

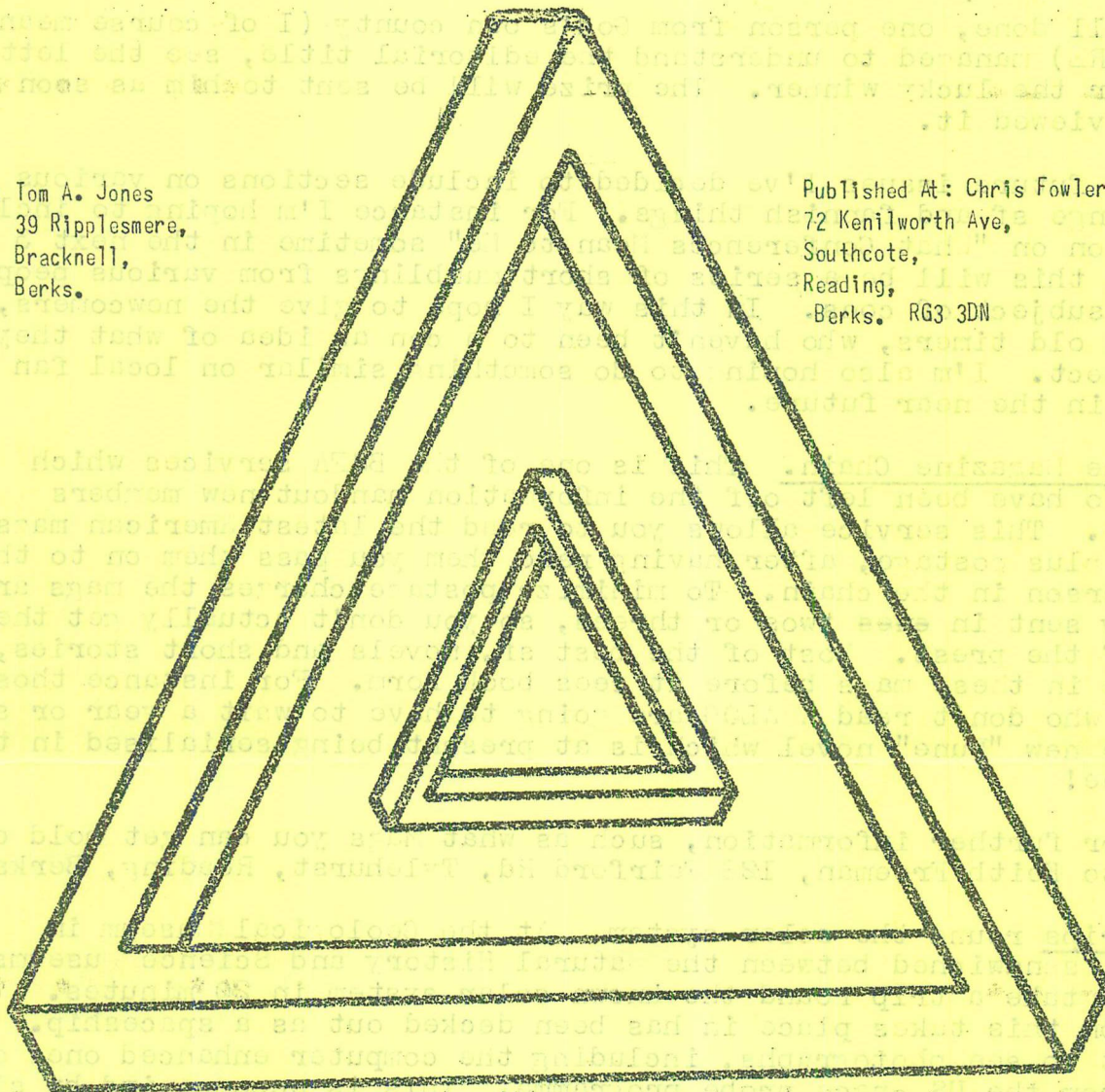
BSIFA Newsletter 5

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Well done, one person from God's own county (I of course mean YORKSHIRE) managed to understand the editorial title, see the letter page for the lucky winner. The prize will be sent to him as soon as I've reviewed it.

In future issues I've decided to include sections on various sf, fringe sf and fannish things. For instance I'm hoping to include a section on "What Conferences Mean to Me" sometime in the next 3 issues, this will be a series of short mumblings from various people on the subject of cons. In this way I hope to give the newcomers, and the old timers, who haven't been to a con an idea of what they can expect. I'm also hoping to do something similar on local fan groups in the near future.

The Magazine Chain. This is one of the BSFA services which seems to have been left off the information handout new members receive. This service allows you to read the latest American mags for 5p plus postage, after having read them you pass them on to the next person in the chain. To minimize postage charges the mags are usually sent in ones twos or threes, so you don't actually get them hot off the press. Most of the best sf, novels and short stories, appears in these mags before it sees book form. For instance those of you who don't read ANALOG are going to have to wait a year or so for the new "Dune" novel which is at present being serialised in that magazine!

For further information, such as what mags you can get hold of, write to Keith Freeman, 128 Fairford Rd, Tylehurst, Reading, Berks.

Trips round the solar system. At the Geological Museum in London, sandwiched between the Natural History and Science Museums, you can take a trip round the known solar system in 20 minutes. The room this takes place in has been decked out as a spaceship. You get to see photographs, including the computer enhanced ones of Mars, from the US space probe programme. This is accompanied by signs saying "Faster than light drive in operation" and a Disney type commentary. Still it's not bad, especially as it's free. It was very packed whilst I was there and where as the little kids, at whom it was aimed, wanted to leave after 10 minutes when Mr. Spock didn't appear all the dads insisted on staying to the end.

Also of some interest to sf fans and thinking people is the new computer exhibit at the Science Museum, London. I enjoyed it,

though it's best to go during the week so that you can have a go at the "guess the animal game" with the on-line computer (it can even recognise 2 legged camels). I found the section on computer art particularly interesting. Though I've been told that there's no truth in the rumour that one sf writer has fed all his stock plots and phrases into a computer which now writes his books for him.

No room for humorous articles this week (issue) but I've got a piece called "The Thing From Inner Space" by Dave Langford, which I think is pretty good lined up for the next issue.

And now....

