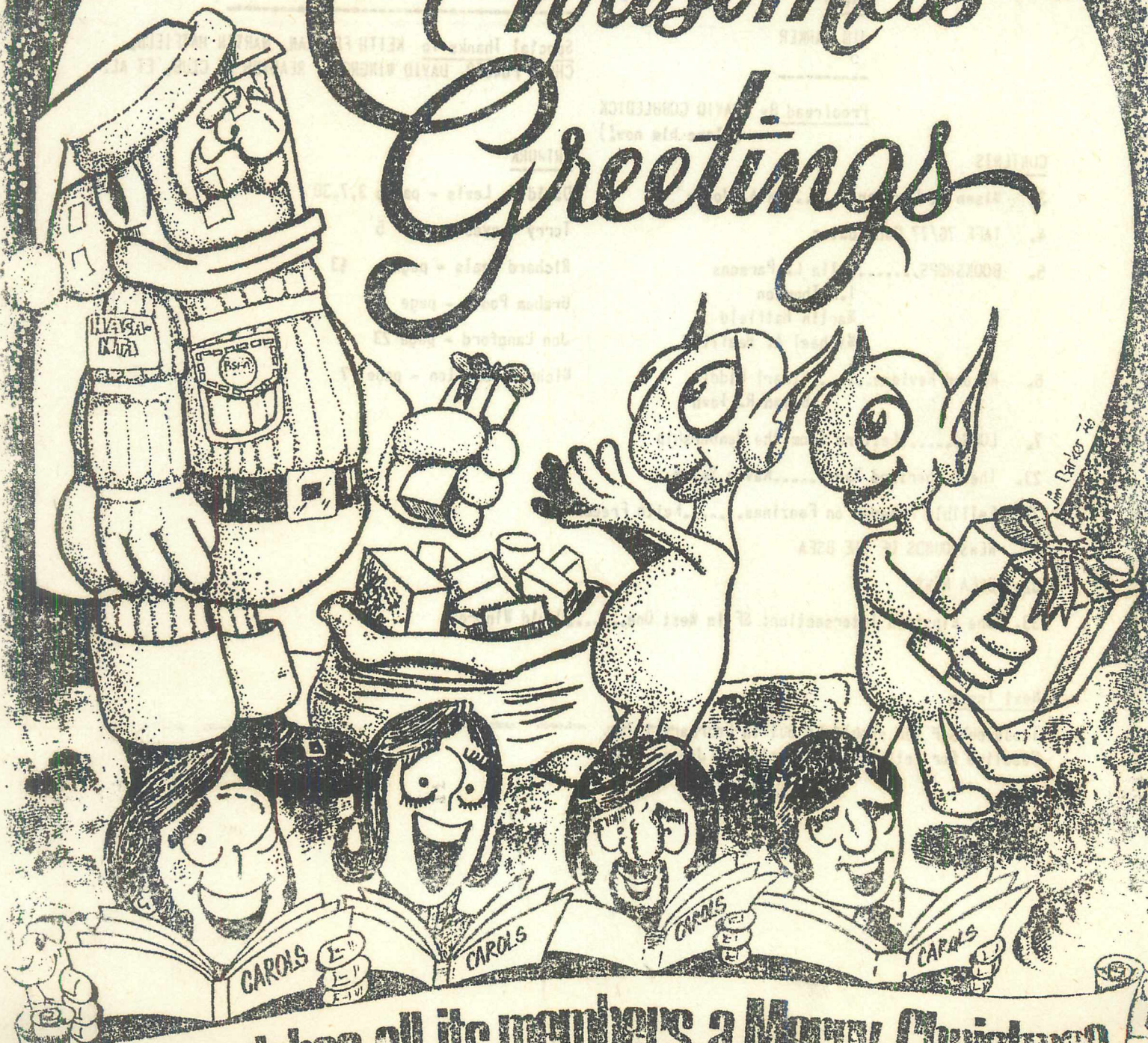


MATRIX

Christmas Greetings



The BSFA wishes all its members a Merry Christmas

9

- DEC. 1976

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EDITOR
TOM A. JONES
39 RIPPLESMERE
BRACKNELL
BERKS. RG12 3QA

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Cover

JIM BARKER

Any opinions, including editorial ones,
expressed in this journal are not
necessarily those of the BSFA.

Proofread By DAVID COBBLEDICK
(Blame him now!)

Special Thanks To KEITH FREEMAN, MARTIN HATFIELD,
CHRIS FOWLER, DAVID WINGROVE, READING SF CLUB, ET AL.

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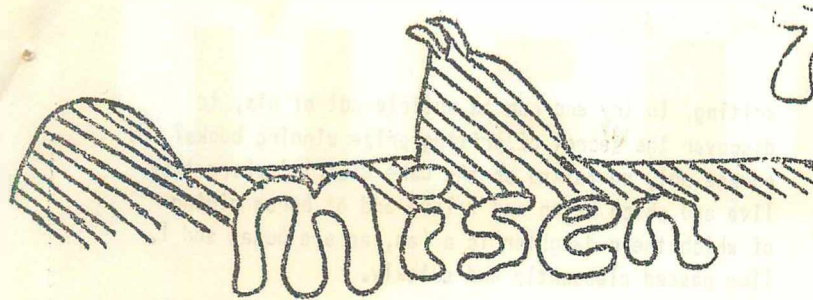
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Issue number ten should be out in February 1977.
Deadline for letters and material is January 20.



Tom A Jones Goes to Nava Co

Personal Thoughts

When I graduated from Birmingham University the hood which went with the academic robe was gray. I considered this an apt colour for Brum. Brum grew from many small villages but achieved cityhood late in its life. Search the city centre and you'll find no old, great buildings, even the cathedral seems only Victorian. It was thus with a mixture of trepidation and expectation we set off for Brum.

The Journey

In the trusty 1300, driving down the great M40, sat the occupants most excited, driven by a well known Yorkie. 1300cc doesn't produce a lot of power, especially with 4 passengers - Tom & Susan Jones, Keith & Wendy Freeman, plus several hundred Rob Jackson fan dictionaries (not stapled, not collated), and several jars of cleaning fluid for some friends of Keith (don't ask me, I don't understand the significance either).

Keith provided light relief on the journey, grasping the sides of a toffee bag he gave an almighty pull. Usually this results in the straining of arm muscles or the fingers slip futilely off the well greased bag - in both cases the bag remains closed. In this case the bag immediately opened, torn completely in two. The air was filled with a hail of toffees and three hysterical passengers. Your driver remained his stoic self.

The Hotel

The Royal Angus is situated on a ring road and above a garage but I found it surprisingly quiet. The room - double bed, colour TV, bathroom. The only gripe I have is that because the place supposedly had day & night room service they didn't bother to put a kettle, coffee, tea-bags, etc in each room. This could have saved some hassle as there was great difficulty in getting coffee delivered to the rooms during the afternoons - the well known shortage of staff.

