrum of SF culture in this country. I also noted the continued non-publication of my riposte to unjustified comments (in *Matrix*) on *Shoestringcon 9 - Necroninecon*; despite their concern over lack of input, and a verbal assurance at *Follycon*!

A good example of their ambivalent attitude toward students and other such 'minority' interest groups as a whole.

The cliché "big fishes in small ponds" is illustrative of the fragmentation of fandom into cliques.

So what happens to the small fry?

Ignored by most cliques they get swallowed up by the predators, or - like PSIFA - form their own cliques, student groups cannot afford to be closed, they depend on the intake of fresh dedicated individuals to keep going. A complete turnover in personnel every 3 - 4 years and minimal membership requirements means that no one can be ignored and all are actively encouraged to participate. In my opinion student groups are the only fresh thing in fandom today and will always continue to be.

Dave Lermitt.

(Dave Lermit(t) was one of the three to leave Warwick U and come down Hatfield way. Despite a degree (for classification see early Hypo Spaces) Dave availed himself of the PSIFA job-finding service and became a Polytechnic staff member in the middle of PSIFA's 2nd year. Since then he has been able to provide a bridge between successive years.

Regarding Dave's second 't', Wimbledon and the Muppets, current PSIFAns should endeavour to elicit this information from the first generation).

Comment.

It seemed a shame to spoil this publication with a gripe, and Dave's piece almost got the proverbial reject slip. Yet we live in a real world and Dave has pointed to some real problems (elsewhere echoed by Stuart Clark) that have dogged PSIFA and other groups. No matter the enthusiasm of local groups, they do not have the contacts and experience of larger bodies even if they do have regional expertise and local resources. Hatfield PSIFA is typical; it suffers from the former and has the latter. Each year students leave the polytechnic on graduating, as well as to go on industrial placement. Each year there are new freshers and those returning from industry. This means that *the average polytechnic student will not know anybody outside his/her academic year for more than one year*. Consequently successful partnerships and teams of poly

students are even more transitory than their university counterparts. On the other hand PSIFA does have a reservoir of science on tap as well as access to equipment, lecture halls etc etc.

Surely here you would think that a team-up with a larger body who had the experience, contacts and know-how, would be to both parties' advantage. Whatever the reason this has not happened despite most PSIFAn generations approaching Dave's Biggleswade Association. But new and small groups are not alone. As was pointed out in the 1987 *Concatenation*, conrunners could do with some central assistance.

'Why is this?' I hear you cry. Could it be that national association organisers are more interested in their own thing than in associating! I do not know. I do know, though, that while newcomers and fringe fans are ignored, (and Dave's letter is not answered), then British SF groups will not be associated.

All this must seem strange to a reader outside the SF community, the genre is, after all, meant to be frontier spirited, forward and outward looking. Still never mind, if PSIFA can't approach Biggleswade then surely it will only be a matter of time for Biggleswade approaches PSIFA - after all that was why eternity was invented.



LIFE AFTER PSIFA.

*What is the fate of students after Hatfield?
Jonathan Cowie reports on the fate of over 2000 (CNAAs)
B.Sc./B.A. graduates from 1982.*

Having done your course-work as soon as you get it, what value is there to being an active member of PSIFA? Well of the first generation PSIFAn officers and convention committee (with one exception who dropped out in the first year for personal reasons) all were very active in PSIFA, all passed their exams with honours, all got jobs within three months except for two who went on to obtain post-graduate qualifications at University. But is this typical? To find out Tandfran used his psionic fluence to get the CNAAs to conduct a survey of 2000 UK poly 1982 graduates - the year that the first PSIFAns qualified. These are the results in brief:

Employment and further study: 1 year after graduation 52% of bio', chem', comp sci', env' sci' students were employed. This rose to 71% after two years and 79% after three. 22% went onto further studies after graduation. Psychology, pharmacy students did better on the job front initially with 72% employed but only 10% went on to post-grad'. After three years there was little difference between these groups. Of humanities students only 36% found full time employment after one year but this rose to 71% by three years. Though 25% went post-grad', 32% were still unemployed after one year and 8% after three years (twice the unemployment rate of any other group).

Income: The trend of all graduates was toward employment but even those who went into full-time jobs straight away changed jobs within three years - over half of all graduates had two or more jobs in this period. On average (mean) all graduates in employment earned £5,506 (1983) one year after graduation which rose to £8,768 (1985) three years after qualifying. Humanities students earned about 10% less than this (social science even less), scientists were about average but engineers and business management graduates earned 14% more.

Hypo-Space obtained the inflation rates for the intervening years from the British Medical Association's Economic Unit, so enabling PSIFA's logistic department to calculate that by August 1988 the previous year's (1987) graduates would be earning (if the trends remained true) on average just over £7,000.