Foiled you, bet you thought I'd finished, so did I. The reason for my continued presence is three fold, two letters and a tv programme. First the letters. Chris M. Lilley (18a Flax Bourton Rd, Failand, Bristol, BS8 3UW) writes about an sf "scrap book" idea which he has had. I've already referred Chris to our information bureau and the SF Foundation, but I've decided to reprint the relevant part of his letter in case any of you can help.

"You may have read in the OBSERVER colour supplement 28th Dec 1975, an article "Did H.G.Wells and Co. get it right?" This article is by Jonathon Sale, and is about people like Wells, who had predicted things. Such as World War 1 to start in 1956, despite that "miss" he also predicted "hits", such as Pearl Harbour and many other things in his books and, I believe, his lectures.

"The article includes many other such accurate hits and amusing misses.

"Why not do some long, painstaking, yet rewarding, research to produce a thorough book on it, or, at least, most of the prophecies made in the last century or so? One part of the book would contain all the past prophecies (that is, all those years pinpointed by writers that are now behind us), and another part of the book would contain the prophecies made in the last 20 years or so for years yet to come. It could be very interesting!

"As I said, this is going to be long and painstaking for me, for I cannot afford the time to do all the research in the profitable space of a year, or afford assistants. I would be most grateful therefore, if you could give me any reference for research, or indeed, any contributions of valuable information, which would be gratefully received."

Hello Chris Lilley, on consideration my reply to you was perhaps too pesermistic. Although a lot of early sf stories, especially those in the Gernsbach magazines, were just scientific prophecy stories I'm not sure how many of them actually specified a date. Certainly by only including in the first section those stories which specified a date which has now passed and in the second section only including those stories which specify a date sometime during the lifetime of the average sf reader, you may cut your task down to a manageable size. I hope some of our members reading this will be able to help you.

Second letter. Michael Hamilton (38 Park Way, Etwall, Derbyshire) writes to discuss several points and asks what he can do about getting advice on a story he has written. In the past the BSFA initiated amateur writer round robins. In these a letter was circled round a number of people. When a member received the letter he would comment on the stories it contained from the other members of the chain and he would add a story (or stories) of his own for the other members to comment on. As long as there was sufficient interest the letter would continuously circle round the group. I don't know if this kind of thing is still in existence, if it is would someone let me know about them. If any of you are interested in this kind of thing then just write to me and I'll try to initiate a few circles.

Now the tv programme. READ ALL ABOUT IT. In the past I have considered it somewhat precocious but on the whole pretty reasonable in its assessments. After all they liked both James Herriot and Solzhenitsin. But, when it comes to sf they are blind. Recently they did (and this is the correct verb) Frank Herbert's THE DUNE EYES OF EISENBERG (I won't swear this spelling's correct). Usually the reviewers pick a book they know of or have already read and so can recommend. This time we have Irene Handle (what qualifications she has for reviewing books I do not know) picking a sf book at random, because she thought it might be a good read. The panel then put it down because it contained scientific things they could not understand. I didn't like the story but not because of the scientific words. One of the panel says "what are these things called cyborgs?", preserve me, I would have expected that between them they could have afforded a dictionary!

This highlights the crucial point, most sf contains some reference to science, even if only in passing, and most artistically minded people know nothing about science. Most scientists and technologists know something of the Arts, they read books, listen to music, watch films, go to the theatre. How many artists even bother to read the science columns of the quality newspapers, let alone try to read the easy bits from THE NEW SCIENTIST or SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN?

Here on the show we have a panel of artists; author, actress and media man. They know little or nothing of science, and so tend to be frightened of it. And when science, in the guise of sf, tries to invade their world of the novel, horror, horror, they've just got to put it down.

It would be really nice if everyone wrote to the BBC and said that in the interests of fairness they should occasionally have a scientist on the panel, just to help give a balanced view.



Letters

((These double brackets denote your editor speaking))

BRIAN GRIFFIN. 17 Kitchener St, Walney, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria.

I'm still giggling uncontrollably over the Alka Seltzered, hoversprayed roads in Bob Shaw's BRIGGING THEM OUT OF THEIR SHELLS. The more one thinks about it...beautiful! There's almost something poetic about it; it's discernably from the same mind that produced Slow Glass.

Anyway, you'll gather I enjoyed the NEWSLETTER, which was nicely miscellaneous and unpredictable ((especially if you got one with a page missing)), without being chaotic (the Media News is obviously carefully prepared). The letters were also interesting, like good conversation..which is presumably what the fannish press is all about. ((I would hope that with time the letters in BSFAN will be the most interesting section.))

I see that people are still nervous about the status of sf in relation to "serious" (!) literature. There's always someone ready to go one about the "relevance" and cultural importance of sf, and there's always someone ready to go to the opposite extreme and consign all things unfannish to the Outer Darkness. Case A always ends up sounding rather absurd, while Case B, whilst earning my sympathy...sf is a marvellous secret thing, that's why the world of organised "culture" doesn't begin to understand it... provokes the thought that, well, yes, I agree; but we must talk about sf as well as read it (it's only natural), and that talk will eventually become criticism, a public mulling over sf. And if this mulling over is good enough, it will naturally connect up with what is going on in the realms of "serious" art. God knows, the "serious" boys are in a hell of a mess... they've run out of criteria, they still think the Novel is dead or dying (in the age of Priest, Shaw, Aldiss et al)), they're in despair, they need new blood. So perhaps we can help them...if our mulling over is good enough to attract their attention. The danger will be for our mulling over to degenerate into Lit.Crit., and all the evils thereof;but it may be a challenge we have to accept.

((I agree. I dislike critics, as distinguished from reviewers, especially sf critics. Most critics being no good as their criticisms usually boil down to "I don't like it because I don't like it", this being padded out with the names of 5 unheard of authors/critics and the titles of several books you've never heard of, preferably in a foreign language. I don't believe sf can be criticised in exactly the same way as mainstream because it's not about the same kinds of thing. James Blish we miss you, you were a good critic.))

RAY HARRISON. 18 The Witham, Grange Est, Daventry, Northants.

I enjoyed Graham Poole's Media News and am pleased to hear he will be doing this regularly. Special mention must be made of his piece on ROLLERBALL. I saw this film about 2 weeks ago and have read no end of short and long reviews, none of which express my sentiments of this film so accurately as does Graham's in just a few short sentences.