The Convention

I hate to start off on a bad note but the Chairman's Welcome was half an hour late. This was a shame as the rest of the programme seemed to get off on time. I know the Con Committee have a hard job to do but this does leave a bad impression, especially on first timers.

The first person to be introduced during the Who's who session was ole fallible, Keith Freeman. To massed cries of "Who?" Keith was forced to his feet to read a telegram from Arthur C. Clarke wishing everyone at the Con and all other BSFA members best wishes. Dave Kyle then introduced a small host of authors and fans, pointedly not introducing John Brunner as an author but giving him a mention as a fan!

I have to admit I missed Saturday morning's programme. Susan and I decided to wander round the concrete canyons and glass cliffs of the city centre. It was overcast and drizzling, it seemed the ideal weather for the environment.

Back at the Con we visited the book room - a fate worse than death. Money rapidly transferred itself from my wallet into the palms of book dealers - talk about telekinesis.

It was at Rob King's stall that I met Jim Barker who

handed over this issue's excellent cover. I was chortling over it when Keith looked over my shoulder and shuddered, "Oh no, I've got to duplicate that, look at all the black, I'll kill him!"

Restraining Keith we moved along to Ken Slater's stall. Ken is a good guy and always interesting to talk to. He told me that most paperbacks were on cover return. The books are bought on a sale or return basis but only the cover is returned, the rest of the, now mutilated, book being left with the bookseller to dispose of. This also includes SF magazines and was one of the reasons for the apparent shortage of the first of the newly imported GALAXIES.

After lunch our very own Dave Kyle gave his Guest of Honour speech. Dave has a clear voice which carries well, this was fortunate as, during the whole Con, the sound system either didn't work or was so poor as to be worse than useless. Dave in fact gave 2 speeches; Dave the fan and Dave the pro.

Dave the fan told us how US fandom started, how cons came to be and covered numerous humorous anecdotes from his rich and varied life. From the information given I made a rapid guess as to Dave's age and I don't believe it - either he's signed away his soul or the flames round his house "Two Rivers" is an elixir of life.

One of the anecdotes Dave tells is how he organised a charter flight from the States to the WorldCon when it was held in the UK and then got married just before it. You've seen the comedy sketch where the mother-in-law goes along on the honeymoon - but fancy taking a whole convention with you!

The professional Dave Kyle gave a serious talk on morality in SF (and we're not necessarily talking about sex) including the role of optimism and pessimism in the genre. This talk had some real meat in it and whilst I enjoy some SF which is realistic/pessimistic I could agree with a lot of Dave's points. I hope that this speech appears as an article somewhere as it is worthy of more careful study.

After managing not to get a cup of coffee I went along to see John Brunner tell us how to write SF. To add to our enjoyment the Hall was ablaze with extra lights as a film crew preserved the speech on celluloid. This was all for a TV programme being made about John Brunner for showing sometime next year, I believe. I was sitting near the camera and if you see a nose protruding onto the screen during one of the shots of the audience - it's me.

John's speech was well received and he ably handled, though not necessarily answered a set of questions some of which were criticisms of his writing rather than about writing SF.

I found myself at the back of the Hall for the Jim

White Chat Show and as Jim speaks with a soft Irish brogue and the sound system wasn't working I couldn't hear a thing. I was very disappointed as I'm told this is usually one of the highlights of NovaCon, and the Hall was certainly well packed in anticipation. The ConCommittee mentioned later that they were looking for a larger hotel for 1977, let's hope they find one with a decent sound system.

It was during Saturday that I was accosted by John Harvey. "Why do you always mention Skycon and never Channelcon in Matrix?" he accused, pinning me to the wall with a finger. "You never tell me anything," I replied. But John forgave me, passed on some information on Channelcon and a copy of his fanzine GHAS and even admitted that he liked MATRIX.

The Harvey convention bid for 1978 is well worked out and there is a good committee but the same can be said of the Skycon bid. It's a shame that two good bids should come up for the same year, and I'm certainly not going to choose sides in public.

I had a list of people I wanted to see during the Con but kept meeting Dave Langford. But Dave, acting the part of an Indian spirit (well he had been drinking) guide, managed to find most of these people for me.

I don't intend to mention all of them or this will turn into a who's who of the MATRIX letter column. So I'll just mention Chris Morgan with whom I discussed a writers' conference and David V. Lewis, who was there along with Ray Harrison, their first Con I believe, who handed me a pile of illustrations, wait to see next issue's cover - and we also talked in some detail about the YEARBOOK, which looks on course, so far (touch wood).

At the banquet John Brunner arrived in a silver/gold lamae jacket, he only lacked a sword to be a real dandy. When I told him this he rejected the idea saying it did not fit in with his beliefs as a pacifist. He also said he had difficulty reconciling these beliefs with his quick temper. So saying he kicked aside a few of the Cambridge fans, who had turned up in their academic robes, and went into the banquet. I'd been warned about these banquets but thought it was reasonable for the price.

Later that evening we went along to Dave Kyle's (really Ruth Kyle's) room party where we were shown how the ceiling wobbled. The mystery of the clock was also revealed. This digital clock was on a building opposite the hotel. Between each minute an apparently random number was flashed up. When first seen this was static and we thought it might be the date, except it was wrong, but shortly afterwards it began to change (into a frog). I know you're all on the edges of your chairs in anticipation ("Why doesn't he get on with it") so I'll tell you - it was the temperature - in degrees centigrade! How useful, it allowed one to know exactly what temperature one was freezing to death at.

It was here that we met Bob Shaw and his wife, Sadie. Did I take this opportunity to discuss Bob's

writing, to try and con an article out of him, to discover the secret of writing prize winning books? Of course not, we talked of the Lake District where they live and which Susan and I love and of horse riding of which their daughter is a fan, as are Susan and I. Time passed pleasantly and quickly.

Ever since leaving university and starting work I've lost the ability to stay up late, perhaps it's because I now have to get up in the mornings. So it was that I was able to get up early enough for the quiz on Sunday.

Bob Shaw was quiz master and he told the audience he hadn't got to bed until 6 (or was it 7). So saying a pint of beer was placed before him; have you ever seen any of those drawings of green skinned aliens... The questions, set by Con Chairman, Stan Eling, were of a reasonable standard, except for the occasional impossible one, usually about a dog (what would Freud have to say about that. Alfred?), Oh yes, Rog Peyton won (let there be no accusations of a fix) with Jim White and Lieze Hoare tying for 2nd and Colin Fine a good last.

Wishing to be home reasonably early and having finally found Wendy we said goodbye and aloha to NovaCon 6.