The survey also revealed that over 40% of science graduates (excluding psychology and pharmacy for which the figure was 28.5%) felt that their degree *had not given them sufficient opportunity to develop oral communication skills* and 15.3% of science students thought that they could have done with more training in written communication. This figure was *higher* for engineers and business graduates!



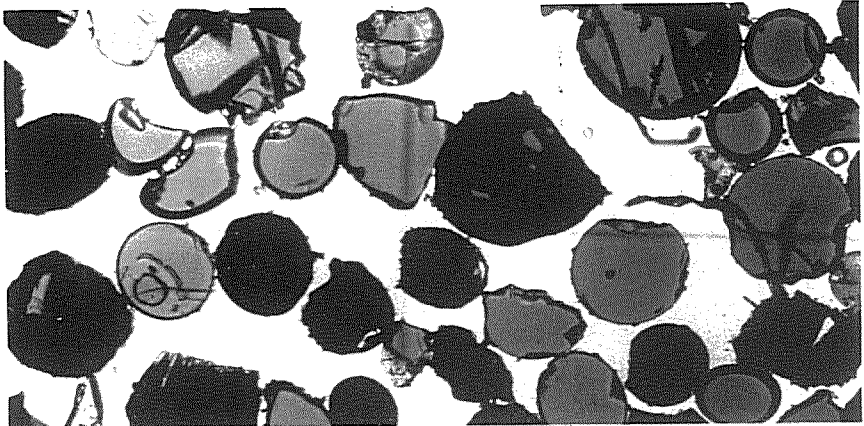
Student societies & life after PSIFA: Being actively involved in PSIFA can help round off your degree. Providing, as stated at the beginning of this article, that course-work takes an *immediate* priority, students should get through their degree. Then by getting *actively* (that means doing things and not just consuming) involved in PSIFA it is possible to develop communication and managerial skills. A really nifty poster for a PSIFA meeting requires exactly the same skills as producing an advertisement for *any* product. Preparing a panel game, giving a talk, managing a debate etc, develops oral communication skills that can be used in commercial committees or when giving industrial presentations. Writing a good, concise *Hypo-Space* review, be it of a book, film or PSIFA event takes the same sort of ability as writing a project appraisal, *honest*. Putting on a full convention is no harder than running a commercial conference, product launch, whatever. Finally, being an active society officer who delegates and ensures that events happen, are well publicised, and *above all* are successful, provides an excellent grounding in managerial skills. True, you may find that student efforts aren't quite up to a professional standard, but then students are not full time professionals with years of experience or even the right resources. Even so such extra-curricular activities can only help fill the degree course gaps that have been identified by the CNAAs survey.

Students in their first and second years, having done their assignments, ought to seriously consider being active within a student society as uncommonly broad-based as PSIFA. Not for any altruistic reason, involvement in SU societies can be for a purely selfish, personal-development, rationale. Use your short time at Hatfield wisely, and have fun!



The Science Fiction and Fantasy Society

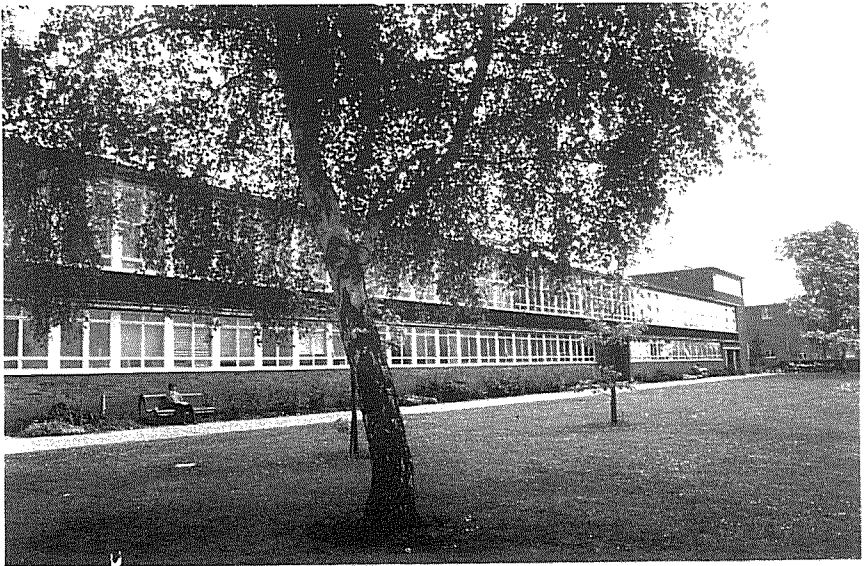
c/o Students Union,
Hatfield Polytechnic,
P.O. Box 109, Hatfield, Herts.



Magnified sample of Lunar 'Orange Soil'.

Moonrock Exhibition (1980).

Organised by Geology Dept's Dr Alan Cheshire and
PSIFAn Paul Melon.



Hatfield Campus.