Also enjoyable was Keith Freeman's fanzine reviews although I found it a bit sterile. I would like to see Keith not only listing contents but giving his own opinion on the contents, whether or not it pricks any editors pride! ((Right, I likes ter see a good slanging match with fanzine editors getting upset. Me, I don't worry, I have a captive audience.))

I feel James Parker may have missed the point of fandom altogether. In his letter he talks of "a religious calling" and "a holy crusade" but surely no fan believes anything of that sort. (Wait til you see 3 Ballard fans together at one time.) Could it not be that fandom simply adds to the enjoyment of sf even though it is not essential.

The one thing which could greatly improve the BSFAN is more interior illos, although you can't publish what you haven't got, so I hope you get some contributions. ((So do I. We use a therm-sten process which means that the illo has to be done in a carbon based ink or soft pencil. Last issues illos weren't in either medium so we had to draw round them in ink or hand cut them onto stencil, this didn't work too well, apologies to the viewers and artists.))

DAVID E. BRIDGES. 51 Crawshaw Grove, Sheffield, Yorkshire.

Misen? I get the distinct impression that you are having us on. However, having looked in a dicti and found that the nearest word is probably 'misenscene' (as in plastiscene), meaning the art of setting up the scenary for a play, I decided that possibly it was a made up word. How about MIS as in the prefix meaning 'ill', and EI as in the prefix used to form verbs with the sense 'cause to be', that is, the editorial was intended to cause us to be ill. No? ((Charming, next time I'll send you a copy of BSFAN without your letter in it)) Well, of course, there is the obvious answer that you didn't want to break into a new sheet of lettraset and you only had the letters m,i,s,e,n left, no? OK, I give up come out from behind that ridiculous grin and tell all. ((Fancy you coming from Yorkshire and not getting it, the answer that is. Read on through the letters and you'll find that a fellow Tyke managed to decipher it.))

Talking of covers ((I've missed out a bit, Dave doesn't really write letters as disjointed as this)), either Dave Baldock spent an awful long time drawing around the rim of a glass, or he ruined a perfectly good slinky squashing it through a Xerox machine like that. ((The cover was obviously a 2 dimensional representation of a 3 dimensional projection of a 4 dimensional Klien bottle, huh?))

If you have to stop calling it BSFAN then REVELATIONS is the best of the alternatives, but I'll still think of it as BSFAN. Of course you could have a different name each issue, just to keep folk alert. ((I'd thought of that but it would drive the British Library mad. But I have decided to keep the name BSFAN for a few more issues at least, if I change too many things too quick you'll all end up suffering from Future Shock.))

DAVID LEWIS. 8 Aldis Ave, Stowmarket, Suffolk

Misen - Well staples are misen, various letters are misen from the text, also misen is various bits of artwork. ((A good try and accurate, unfortunately, but wrong.))

I expect you will get over these minor hiccups and they are due to trying to maintain a rigorous schedule to produce a large slice of news and views at shorter notice than we are used to.

I enjoyed the debate on Fandom, a subject likely to produce lively reaction from both pro's and anti's, I remain an unrepentant pro. As to relating to current developments in the arts if this means relating to expensive piles of fire bricks and pictures of turds recently aquired by the Tate and other wonders of contemporary art well JTP you go and relate to the happening world and I'll stay home digging SF. Who is conning who?

I also wish sf to be dis-associated from the peurile stereo-types the mass media associate it with in their pea sized brains, You haven't seen a good newspaper report of a con, I haven't seen one either good or bad. ((The papers which actually print news, as against those which are more interested in pictures of semi-naked people, usually give us an inch or two for the convention. How about us all keeping our eyes open at Easter and seeing which papers report the con and what they say?))

I see the old reviewer/reviewee argument rearing its grizzled old head from the trough yet again, acrimonious words flow swiftly, and will flow in future, whatever the reviewer says he will upset someone. However, I find Fallible Freeman Fanzine reviews useful and informative.

I enjoyed the Bob Shaw romp. Perhaps someone should give this oyster rating to some of the more vocal members of fandom. ((We're working on yours now....just my little joke)) Also Chris Fowler when unleashed into the realms of fannish humour submerges his straight laced Vector self and there appears a witty alter-ego, much to our enjoyment. ((Careful, everytime a letter of praise comes in Chris has to go out and buy a new hat.)) This is a new departure which I for one would like to see pursued in future issues. Seriousness in sf is OK but without a little humour becomes rather boring after a while ((hear, hear!)). All this posturing for status reasons gets on my tit I'm afraid.

((Thanks for your regular missive. I could not agree more about humour and sf. Humour is sadly lacking, especially in the pro area. The last time I got a good laugh from sf was when I saw SLEEPER. The last story to give me a good belly laugh was an Eric Frank Russell one. Since then I've had the odd chuckle from a story but nothing gutsy. The trouble is it's much easier to write serious stuff than good humour, comics are born not made. Also the type of humour we are served up tries to be witty rather than funny and with the majority of this the wit is either sarcasm or nastiness dressed up. It's a pity Groucho never tried his hand at an sf script.))

MERF ADAMSON. 14 St James Close, Hedon, Hull

Well, it's pretty obvious, really; the Editorial is written by the editor, which happens to be you: so you write it versel' and call it MISEN ("myself"). Yes? Not so very different from the way we talk up here. (I had thought, for a brief moment, that it was a curious contraction of "misogynist" until I realized that there is a slight difference between the letters Y and E...)

((This boy has just won the prize. I am an exiled Yorkshireman, forced by economic circumstance to live down South, but I still like to keep the accent alive. Sorry the competition was biased against non-Yorkshiresmen, you'll just have to press your local adult education centre to put on courses in Tyke Culture. Merf wins a couple of books, but won't get them for a while because I'm reading them for review.))

There. Dunno how many entrees you'll get; I'm hoping that maybe I'm the only one again (as in the 'spot the not so deliberate error' competition Chris had - hmm, I'm still waiting for my prize, come to think of it...). ((That's why you're getting 2 books.))

First, a few nice words: Thanks for reprinting the Bob Shaw piece, excellent, as usual. I guess this is the kind of fan writing people in the letter column are asking for: it's funny, it's fannish (but not in group) and it makes an excellent contrast with the more serious contents of VECTOR. Then again, it could easily have appeared in VECTOR - so I assume that it was put here as a contrast to the serious and constrictive letters in BSFAN...