In this short report I've had to leave out a lot of things, like, how the lift ate 7 people; how Keith gave me a plastic bag with no bottom in which to put BSFA badges; how I met Graham Poole - one must befriend these neos; how Keith ejected 2 unruly children from a lift much to everyone's delight; how Dr. Rog Gilbert crashed his car; how Rob Jackson stapled 500 fan dictionaries with a kiddy toy stapler; how MAYA won the Nova Award, again; how a certain Danny who was overtired was taken back to the overflow hotel, only it wasn't; how.....

I enjoyed the Con. It was quiet, almost respectable - no one was thrown into a fountain (not that there was one to be thrown into). It all seemed to finish just as it was getting started - that, for me, is the sign of a good Con.

1976/77 TAFF 1976/77 TAFF 1976/77 TAFF
TAFF (The Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund) was created in 1953 so that popular fans could cross the Atlantic for the worldcons.
Voting is open to anyone active in fandom (fanzines, clubs, cons, etc) prior to September 1975 and who contributes not less than 75p to the fund.
Votes must reach the administrator by noon, Easter Monday 1977.
This year's candidates are;
TERRY JEEVES, sponsored by Eric Bentcliffe, Lynn Hickman, Ed Connor, Chris Fowler, Jan Howard Finder.
PETER ROBERTS, sponsored by Harry Bell, Terry Hughes, Jerry Kaufman, Waldemar Kumming, Ian Maule.
PETER PRESFORD, sponsored by Brian Robinson, Steve Sneyd, Peter Knifton, Paul Ritz, Bruce Townley.
Write to Peter Weston, 72 Beeches Dr, Erdington, Birmingham B24 0D7 for a ballot. All those voting have a chance to win an original Eddie Jones painting.

BOOKSHOPS

SCIENCE FICTION AT "THE LARGEST SECOND-

HAND BOOKSHOP IN THE WORLD"

by Cella L. Parsons

Hay-on-Wye is a beautiful village situated about half-way between Brecon and Hereford. It consists of antique shops and second-hand bookshops. Note, shops, because there are several branches of THE bookshop plus several other shops trying to divert your attention. In the end we asked at a bank, hoping this would give impartial (and, therefore, hopefully, accurate) information.

Having found THE bookshop (which is open 7 days a week) our troubles were still not over, since there are at least 6 different buildings scattered around the town which are part of the same shop. Unfortunately we didn't have time to see the science section, but on enquiry we discovered the SF was in the main building, and also how to find it. My friend (French, but then we all have our faults) headed for the languages section, while I looked for the SF. It took about 5 minutes to find, since it was located between what appeared to be the history and the crime sections. There were 2 shelves of SF, comprising about 30 different books. However, there were several copies of some of them. The paperback section consisted of the following:- GALAXY, several copies between '72 & '74; IF, several copies '73; THE MYSTERIOUS ISLAND - J. Verne; THE DAY BEFORE TOMORROW - Klein; TO CHALLENGE CHAOS - B. Stableford; MYTHMASTER - Leo P. Kelly.

The hardback section was interesting in that it contained several first edition copies. The oldest of these was ONE AGAINST THE MOON by Wollheim from 1956 - so no prospective goldmines there! Other first editions included:- EXPEDITION VENUS - Walters; RAKEHELLS OF HEAVEN - J. Boyd (good, despite the title); GALACTIC CLUSTER - James Blish.

All the books were in fairly good condition, but I felt that a larger section could have been devoted to this pre-eminent field of literature. They must be biased! Certainly they have a vast collection of books there; the "arts" sections were very well represented. My friend agreed; he was quite impressed with the French section.

For general literature I can really recommend Hay-on-Wye. The SF, I would say, is interesting though limited. On the way home I suddenly realised why. Fans, and even other SF readers (are there any others?), in a world of the Unconverted, consider their books far too valuable to give away or sell.. .(THINKS!)..unless, that is, for lotsa money - anyone want to buy...!

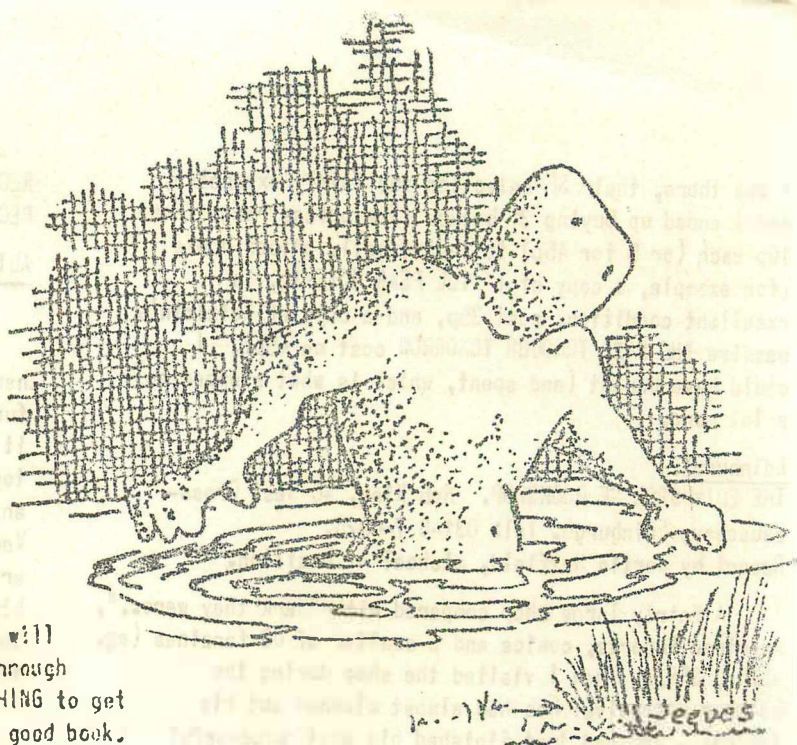
RECOMMENDED BOOKSHOPS FOR SF IN THE MERSEYSIDE REGIONS

- I. A. Thomson

Liverpool

PHILIPSON & NEPHEW LTD. Paradise St, Liverpool.

Reasons; good selection of fiction and related subjects



Fans will go through ANYTHING to get at a good book.

(eg have new STAR TREK blueprints in stock). They keep a lot of SF in a rack marked SF and also a lot under the publishers. The assistants are helpful, though none of them read SF so they don't know too much about it.

PARRY'S BOOKS LTD, PAPERBACK SHOP, Bold St, Liverpool

Reasons; good selection of fiction and related subjects (eg they have the new MARVEL COMIC HISTORY in stock). The sf books are all kept in alphabetical order by an addict of SF (when he's not serving he spends his time sifting through the new SF books). PARRY'S also have a university bookshop near the university, right next to a pub. That's recommended too.

LEWIS'S. Corner of Renshaw St, Liverpool.

Reasons; selection only. The assistants couldn't give a damn about you or SF, mainly I suppose 'cause this is really a department store. Book section is on the ground floor next to the food-hall. There are 3 large racks of SF and the same No. of fantasy books (labelled HORROR, of course).