And they are, aren't they? Very serious, and earnest, even. Now it's one thing to take your hobby seriously, but it's quite another to take it so seriously that you can't enjoy it anymore. And reading the present selection, I get the impression from most of them (and particularly James Parker's) that the writers are so intent on being serious that they resent us ordinary fans having fun and enjoying sf. Even the letters in VECTOR itself aren't this heavy, and isn't BSFAN supposed to provide a light contrast to VECTOR? ((Yes and no. In the way of articles BSFAN will provide a light contrast to VECTOR but all letters of general interest, not specifically aimed at VECTOR or its contents, will appear in BSFAN; whether serious or not. OK, a lot of people are in fandom for fun, I get a lot of enjoyment from it, but some people are in the BSFA so that they can seriously discuss sf, literature and the arts, I enjoy that also. Surely you can't begrudge people this serious discussion?)). I suppose you're limited in your selection of bits to publish by the letters that are actually sent to you (for which I flagellate myself: I should have written before now, naughty, naughty!) ((It's my policy to publish at least part of every letter. If people take the trouble to write then I must respond and I can't reply to each one individually, I haven't the time. Even if I didn't do that I'd still have published James Parker's letter, it made some relevant points. From the response I've had to it, even though mostly adverse, it must have hit a nerve somewhere. And, of course, what every editor wants is active discussion in the letter column.)).

Coming back to JP's letter, I cringe and fume at his 3rd paragraph (the long one). Passing over his "summerization" of one sentence (3 lines) into 20 lines...

When I come to "Unfortunately fandom in its present form does not constitute (a vehicle for the propagation of the sf culture)" I wonder about his motivations. It isn't unfortunate; maybe "crusaders" consider it so (I guess its non-susceptibility to manipulation frustrates them), but this is all to the good. Crusaders have always been resented, and always will be; instead of trying to cudgel the literate population, and force them to accept sf as a "sober, considered artform", either persuade them gently or just let them discover the thing for themselves; the only way to do it is in a civilised manner. By being forceful, you will only increase their resentment and they will never accept sf. I too would like to see sf more generally read and enjoyed; so would many others. But I'm not trying to turn people off it.

Rob Jackson ((who?)) had a very relevant article in MAA 9. He made out a very good case for a change in the public relations of sf. The people who are trying hardest to get the non-sf-reading public to read it are the ones who are turning most people away from it, by stressing the "art" and "sociological relevance" of sf. The majority of people don't want to read Literature; they want to read a good book and enjoy a good story & they read for pleasure. Up to now, though, they have been put off by crusaders who want people to read sf because it is "relevant" and serious. We need a change; we should be stressing instead the fun aspect of sf, and how enjoyable it is to read. "Social comment" may be present, but it is not the first thing people look for in books and magazines.

Eh, but now I'm guilty of being serious! Must try to think of something a bit lighter....can't. I'll continue.

People read novels and stories as an escape from the world (it isn't called escapism for nothing), somewhere to go to get away from the mundane. But damn me if James Parker doesn't want sf to turn into mainstream literature and reflect reality; I, and many others, read sf because it is different from the mainstream. And when he started out he probably did too, shame... ((I suppose the argument is that sf need not be escapist, that it can remain different whilst becoming relevant, I don't know. I certainly agree with your point about some small groups in sf wanting it to become more like mainstream almost to the point where it is indistinguishable, this could only be a bad thing and it is taking the quest for literacy too far.))

Did you hear about the Irish Sea Scout whose tent sank? ((This magazine has no race prejudices, and does not believe all Irish are thick, especially the large, strong ones with big fists and cudgels.))

It's quite amazing, really, the number of sf films being made and planned. If it wasn't for the film magazines, and columns like Graham Poole's, we up here in the provinces would never hear about 80% of the films that exist or are being made. I suppose, though, that the fault is with the distributing companies; if the cinemas don't get prints, they can't show the films, can they? An interesting column, lots of news, I look forward to more.

The fanzine reviews are much better this time, and are now about right. It was fun to see Rob Jackson getting worked up about the last lot. Keith's excuses are acceptable, but I think they'll only be accepted this once!

But whenever reading reviews, always bear in mind that the reviewer is human, therefore biased and fallible. And who can expect really penetrating and perceptive reviews of fanzines (of all things) in three lines? Hardly room to list contents, never mind comment on them. But again, a reviewer does owe it to his readers, and the fanzines he's reviewing, to read each one through, and to do the job properly. No more rushed jobs thank you! ((I hope you're not suggesting Keith doesn't read the fanzines. What Keith said was that he doesn't get chance to re-read the zines before writing the reviews and so has to rely on his memory of them. Keith not only reads all the zines but is the only person I know who locs everyone of them! How many readers, let alone reviewers, can say that?))

Keith's reviews I think complement nicely the LITTLE GEM GUIDE, giving a bit more information about individual issues, where Pete Roberts does a listing of fanzines extant. Lots of new fans and new members should find these 2 very useful when begining their fanzine collections.

One last word on fanzine letter-columns: Keith makes the point that the loccol in one issue can be frustrating if you haven't read the previous issue. I daresay this is often true, but one particular column that I think stands out on its own is the XXXX ((I refuse to give a competitor 2 plugs in one letter)) one: there is enough material in it to be interesting in its own right, without having to refer to previous issues. No doubt there are many ~~issues~~ others of which the same is true, too. (Do I get my lifetime subscription now, Rob?).

((I recently read NAVA 8 & 9 without having read any previous ones and found that a large percentage of letters were uninteresting, to meas I hadn't read 7, there can't have been anything of startling interest in it either because I can't remember a single letter now. But then one man's poison, etc.))

R I Barycz. 16 Musgrove Rd, London SE14 5PW

Misen? Crossed swords, what else? Well, for a start it's German for "missing" (if not it should be).

Mr. Poole might be interested in an article (well there are words around the pictures) in the March 76 CONTINENTAL FILM REVIEW. Science fiction? When may we have an article from him on porn in the sf cinema ((Like FLESH GORDON?)), the sort of stuff you take Mary Whitehouse to see ? (If he's thinking of doing one on it I suggest he join that ladies organisation, they know where it's at (& no doubt can offer the money saving block bookings)).

((Fortunately the cheap porn merchants seem to have left sf alone, so far. FLESH GORDON got mixed reviews, from worst film ever to not bad. Apart from that BARBERELLA is the only other sf film which might, if one really stretched a point, be called soft porn. From the point of view of sex sf films are in the same state the literature was in the 50s. We are now getting large slices of violence in our sf films, though, ie ROLLERBALL and DEATH RACE 2000, so perhaps sex will be next. Whether it'll be good or bad is going to depend on who does the film.))

SANDY (ALEXANDER) BROWN. 18 Gordon Terrace. Blantyre G7B 0NA, Scotland

At last I've been shamed into writing a letter on VECTOR and the BSFAN, as my wife keeps sending you letters and you keep publishing them; so I've got to show that I can at least do as bad as she can, if only for the sake of the male-chauvinist pig backlash.

Firstly, your editorial title - I think it's a misspelling of "mizzen" - you remembered that there was a nautical term connected with publishing, and that was the only one you recalled offhand. ((No. I do work for the Admiralty but we've done away with the mizzen masts.)) The less likely explanation is that it's a regional dialect form of "myself". ((Right, but too late. You get an honourable mention.)) Even less likely (or perhaps not) is a corruption of "misere", where you don't expect to draw a single letter of comment.

If you want any sf-oriented photographs for future use as covers, just let me know the size required and I'll let you have a few prints. ((We certainly would like to see some, they could be useful for both BSFAN and, perhaps, VECTOR. The size we need is A4. I look forward to seeing some prints.))

I disagree with your view of the "Read all about it" programme, which I find pretentious beyond belief (the programme, not your view). I haven't read the book either, but my impression of the panel's position was, - the stories didn't contain any BEMs, or were totally unlike STARTRUCK, so they were really "mainstream" stories. (Is "Dying Inside" not basically a mainstream story with sf tacked on, to a non-sf reader? You can supply your own examples of others). Does it matter if sf is socially acceptable? And if "acceptable" means getting air time and reviews in large circulation newspapers, who are we trying to kid?; would it make any difference to sales?; sales don't interest the average sf buff like you and me, they only matter to publishers (assuming that royalties to the author don't amount to much on an extra couple of hundred copies); it would only give us the knowledge that we had been right all along - "See, I told you so". I too am all in favour of literacy in sf, but a poor story is a poor story, no matter how many spaceships are mentioned, or how many crises of conscience the protagonist suffers. Nicking the bad with the good from "mainstream" might be good for the author's pocket, but not for his self-esteem or satisfaction. ((Surely we should think about sales. Only if publishers sell a lot will they publish a lot, OK so most of that is going to be rubbish but some of it will be good. Also only with good profits from sales will publishers have the money to experiment with new authors on whom they know they're going to make a loss, and publishers do do that.))

I note with severe misgivings that the Public Lending Rights Bill appears to intend to dole out the royalties on library books so that each author gets something, at the expense of the best sellers. While feeling that a best seller means lowest common denominator, I can see on the shelves of my local library several feet of "trashy" sf by authors whose names don't appear in the stocks of bookshops, nor in the catalogues of the sf postal shop that I deal with. The only outlet for them is the public libraries, which appear to buy their sf indiscriminately, and I would hate to see even a Harold Robbinw subsidising and encouraging the author of inferior and non-selling works to perpetrate more of the same, and have the libraries stock up yet more rubbish. Thankfully this will not effect the paperback market, which seems better researched, and does not contain as much of the dross as does the libraries' market. So I'm not trying to dictate what should be available for people to read, it's just that

the opportunity for the average author to earn a decent living and improve his standards is going to produce a perhaps fatal byproduct, which may lessen sf.

Graham Poole's column is interesting, but at 5 pages is too long and tends to be gossipy rather than informative. A bit of pruning would give more impact. ((Last issues column was so long because there was so much in it and I think the chatty style makes it more digestable. Personel tastes differ.))

I didn't think Bob Shaw's bit was upto his usual standard, but then maybe he's suffering from the 'flu, like me.

Freeman on Fanzines is excellent. A much better approach than that employed in any other zines I have read. (By the way, BSFAN seems to be getting more like a fanzine with each issue, or is it just my imagination?) ((Yes.))

The reports section is ideal (if regular) for letting the members know the office bearers are still alive and well and looking after things. (Would that the Mancon Committee did the same).

GRAHAM POOLE. 23 Russet Rd, Cheltenham

A 24 page BSFAN 3!! Now this is more like what the BSFA should be producing. And the idea of hiving off fannish material from VECTOR I like. In fact, the BSFAN has become the "lesser Vector" that was much talked about in the late 60s, early 70s. The discussions were just dying down when I first joined the BSFA in 1970 and so I don't know very much about it. Archie Mercer was, however, producing a good bulletin during that era that I enjoyed but it was often too short and, if memory serves correct, a little impersonal, possibly because Archie, although an age old fan of long standing, had reduced contact with other fans to a minimum. What is emerging now is far more substantial, has more personality and, with careful control, could become a very useful organ of the BSFA. All that is now needed is members willing to write letters and to discuss what the BSFA should be doing. ((Blush, blush, thank you, kind sur, now don't you be a takin' advantage of a young editor like that.))

Misen: My son; Risen (as from the grave); typon for Miser or Risen; or setting the stage for what follows as in mise en scene.

The cover wasn't really xeroxed was it??? ((We're using thermo-stens for the BSFAN artwork - what there is of it - and these require that the original be in some carbon vased compound. Such as a carbon ink, soft pencil or xerox copy. So the original ink drawing was xeroxed and then put onto thermo-sten. The same fate awaits the artwork you've sent - thanks very much for that by the way.

Egoboo is still used in fandom...a lot! ((Nice to know the old words don't change.))

I tend to agree with your comments that some so-called sf stories are no more than mainstream stories with a bit of sf tacked on for good measure. How universal this is I don't really know because I now read very few short stories (because I find very few that I really

enjoy or find fulfilling) but Brian Aldiss has certainly demonstrated on many an occasion that he is an advocate of such fiction. You say of SFM's fiction "It's all short stories and most short stories are poor". I wouldn't quite go along with that but I know how you feel. Some people like short stories, others don't. You and I don't but that doesn't mean the stories are necessarily poor - one man's meat... ((Actually I don't dislike all short stories, there are still some good short story writers around, such as Harlan Ellison, but they don't write for SFM.))