Birkenhead

MISS LAW'S, Birkenhead Market, Birkenhead.

Reasons; this is a second hand bookshop. I get a lot of my SF here, mainly because the top price is 10p for a paperback. Most of the books are put into different classes, so if you ask for SF you're liable to get a huge pile. Rooting through the racks, though, is likely to yield some goodies too.

I wouldn't recommend any other shop in Birkenhead. There are a number of bookshops, but all useless for SF.

RECOMMENDED BOOKSHOP - CHESTER (I.A. Thomson)

EARL'S EYE BOOKS, Chester Market, Chester.

Reasons; this is another second-hand bookshop, but this one deals a lot in antique books. When

I was there, their SF selection was fairly extensive, and I ended up buying 21 books. The prices range from 10p each (or 5 for 45p) to individually priced books (for example, a copy of I WILL FEAR NO EVIL, in excellent condition, cost 35p, and a copy of Heinlein's massive THE PAST THROUGH TOMORROW cost me 45p). I could have bought (and spent, which is what stopped me) a lot more.

Edinburgh.

THE EDINBURGH SF BOOKSHOP. Rob King, 40 West Cross-causeway, Edinburgh. Tel: 031-667-0426.

Report by Martin Hatfield, Michael A. Hamilton.

A fairly large shop compared with "Dark they were..", American imports, comics and a scatter of US fanzines (eg. ALGOL, SFR). When I visited the shop during the Edinburgh festival Rob had almost cleaned out his imports - and had just finished his most successful weeks trade.

Singles out Harlan Ellison as a good seller.

He is slowly increasing his mail order list - produces a catalogue which he told me is usually out of date very quickly.

Rob had a mention recently in the SUNDAY TIMES (10-10-76) when he was reputed to have sold out of STAR TREK logs and plans only a few minutes after the Leeds Trekky convention had started.

Rob hopes to appear at Novacon this year - his first SF con at which he will operate a stall. He has acquired an interesting selection of ACE doubles which he expects will sell like hot cakes (or cold meat pies).

Michael adds; the shop sells second hand hardback and paperbacks, posters, old magazines (and new I think), and a few records. The shop is fairly big but don't be put off by the window display - or, rather, lack of one, or the street the shop's in.

THE EINSTEIN INTERSECTION

George Hay has written to tell me about this the newest of London's specialist SF bookshops. The shop's proprietor is Brian G. Guzman and George is Directorial Consultant. The shop's address is 31 Sackville St, London W1, Tel: 01-437-2135. George said, "Basically, it's a bookshop intended to cover the full range of SF and also - this is important - to serve as a newscentre and information point for SF buffs generally. Exhibition space is there for sale or for free, depending on the amount of space asked for, the contents, etc. Free coffee for visitors (well, until the price of coffee doubles). We throw in a book exchange and all the other services we can think of. The point is, there is sure to be something which would be of real use to fans which we haven't thought of - we'd be glad to hear from the readers what that could be. (no, not that - the terms of our lease forbids the display of obscenities). But anything else." George also adds in another letter, "we plan to sell any fanzine which the editor would actually be willing to supply on a sale or return basis."

This sounds like a good idea to me, I hope to keep you informed about what else TEL is doing and would be interested in any comments on the shop from members who've visited it.

RECORD REVIEWS record reviews RECORD REVIEWS
RECORD REVIEWS record reviews RECORD REVIEWS

AUTOMATIC MAN (Island Records) reviewed by Stuart Riddle

This is the first album by Automatic Man, a new, four man band from the USA. The music has a funky feel to it, and although it is quite sophisticated, it is not complicated. All the instruments fit together nicely and you get the impression that if any were removed the music would be barren and wanting. Vocals are average and harmonies and backing vocals are not gone in for in the big way that some other black groups do (eg those crummy, to say the least, ones that are ten-a-penny on "Top of the Pops", you know, they do funny little dances).

Keyboards are an important facet of the group's sound (especially the synthesisers) although they do not dominate. Bayete, the keyboards player, is proficient, but not a maestro, like a puppeteer he dictates the direction and mood of the group's music; he wrote or co-wrote everything on the album.

Of the album's eleven tracks, only 4 are SF. Two are instrumentals, "Atlantis Rising Fanfare" and "Atlantis Rising Theme turning of the axis", the opening and closing tracks respectively. The other 2 are; "I.T.D. Interstellar Tracking Devices", an excellent track concerning the lead singer's friend who has been riding "through the heavens on your ship with wings", what nice unpretentious lyrics (take note Jon Anderson of Yes); and "Automatic Man".

"Automatic Man" is about a sort of technological super-guy (Steve Austin! who, in the words of the song wears an "electric suit" and "moves like a computer" - which could mean a lot of things, or just be taking the mick, I don't know). The intelligent reader will have noticed that the name of the song is the same as that of the group. I wonder whether they wrote the song then said "Hey, let's name our group after it" or vice versa? Is it a signature tune for the group? Whatever it is, it's a great, racy number with some nice organ work.

A great album, one of this year's best, one to buy.

WADHAKS by Hawkwind (United Artists UAK 29919)

Reviewed by Brian R. Tawn.

Anyone who knows me well enough to know my tastes in music will know Hawkwind are my favourite band. Likewise I shall be expected to rave over the album in the hope that everyone will rush out and buy a copy. Well, I would like everyone to buy a copy of course, but I really can't get too excited over the album. It's a compilation set, put together by Dave Brock and is a mixture of the tracks that Dave likes and ones which UA think will promote sales...or so it seems to me. However if that is the case, then it should have carried Hawkwind

standards such as Sonic Attack (a must), Master of the Universe or Brainstorm. It should have carried vocal material from HALL OF THE MOUNTAIN GRILL, such as Psychodelic Warlords (Disappear in Smoke) which does much to outline the Hawkwind ideal. It should have carried some of their brilliant singles' "b" sides, such as Brainbox Pollution and It's So Easy (a beautiful song in the style of Children of the Sun), though I can forgive the absence of Motorhead. It should have had so much music on such little space.

Perhaps it should have been a double or a triple.

It's easy to stand to one side and say what should and what shouldn't have been included, but I'm sorry to see that it does not include Sonic Attack...Still, I should worry, I've got the obscure "b" sides anyway along with the rest of the Hawkwind "official" material except for their first single, Hurry on Sundown (anybody want to sell me a copy in exchange for my soul?).