So you have spare copies of the SFWB and the Handbook. Some time ago I had the idea of reviving the SFWB and even received permission from Dan Morgan to use any of his work from when he edited the Bulletin. Well, a year later, the idea has mulled around long enough and in the near future I shall be publishing something along these lines. What I shall call the publication I still do not know. The Science Fiction Writers Bulletin is good enough, I suppose, but would the BSFA welcome my 'pirating' of the name? Most probably I shall use the "SFWB" bit as a sub-title. Since I'll be using the cheap 'instant print' litho method of publication I may be able to let the BSFA have spare copies for distribution if it so wishes. ((This is a very interesting idea and speaking personally I think the BSFA should be helping this kind of fan private enterprise in any way it can. The Committee will certainly discuss this and I hope we can talk with you about it.))

You mention in passing that the BSFA is going ahead with the Yearbook...Good. (No doubt you'll say "Didn't you read on page x three issues ago that we were going ahead?" If you did it's not surprising I've forgotten - my bad memory is a living legend..I think. ((This issue you'll even find a report on the Yearbook and you may even get a copy of it in an issue or two's time.))

I agree with your answer to David Lewis that "BSFAN will never be a flash mag". A duplicated fanzine has a far warmer, friendlier atmosphere than that of a clinical, flashy lithoed zine devoid of personality...no, I'm being too sweeping here, I know several good lithoed zines that ooze with personality.

Dave Lewis says that Hard core fans provide the cash to buy sf writers' books and without them the sf writers wouldn't exist. Really? Hard core fans in this country must number in the hundreds only, and not everyone spends £250 per annum on books like I did last year (I nearly had a heart attack when I worked it out). Now, if you spread the net wider and include regular readers of sf then you might possibly get into the hundreds of thousands. The best people to answer this, though, are the publishers. I would certainly like to see further discussion of this subject because I see glimmerings of an article I could include in STARFLIGHT, my recent 'fanzine' on sf books. ((This fanzine is basically a set of book reviews. As such it'll be very useful if Graham can bring it out regularly so that the reviews are right up-to-date.))

Continuing with Dave's letter; active fandom does have positive effects in other areas such as the positive feedback authors receive through fanzines to their novels, and their ability to reach their audience, or a part of it, through fandom. Do other fandoms (apart from fantasy and comix fandoms) have similar active fanzine followings... westerns, romances, crime...?

The Fallible Freeman on Fanzines Section: I could have ripped this to pieces if it had appeared anywhere else but the NEWSLETTER. However, since most members of the BSFA presumably haven't seen any of these zines or, indeed, any fanzines at all, they're going to be more interested in the contents than with Bill Bloggs' subjective likes and dislikes. In its present format, therefore, it achieves its objects. I would like to see, however, more details about what fanzines are, what sorts there are, and so on, like Peter Roberts does in his LITTLE GEM GUIDE TO SF FANZINES. ((We intend to do this and are in the process of purchasing the GUIDE for free distribution to members.)) Another omission is that Keith doesn't say fanzines can be obtained free for a contribution or a decent letter of comment (as well as in trade). In fact certain fan-eds refuse to sell their fanzines preferring an active response rather than a few odd coppers in exchange. This has been my view in the past with SPI but if I publish the next issue using 'instant print' I could publish twice as many copies as the previous photocopied issue for about the same price. This would mean a lot of spare copies which I may consider selling. The main idea, though, is you publish a fanzine for the fun you get out of producing it and out of the response you get to it. A letter therefore is far more interesting than a piece of paper with the words "Pay Graham R. Poole or order 30 pence only" on it.

If The next NEWSLETTER is due to be printed on March 14th I'm afraid I won't be able to contribute a Visual Media SF News column - too much other work on my plate and what is more I had to rush my father into hospital this week with gall bladder trouble which was causing considerable pain. That has managed to knock all my plans haywire! ((I'm very sorry to hear about your father and I'm sure we all wish he has a speedy recovery.))

I've at last seen JAWS and although I enjoyed it, and it was a good film, my reaction was one of disappointment and a feeling of "So why's everyone raving over it?". ROLLERBALL is a far more exciting film. I'm now looking forward to DEATH RACE 2000 which is reputed to be even better than ROLLERBALL. It is going on release in the north east this weekend and then makes the rounds of the country.

Comments on the Novacon Council meeting notes:

5) Membership running 12 months from first full month upon joining. A good way of spreading the income I suppose but makes it more difficult to plan ahead and...think of the extra work involved, Tom! I hope your records will be able to cope. ((We're now computerised!))

6) Thanks to Chris Fowler for good work on VECTOR. Hear, hear!

7) Purchase and distribution of THE LITTLE GEM GUIDE. This I like and it has been something I've advocated for sometime. If sf fans are willing to produce such independent publications (the fools), saving the BSFA much time and trouble, then the BSFA could at least help them in their ventures.

8) Ditto to Keith Freeman's SF INTERNATIONAL NEWS. But what's happened to SFIN? It hasn't appeared for several months.

9) "Information on fanzines, including news and reviews of them, will be carried in VECTOR". Hmmm, I thought the idea was to have the fannish material in the Newsletter. Slight contradiction here methinks. I shouldn't complain though. After all, if any of my publications are reviewed in VECTOR it will go out to approx 400 more people than if it appeared in the BSFAN.

12) New badges! At last, now we can dispose of those Ghod-awful black hand affairs. ((I have some of the black hand badges which members can have for a stamped addressed envelope.))

13) The names of Hon Managing Director and Administrator are, I suppose, aimed at giving the holders more "respectability" in their relationships with outsiders and are not cases of empire building. ((The only cases of empire building I've got are those which are taking up my valuable floor space!))

DAVE LANGFORD. Boundary Hall, Tadley, Basingstoke, Hants.

Thanks for BSFAN, which is getting better all the time, so much that I hardly like to niggle until it reaches its ultimate plateau... (and please don't change that title now). Well, one niggle than, the punctuation. This is always a fannish failing: a good sprinkling of cammas would greatly improve your editorial, for example. Quoth Fowler or someone similar, "Bad spelling is comparable with bad manners" ...like taking your fish-knife to a steak, I suppose ... "but bad punctuation is an intellectual error." ...Like using the fish-knife for the soup!