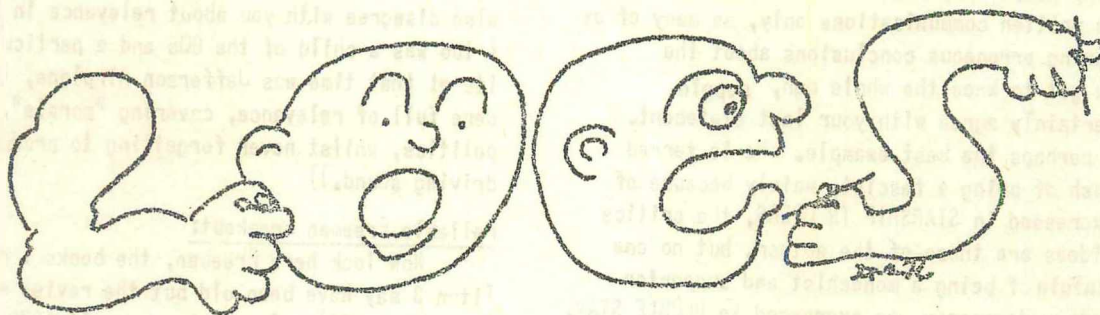
Side one of ROADHAWKS contains Hurry On Sundown, Paranola (excerpt), You shouldn't do That and Silver Machine. Side two contains Urban Guerilla, Space Is Deep, Kind of Change and The Golden Void. For some

reason best known to Dave, side one has been mixed so that the songs blend into one another just as they do on their live concerts, but on side two, the transition is sudden. For Hawkwind Fans, the most important track on the album is a previously unissued live version of You shouldn't do That. I see from the recording dates that it was recorded as part of the Space Ritual (but not used on the album) and generates the intense excitement of the Space Ritual album. ROADHAWKS is worth the money for that track alone.

With the record, you also get a ROADHAWKS poster (similar to one done by Barney Bubbles), which is also the cover of the album, and a Hawkwind sticker of the DURENT FASOL LATIDU emblem, a couple of items which I've been trying to get for some time.

So that's it then. If you don't like Hawkwind, this won't change your mind, but if you do like them, it's a nice package.

((This review first appeared in Brian's fanzine SCRIBE, Issue 3. Thanks very much for letting me use it. More reviews of SF oriented material would be appreciated, from any member.))

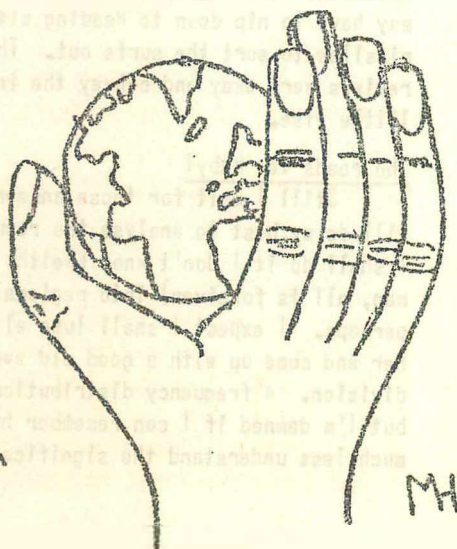


((All editorial comment in double brackets.))

DAVID V. LEWIS, 8 Aldis Ave, Stowmarket, Suffolk.

Many thanks to John Welsh for his kind remarks & Alison Lowe for hers (I assume she enjoyed my stuff from her general comments). I feel that you ought to get Jim Barker to do some more stuff to as his is, for me, far superior in execution and content than mine. His front cover for MAIRIX 8 was glorious & neatly took Bob Silverberg's titles & used them well in paraphrasing events that can happen to any fan at a con.

"DON'T PUT
THAT IN
YOUR
MOUTH,
IT'S
COVERED
IN VILE,
LITTLE
GERMS!"



Communications Breakdown: Jackin the Jargon?

Into the Jargon debate: I am pleased to see the "Young Turks" of the BSFA taking fandom to task over this vexing issue, expressing views I held myself some 6 years ago when I came into the BSFA. Every section of society or culture has its jargon which is purely for speedy transmission of known conditions to all its adherents. Where would we be without it? Communication would be a lengthy process. But having recently been on an "Effective Presentation" course I learnt one or two important facts about communicating which I suggest BSFA members and fan alike would benefit from using:

1. Have concern for your audience: What is their previous experience? Pitch your communication to their level of experience & you will get your concepts across without it drowning in a sea of "noise".
2. Avoid the use of jargon: The use of jargon is a kind of snobbery with in-group associations (great for use as above mentioned) great for getting information across to your peer group but meaningless to the outsider or layman.

Of course fandom will not, nor would I want it to, abandon fanspeak, but a little less neo-bashing perhaps would be in order.

Young Turks Clobber Fandom all over Hell

This is a refreshing change to see some new loccers tearing into me and others with well reasoned arguments on all subjects dear to our hearts, may we see more from them.

As to the Yearbook I still hold to the opinion that whilst the idea was good the execution was poor. It may have been great to those not in receipt of any fanzines but everything inside was a rehash of what the writers had written better elsewhere. This is where my main objection lay, no new fresh material. Also in certain articles, for example, only the Pro-mags that the writer happened to like were looked at whereas he ought to have produced a review of all the pro-mags issued in 1975.

As to the academics and SF controversy I adhere to the view that they are incapable of the realisation that SF, or any literature, is entertainment first and relevance second. They do and will continue to produce mountains of learned claptrap & dissertations proving many esoteric theories of the meanings to be found there, that the writers did not even put there in the first place. They fall into the trap of judging a man by his written communications only, as many of us do, thus drawing erroneous conclusions about the writer. You got to know the whole man, popple ((I would certainly agree with your last statement. Heinlein is perhaps the best example. He is tarred with the brush of being a fascist, mainly because of the ideas expressed in STARSHIP TR OPERS, the critics assume the ideas are those of the author, but no one accuses Heinlein of being a monarchist and supporter of parliamentary democracy, as expressed in DOUBLE STAR. Accusing him of holding these ideas wouldn't cause much of a stir, would it?))

Should we Fictate as ritters do it Better?

The answer is, for me, yes: I wish TANGENT every success. The all fiction fanzine has a place in fandom and elsewhere. Let all aspiring writers write be it the most heinous trash ever, they must practice their chosen trade & perfect their techniques. The argument that one does not wish to read it when the pros do it better is irrelevant when you consider that/all new writers were discouraged then when all the old pros are washed up (& some of them are now) who will carry on? Yes, I know several writers appear from outside of SF and fandom as did Jim Ballard but many appear from within. Some of the more voluble opponents of fan fiction are those whose stuff was just as terrible a few years ago.

Assorted Articles

Enjoyed Ian Garbutt's piece but naughty, naughty, no mention of how or where to obtain Elwood's zine short of an Odyssey to Vineland. ((I don't know of any UK shop importing the mag, maybe Ken Slater has it. You can send money, US dollars, to the publishers, address given in issue 7.))

I.A. Thomsen? Bit formal for a reviewer, isn't it? Has the poor person (for it may be female) a fear of revealing his names, is it lolanthe or Igor or plain old Ian then? The newshounds must be put on the trail.

((Yep, that's his name, how did you guess?))