A few hours of computer analysis easily cracked your editorial-title problem. The key lay further down in the editorial, in the misspellings "explanation" and "sentance" ... a broad hint (since I'm sure you keep your fishknife for the fish) that the title contains a deliberate misprint. It is of course meant to be Misan, suggesting "misanthropic" ... in fact, that word without the letters "thro pic". Their absence must be a subtle indication that no longer will you "thro pics" (ie of girls on the cover) at us, owing to your newly aquired misnthropy. Examination of the cover confirms the hypothesis: no girl.

Misanthropy is an occupational disease both of editors and of membership secretaries.

Notes on films are a good thing, so good that I fear VECTOR may swipe them from you unless A.Tidmarsh returns. ((Chris and I have an understanding, if he tries to nick the film reviews, I hit him.)) Bob Shaw is always a good thing, anywhere, anytime. The BSFA news is ably concealed, thank God; and my feelings on Chris' "review" were displayed by my state of mild prostration when he read it aloud. ((At a recent Reading SF Club meeting)). However, some of the letters could do with some more ruthless editing; insipidity and inanity are present in spots. Like this one, I daresay.

((You made one error in your computer analysis, I can't spell. Never have been able to. Although I could read before most kids I knew, thanks to my folks, I could never spell, many an hour I spent staying behind after school because of my poor performance in spelling tests. Over the years my spelling has improved somewhat, but it has also become more variable; I cannot promise that a word spelled correctly to-day will be spelled correctly tomorrow.))

NEW MEMBERS

- 1484 Christopher Johnson. 14 Rivershill, Watton-at-Stone, Hertford, Herts
1485 Hugh Carroll. 34 Walnut Cres, Hawthorn Scheme Fossilpark, Glasgow
Interested in writing to fans in UK and USA.
1486 Patrick Crowley. IX Sqn, RAF, Waddington, Lincs.
Interested in writing to fans anywhere.
1487 Martyn W. Gribble. Bottom Flat, 77 Park Rd, Gloucester, GL1 1LR.
Interested in writing to fans in USA, UK & Europe.
1488 Anthony W. Swain. 52 Morley Grove, Harlow, Essex, CM20 1EB.
Interested in writing to fans in UK & USA.
1489 Pete Miller. 1 Oak Ave, Muswell Hill, London N10 2RP.
Interested in writing to fans in UK & Andromeda Galaxy (No discrimination here, Pete.).
1490 Stephen Watkins. 45 White Farm Rd, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield.
1491 Mr. M.A. Strain. Woolacombe, Devon
1492 Robert Stock. 20 Endcliffe Rise Rd, Sheffield 11.
Interested in writing to fans anywhere.
1493 Adrian Boyer. "Reservoir House", Western Kings, Devils Point, Stonehouse, Plymouth. Interested in writing to fans in UK & USA.
1494 W. Richmond-Pickering. Caterham School, Harestone Valley Rd, Caterham, Surrey. Interested in writing to female fans in UK.
1495 Duncan Gobaurne. 53 Burland Ave, Tettenhall, Wolverhampton.
Interested in writing to fans in USA, Europe & S. America.
1496 Brian Rendell. 10 Brenchley Close, Hayesford Park, Bromley, Kent
Interested in writing to fans in UK, USA & Commonwealth.
1497 Alison Lowe. 8 Holyrood Pl, The Hoe, Plymouth, Devon.
Interested in writing to fans in UK & USA.
1498 David Isaacs. 85 The Glade, Clayhall, Ilford, Essex.
Interested in writing to fans outside UK.
1499 Andrew Muir. 11 Devon Gdns, Bishopbriggs, Glasgow.
1500 Sid Collins. 46 Chester Rd, Huntington, Chester.
Interested in writing to fans anywhere, including East Europe.
1501 David Coppard. 49 Brookway, Burgess Hill, West Sussex.
Interested in writing to fans anywhere.
1502 Mark Negus. 17 Courtney Gdns, Upminster, Essex.
Interested in writing to USA fans.
1504 Chris Lilley. Failand, Bristol.
1505 Alan Freeman. 23 Adelaide Rd, High Wycombe, Bucks.
Interested in writing to UK & USA fans.
1506 Anthony Hampton. 22 Alfriston Rd, Worthing, West Sussex.
Interested in writing to UK & USA fans.
1507 Raj Rattan. 129 Devonshire Rd, London NW7 1EA.
Interested in writing to fans in Europe & USA.
1508 Richard Dowell. Exwick, Exeter.
1509 Howard Young. 69 Chapel Fields, Harlow, Essex.
Interested in writing to fans in UK.
1510 Mary Caulton. T8056562LACW Caulton M, Plaish Hall, RAF Cosford, Wolverhampton, Westmidlands. Interested in writing to fans in UK, USA & Europe.

FALLIBLE FREEMAN on FANZINES

"All fanzines are valuable, all are worthwhile. Each one represents the effort of an individual to communicate something to another individual, to elide (sic) some kind of response or whatever.

"Each crudzine, personalzine, genzine, serconzine, groupzine, faanishzine, apazine, clubzine. All are worthwhile."

Above is quoted from Sidhartha (see below for more details). With that in mind let's look at what's arrived lately. Once more qtly=quarterly and pp=page(s).

Amor 8 & 9 - Dec 75 & Spring 76: Susan Wood, Dept of English, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1W5, Canada. Susan's personalzine (10pp each). No. 8 was mainly on her trip to the WorldCon in Australia, No. 9 on settling down in her new job (neith stuck exclusively to the "main theme"). Some of the writing is a little gushy for my tastes but although Amor is a personalzine Susan meets so many interesting people and describes the meetings so well that Amor has a different flavour. I like.

Lelap's F & SF Review - Feb 76: Richard Delap, 1014 South Broadway, Wichita, Kansas 67211, USA. Monthly. UK (airmail) sub is \$15 a year. For this you get a typeset magazine of 31pp reviewing the latest books (sf and sf-orientated) - generally about a page per hard cover book and less for paperbacks/reprints etc. Highly recommended.

Fanzine Fanatique 13 - Feb 76: Keith Walker, 2 Daisy Bank, Quernmore Rd, Lancaster. Qtly? 10p trial copy. Worth the effort (and it is an effort) to read this. Keith talks about and illustrates 'The Forgotten Fanzine' - Convention booklets. Naturally one can argue over the articles and illustrations he's chosen to use - but as he had the idea surely he has the right to choose what he wanted to use? 9 sheets of paper (foolscap?) - my page 17 is a repeat of page 16 and page 18 is overprinted (upside down) on some exam results (?)... well, I did say it took effort to read!