Needless to say the review confirmed my fears about SF DIGEST which I will not be purchasing. ((I thought the Rob Holstock story in JFU was excellent, but whether it's worth buying the zine just for that is more than doubtful.))

"Sounds of Space" I have not read yet, merely scanned briefly, as I am not that much interested in being told the history of underground/progressive/rock music as I was busy being part of the sixties scene at the time so know as much about it as all the other beatniks/flower children/hippies/mods of my age and don't need some latter day commentator giving me the hushed tones phoney crap that goes for musical criticism these days. It was a swinging hedonistic time then, man, none of this social relevance in the music - just laying on, baby!

The trouble with musicians today is that they think they have some great message to deliver, whereas all that is required of them is to produce a loud joyful noise. No more of the idiotic Bob Harris type twaddle please. ((I think you're a bit hard, a lot hard, on the article, especially as you didn't read it. I would also disagree with you about relevance in 60s music. I too was a child of the 60s and a particular favourite at that time was Jefferson Airplane, their songs were full of relevance, covering "morals", society, politics, whilst never forgetting to produce a good driving sound.))

Fallable Freeman Freakout:

Now look here Freeman, the books I reviewed in Titan 3 may have been old but the review was not (penned 8.6.76). The books were all 1976 editions chosen by Geoff. He wanted to do the new SF Master Series from NEL so I obliged. Nor have I seen any reviews of these books elsewhere. His fanzine was to have been out much earlier but he had a lot of problems with printing so it was much delayed. As to the "Skylark of Suffolk" I don't really catch the inference not having read SKYLARK OF VALERON, having suffered the Lensman series was enough E.E. Smith for me. I shall have to chew that one over. As I have always defended your name when it has been bandied around I shall have to review my position. The mighty Sufanac StF racial Hero may have to nip down to Reading with a few cruise missiles to sort the surfs out. The rest of the reviews were okay and convey the information if little else.

Who reads Yer Baby?

Still I wait for those answers rolling in & will do my best to analyse the results. Quite how I shall do it I don't know (Keith, we need you, man, all is forgiven) into regional preferences perhaps. I expect I shall lump all the totals together and come up with a good old average by simple division. A frequency distribution would be better but I'm damned if I can remember how to do it, much less understand the significance of it if I did!

20 Years on and the same old Yucky!

I have just been watching the CONQUEST OF SPACE, George Pal's 1955 film from the book by Chesney Bonestell and Willy Ley (of revered memory) & you know what struck me? ((The TV set?)) The special effects on space movies have not changed in 20 years. I could have been watching the latest part of Space 1999 or that Mr. Spock thing. What an indictment of the progressive thinking of the movie moguls, they deserve to become things of the past if they cannot move with the times. The mass media have a lot to answer for with their refusal to do justice to the great themes of our genre. ((Hmmm, well I would have said that the only way SF films these days are better than their 50s counterparts is in the special effects dept. The stories continue, on the whole to be pretty mundane and shallow - though usually fairly enjoyable. But the effects are better, compare 2001, or even, LOGAN'S RUN with CONQUEST OF SPACE. I would accept that TV special effects are poor, but then they're churning them out - and in the Anderson's case, destroying them - week after week. No one has got sufficient money to produce good ones week after week. So, they make do with a few good ones which they can use throughout the series and fill in with the rest.))

TOM PERRY. 25 Locks Rd, Locks Heath, Hants.

I certainly admire the cover on M8 - Jim Barker has done a fairly complete Mancon report with just a few pictures, and the idea of using Silverberg titles as a theme was quite clever. ((Yes, as cartoonist and humorous artist I can't think of anyone better than Jim at present. But I do rate Dave Lewis very highly, his illoes are more basic but his pen is more vitriolic.))

Now that MATRIX is a fully fledged fanzine I hope you'll consider changing the format as far as binding goes. A staple in the top may be sufficient for a newsletter but not a 44 page zine. ((Unfortunately though I would love to staple the zine to everyone's satisfaction we just don't have the time. There were only 3 of us to do the last mailing and we put over 7 hours in on a Sunday just collating, stapling and putting in envelopes. After 5 hours we were nearly bunging them in the envelopes without any staples. If we had more helpers we'd try to do it but until then it's one staple.))

I'm quite impressed with the breadth of your programming experience. Certainly I didn't intend to cast a slur on scientists by saying that they can now program in a problem oriented language without being worried about the details of the computer on which it is running; I know that many do learn more, like yourself; my only point was that they don't have to. However, when I referred to programming jargon, I didn't mean the programming languages themselves, but the terms that full time programmers use in creating compilers and other large programs, including ones you mention like "top-down", "structured programming", etc. These terms and the concepts they embody, by the way, may seem trivial to you, but since the disciplines they refer to permit mathematically verifiable programs I don't regard them as such.

The barrier in communication between the layman and the specialist (in this and other fields) is not purely a language barrier, I would suggest, but a barrier of concepts which the specialist has learned and the layman has not - that's what makes him a layman in whatever particular field it is. Words are created or redefined to embody the concepts, and so the outsider may think that it is the words which prevent him understanding the specialist. I prefer to see words created rather than re-defined for this purpose, by the way, because at least that way the layman realizes he doesn't understand what's being said: whereas if you use ordinary words in a special sense he may think that he does and completely misconstrue the meaning.

((I have no argument against members of a discipline using jargon, it is an effective shorthand to understanding. I object when they assume that laymen must also learn it if they, the laymen, want to understand. This is snobbery. Any subject can be explained in ordinary English - how else did we learn what the jargon meant in the first place - and one of the dangers of jargon is that one uses it so often that one forgets how to explain using only English - a trait in all science based disciplines, I'm afraid. I'm a 100% with David Lewis on this.))

RUB HOLDSTOCK, 3 Sele House, North Rd, Hertford,

On page 3 of M8 you mutter about writers meetings for "those interested in writing SF". Are you talking about a writing school? Or about a Milford/Oxford University/Pieria type writers workshop; which is a bunch of writers sitting down to give subjective criticisms of each others work? If you start involving professionals you've got to ask yourselves, "What's he going to get out of this?". If the answer is money, forget it. You want involvement of all concerned, and not some paid teacher to come and talk about SF for a couple of hours, and then go away patting his pocket book. But to get involvement you need to get everyone present on the same mental level, even if there are professional writers among you. If you can visualise a meeting at which Brunner and Aldiss and Asimov can sit and drink beer, and eat cake, and put their feet up, and talk to you in the same way you talk to them...if you can imagine being able to treat them like you treat everyone else at the meeting, and judging their work on its merits and not on the author's name on the front page... well, you must be some sort of a marvel man. It just isn't on. Human nature dictates against it. Then you get a situation where the professional becomes a sort of guru, and once that happens he becomes detached, and then you've blown the value of the workshop which is its intensity - the intensity and interchange between the workshop as a single entity!