Fanzine Fanatique 16 - Feb/Mar 76: This time 5¹/₂pp devoted to fanzine reviews. The production is better too (in fact I almost asked myself if it was a fake issue). Numbering peculiarity caused by 13 being produced after 14 and 15.....

Inverted Ear Trumpet 3 - March 76: Richard McMahon, 287 South Lane, New Malden, Surrey, KT3 5RR. Qtly? Editor suggests a nice letter asking for IET or a nasty one enclosing money.... 2pp editorial, 1pp about future small ads page, 3pp column (article) by Graham Poole on books, mags, films and TV. Fanzine reviews (2pp) and 3pp of letters closes the issue. Light-weight but still improving (but, Richard my name is spelt EI, not IE - you misspell it so consistently you're giving me a phobia...)

The Journal Supplement 197/198 - Jan 76: Don Miller, 12315 Judson Rd, Wheaton, Maryland 20906, USA. The regularity of this fanzine can be judged by the fact that it always gets into this column! This issue is, definitely, the last - being replaced by the 'SF Newsletter'. On a pocsard Don says: "SF Newsletter 1 and 2 are out and 3 is due out Feb 28". It is probably the only detraction from these fanzines - the long gap between publication and our receiving them in Britain. Otherwise I suspect SF Newsletter will be like the Journal Supplement - twenty odd pages packed with news and information. Subs (for Newsletter) are 4 for \$5.. what this is in ££'s alters daily as the \$£ rate of exchange - try £2.50 (to me, actually, I'm Don's UK agent).

K1 - undated: Bernie Peek, 6 Hawks Rd, Kingston-on-Thames, Surrey KT1 3EG. Co-editor Dave Rowe. Deadline for locs for K2 is March 13th so presume qtly. 25p cost. With Dave Rowe as co-editor you'll be amazed to find no artwork in K1. Yet, because of imaginative use of space (though I think 2

Blank sheets at front and back going too far!) K1 gives the impression of not being crowded with words. Contains editorial ramblings from Bernie (5pp), satirical reviews (?) from Jhim Linwood (3pp) and genuine (?) reviews, also from Jhim of fanzines (3pp) wherein Jhim tries to show how erudite he is and how insulting he can be... unfortunately only showing an inferiority complex. Coral Clarke's article "The Psychology of Room Parties" (4pp) is very good - though it cried out for illos. Last thing is the second editorial (Dave Rowe) - 6pp of interesting ramblings. Very good first issue.

MidAmeriCon PR3: Tom Reamy, MidAmeriCon, PO Box 221, Kansas City, Mo 6414, USA.
Free to members of MidAmeriCon. All about the 34th World SF Con, controversy on the pricing policies etc. An interesting PR that's virtually a fanzine and could be read as such by anyone even if they're not interested in going to the Con. Supporting rate is \$6 - UK agent Ian Maule, 8 Hillcroft Cresc, Ealing, London W5.

Sidhartha 7 - March 76: Ian Williams, 6 Greta Terrace, Chester Rd, Sunderland SR4 7RD. Subtitled "the personalzine that refuses to die" it is unpretentious but interesting. Herein are no book reviews or fanzine reviews (though one is mentioned) - just Ian's outlook on life and what's been happening to him. I think the success of this personalzine is that it's short (12pp) so that one doesn't get tired of the style half way through.

Tandstikkerzeitung 9 - Dec 75: Don Markstein, PO Box 53112, New Orleans, La., 70153, USA. Irregular, no price. An apazine that gets sent to non-members "at the editors whim" (hence the no price). 3pp editorial on life as a porn palace manager.... Faruk von Turk's column (?) (1½pp) ... then 5½pp of general chatter - good but can't be categorised in a word or two - far too wide ranging. 10pp of letters rounds out a fanzine I liked very much.

Titan 2 - Feb 76: Geoff Rippington, 15 Queens Ave, Canterbury, Kent CT2 8AY. Qtly. 25p, 3 for 40p. Jeeves cover, 2pp editorial, fiction (3pp) by Keith Richmond (who also contributes poems here and there). Controversy is 1½pp about self-sufficient living - shallow thinking (which might be deliberate to cause controversy....). 2pp fanzine reviews followed by 14pp on A.E. van Vogt: an article that struck me as being too hurriedly prepared, mostly plots of his books (which is fair enough) - but poor plot synopses I thought. Future Glitter (listed as unobtainable) is to be published by Sidgwick & Jackson on 25th March.... I only hope it's better than Darkness on Diamondia and/or Secret Galactics. 3pp of letters which could have been vastly improved by the editorial comments being made to stand out, with single brackets one is never sure whether it's the editor or the correspondent writing. Listing of New Books scheduled for release in Spring giving, in most cases, the publishers blurb (5pp). Finishes up with a couple of pages of chat. Second issue that shows promise. Liz is quoted as being co-editor.... could we have something more from her than a name tacked on to the last page?

TNFF Vol 35 No 6 - Dec 75: Joanne Burger (for National Fantasy Fan Federation), 55 Blue Bonnet Ct, Lake Jackson, TX 77566, USA.

Available to N3F members TNFF is, one might say, the American equivalent of the BSFAN - thicker but not accompanied by Vector or equivalent (is that a plus or a minus I wonder?). Reports take up 13½pp, editorial 2pp, members details and ads (3pp), new books report (4½pp) by Michael K. Smith, listing of forthcoming Cons (2pp), reprint from 1961 TNFF (1pp), fanzine reviews (5½pp).

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* Another pile of fanzines done - once more all at once just prior to the dead-
* line. Despite Tom's claim earlier in this newsletter I have not looked any of
* the above fanzines - nor several I reported (not reviewed) on last time. My
* time has been eaten away with BSFA matters -treasureship(.. but keep those subs
* rolling in), -collating/stapling/mailling Vector/BSFAN, -AGM agenda/reports;
* Reading SF Club matters and buying/selling houses. On this last item I should
* be moving on April 2nd (if the solicitors get moving first!). Any mail sent
* here (128 Fairford Rd) will get to me, even better would be to send it to me
* c/o Applied Statistics, Reading University, Whiteknights, Reading, RG6 2AN.