I speak from bitter experience. ((Thank you, I now see the problem more clearly, the workshop members will have to be at the same

level. My first thoughts were that the services of a professional would be bought to give a lecture before the workshops. But I now see that one lecture would be of little use, except for interest value. (More thought will be given to the matter.))

JOHN ELSH. 23 Kelvinside Gardens. East, Glasgow.

Rob Jackson is producing a fan dictionary which you're going to send to us, is he? A very considerate idea, and one which I'm looking forward to seeing. That the ripples should still be spreading from my M6 attack on fan jargon, I find both surprising and encouraging. Since then, however, my own views have become somewhat modified on the subject. While I still agree with my earlier views that fan jargon can be very confusing and offputting to the newcomer, quite perversely I've come to like some of it all the same. Nonetheless, I should still like to see most of it phased out, at least from genzines, a certain serconzine and a certain funzine. Genzine, serconzine, funzine. Jargon. I'm contradicting myself. No I'm not! "I should like to see most of it phased out." Fanzine classifications are the one possible exception. Classifications such as "genzine" do serve genuinely useful functions in differentiating various types of fanzines, in much the same way that classifications such as "westerns", "psychological thriller" and "historical romance" serve in differentiating different kinds of novel. These classifications are invaluable and only very reluctantly dispensable.

Many words could easily be done away with, however. Indeed "sfilm", "fanguage", "thish", "fanfic" and a whole host of others should be laughed out of existence. Not because they're confusing - they're not - but because they're pointless, and ugly besides. Or perhaps you (not you personally, Tom) think "sfilm" is witty? Or that typing "thish" instead of "this issue" is going to help prevent finger strain?

On the other hand, abbreviations such as "loc" and "AHF" do have some slight justification. But still, would it be too much to ask people to write: "I sent a letter to fanzine X" rather than "I locced fanzine X"? At least when they're writing to genzines? I mean, how would you feel if when you opened up your PLAYBOY or whatever the first words ran: "Splodge contains groink, Jane X's first blurp, some yahoowee by Betty Y, plenty of kweak reviews by Fiona Z and an excellent whoo by all you splurgh!" Cheated? Frustrated? BAFFLED? In a less comical way, this is exactly how most new comers feel when they pick up their first fanzine and read: "Thish contains neofan, Joe X's, first conrep, some fanfic by Bert Y, plenty of fmz reviews by Fred Z and an exciting loccol by all you fen!" Now whereas there are no words you can reasonably substitute for fannish fanzine, "personalzine" and the like, all the jargon in the previous sentence could quite easily be translated into the King's own English - at the expense of succinctness perhaps, but at the tremendous gain of total clarity & understanding.

Forgive me if I harp on about this but it annoys me to see unnecessary barriers heaped in the way of

people who are just looking for a little stimulating entertainment and comradeship. I hope that more genzine editors follow Rob Jackson's example and avoid unnecessary jargon like the plague. I would even ask them to translate any jargon in the letters they receive, but I know they won't: who wants to be embarrassed by being the first treacherous, anti-fan git to try it?

Rob Jackson's (or indeed anyone's) fan dictionary isn't a solution to the problem of fan jargon: it's a compromise. "This wall exists, we'll climb over it again, it takes less effort - than blowing it up."

((Hmmm, I wonder if I could fancy a yahoowee. I have this feeling that I've inadvertently printed something pornographic. Your point is well made and compliments that made by David Lewis.))

SF and academe, to weave in another thread from a previous letter, is a question you've successfully riled me on. If you don't mind, I'd like to give a brief resume of my M8 argument.

Quite simply, I propose that SF has nothing to fear from academic acceptance. I argued that contrary to popular opinion academic acceptance of a particular branch of literature does not automatically imply that that branch is then doomed. To illustrate this I pointed out that I could walk into any bookshop in this city and, by glancing at the titles of a large number of modern mainstream novels by authors generally accepted to be sparkling with quality and talent, show that academic acceptance had not destroyed mainstream literature, and so, by induction, wouldn't destroy SF.

Enter Tom Jones, stage left, with a shameless grin and a seemingly unassailable abjection: Who has "generally Accepted" those authors as being full of quality and talent, you asked. Surely none other than the academics and they aren't going to admit mainstream's dead.

Not so! When I said that those authors (& their works) had been "generally accepted", I meant not only by academics but by academics and laymen. That's vitally important, and in the hope of reinforcing this point I offer the following as examples of such authors, authors who are widely accepted, respected and talented:

Solzhenitsyn, creator of such fine and impassioned pieces as THE GULAG ARCHIPELAGO trilogy and CANCER ARD; Edna O'Brien, author of many superb novels, eg NIGHT; Kingsley Amis, justly famous for novels such as LUCKY JIM and THE GREEN MAN; John Steinbeck, Nobel prizewinner for literature and author of THE GRAPES OF RATH; Iris Murdoch, who's written a whole host of splendid novels, eg THE SANDCASTLE and THE ACCIDENTAL MAN; Graham Greene who has countless excellent novels to his name; George Orwell (1984 being post-war!); William Golding - infamous for novels like THE LORD OF THE FLIES and THE INHERITORS; Arthur Koestler and - oh, I could go on for ever!

How can anyone still claim that mainstream literature is dead? Do you, do you not consider the above novels to be vibrantly alive, their authors to be proponents of a vital and healthy mainstream? Answer the question! If you can say: "Yes" then at least you have come to realize that academic acceptance is not the destructive ogre too many people dimly conceive it to be!

Heee, I'm getting carried away here. I should really thank Richard Barycz for his splendid M7 letter; ironically, without it I would never have developed this train of thought, and would, for quite a while anyway, have retained my own irrational distrust of academic involvement with SF. I look forward to reading much more by Richard. (Before leaving this however, Tom, I'd like to point out that you do make some delightful typos from time to time: "Get SF back into the butter" indeed!)

((I've not read everyone of those novels but have read sufficient to agree that they're both good and vital. But let's extend the argument, I contend that this is not due in anyway to the attentions of academe but rather in spite of it. Let me take for an example Joseph Heller's CATCH 22, perhaps the greatest anti-war novel and certainly one of the greatest novels ever. It was also a best seller, it initially received little critical comment and never received any prize or literary award. Look at the nobel prizewinners for literature, how many of them are also popular writers, 2 or 3? To steal an idea from a speech by John Brunner, there is a cult of the "university" novel. Usually long, inevitably shallow whilst giving an impression of depth, written to gain acceptance by academe not the general reader. This sort of novel is still appearing in mainstream and is a direct result of academe's interest in the genre. Worse, it's now appearing in SF, mainstream was big, there was enough width so that not all were contaminated. SF is relatively small, not all will be effected, Perry Rodent is safe, but my fear is that of those authors worth reading some will be effected, I would even contend that some have been. How can you say academe can't harm SF? Okay, so it may not kill it, but losing a couple of fingers isn't a lot of fun. What do you mean only some of my typos are delightful, all of them are deliberately introduced to add a touch of humour, says he lying through his teeth. I look forward to your reply, this is also helping me to think the subject through.))

Ian Garbutt: his review of ODYSSEY 1 was superlative. Ian Thomson's article was also splendid, and I look forward to reading more by him. As to Brian Tawn's review of "New Worlds Fair", that was good. Raj Rattan was good on SFM, but you don't want to hear any more of that so.

((I've used you, John, a number of people wrote saying similar nice things to the above so I've printed yours and, I'm sorry to say, left the others out - got to save space, you know.))

((And now the Barclay Square, is it Barclays you work for?, that sang in Nightingale Lane. Sorry, couldn't resist the pun.....))

DAVID WINGROVE, 4 Holmside Court, Nightingale Ln, Balham.

The status of MATRIX is such that I read it in preference to all else. In the same post came back copies of 5 Geiss SFRs and a Vonnegutt book I hadn't a copy of...and yet MATRIX won! The letters are, of course, what it is all about, and contain remarkably few repetitions for so narrow a field of discourse. ((That's my one bit of egoboo for this issue. But it sums up what I think is the main attraction of the magazine, involvement. MATRIX is the BSFA's Hyde Park and Greek forum combined.))

I was saddened to learn of Chris's problems and was disappointed that VECTOR wasn't included because the 2 publications do tend to throw off a combined aura of amused respectability. (Nietzsche once said; "I would not believe in a God who could not dance"...ie, a sense of humour is crucial..). By combining the two in one posting you manage to please all the people all the time. ((We do!))

One becomes accustomed to the voices clamouring for or against certain topics and begins to see a strange likeness to one of those discussions that begins in city pubs at 10pm when the place empties but for those few intent upon marital problems, "what am I doing with my life?", etc. Eclectic & lucid they focus their hypersensitive minds upon trails of elusive logic that the beer seems to have clouded (or is it just that the beer is cloudy?), discarding the shards of a dozen philosophies in their wake. What am I on about? Why, the discussion of "What is SF?" or, alternatively, "What is fandom?" (which to some minds are the same question, but I digress..) which is our sole concern, albeit under numerous guises. Am I carping again? I promised not to, and I shan't. No, I enjoy those late evening drinking sessions where the truth is ferreted out in spite of the treachery of bladder and eye. Pity I can never remember what the truth is in the morning. The letter section strikes me that way; I enjoy it thoroughly and by the end, in literary stupor, reach for the bottle contented again.

Ahaha, an article on SF music. I wouldn't agree that it all began with "Sgt Pepper", but James Parker nevertheless traces quite a number of its tributaries in the short piece he produced. I'd make the following comments however. Albums such as IN SEARCH OF SPACE are, I agree, superficially monotonous. But I would like to think that the intention of the music is hypnotic, forming an electronic tantra as a soundtrack to the imagination. My own tastes are far from simple, yet this simplistic effect appeals on that level. The early Hawkwind concerts were very much the epitome of the New Worlds concept; thus it was no surprise that Moorcock became involved.

I have ceased to be amazed at the manner in which SF-oriented bands sink without trace. The rock industry is even more commercialised than its literary counterpart and does not encourage unsuccessful experiments.

Finally, look again at Magma, Mr Parker. The

music has, indeed, a strong link to Carl Orff's "Trionfo di Aphrodite", even to sharing one or two chord sequences at times. It is music of some intensity and sincerity. My favourite story of Magma is that they were performing in France with a well known rock group and half an hour before the concert their lead guitarist was observed sitting in a nearby field in full monk's habit (worn on stage) playing chess by himself. They are to SF music what Stapledon is to its literature. But well done, Mr Parker, nonetheless; an educated introduction to a topic that will no doubt grow in importance within the next few years.

((There was a time when I kept up with the "progressive" music field, it was mandatory for me to buy each Jefferson Airplane album as it came out. But I became disillusioned, groups were repeating themselves, complexity was introduced for its own sake, without fitting it into a coherent framework, melody was replaced by cacophony. This was good in that it made me widen my horizons and I became particularly interested in classical and folk. But from reading James Parker's article and the many letters of comment on it plus hearing such band as Yes, Emerson, Lake & Palmer and Pink Floyd I'll maybe look at the SF oriented "progressive" music again.))

BRIAN R. TAYN. 29 Cordon St, Wisbech, Cambs.

Interesting to see your comment that a lot of the letters are from newcomers this time: pleasing too. I've been reading BSFA stuff for years and I've always felt that the letter columns have been dominated by well-known names. I concede that this must be the case because the longer someone is involved with the BSFA and its zines, the more the person will get out of forsaidd zines and will therefore have more to say about them.. It's a vicious circle, so it's nice to see that MATRIX has broken it and brought plenty of new names to light.

James Parker's ramble about SF and rock music was great. It seemed to me though, that he covered an awful lot of ground in the 3 and a bit pages he filled, which meant that he didn't dig too deeply into any particular section. Perhaps you could twist his arm, or threaten him with Frank Sinatra records or something, and persuade him to do more rambles for you, just taking a section of the subject at a time and making a detailed investigation.

As usual, Keith Freeman's fanzine reviews turned up another zine which I don't get and which looks interesting. I like his style...at least you know exactly what to expect in a zine reviewed by him.

The news section advises a new album from Moorcock/Butterworth/Hawkwind, called DAY OF THE HAWK LORDS. I think your info is a piece of confusion stemming from the recent Book, written by Butterworth, overseen by Moorcock, featuring characters played by Hawkwind on stage and called THE TIME OF THE HAWK LORDS. ((Could be, I'm not up with this topic, and I have seen the book you mention.))

Glad to see that TANGENT is to emerge. I know that a lot of fans look down with scorn upon fiction

zines, but the fact that a lot of people do like them means that they have a place in the fanzine world. Whether the fiction therein is good or not, as long as they exist, they encourage people to write and that can only be a good thing. Besides, they're fun and that in itself is justification enough.

The overall presentation of MATRIX is worthy of a mention again. More than ever, it seems to be getting more friendly, embracing a huge, happy-family, atmosphere. I think it's because everyone is pulling together instead of indulging in the petty bickering which appears in so many zines. Perhaps that's the main achievement of the BSFA. It gives everyone a common denominator, something to aim for together. The various schemes may or may not come to fruition, but at least everyone takes an interest.

((Thank you kindly. I agree that not only have we got an active membership but also a friendly one, even the arguments are conducted in a friendly or humorous manner - that can only be good.))

DAVID COBBLEDICK. 245 Rosalind St, Ashington, Northumb-

I note, AGAIN^{erland}, that there seems to be a vast number of people wanting a definition of SF, perhaps my interpretation may satisfy them:-

Science fiction is what the writer makes it and what the reader makes of it, for opinions and tastes differ with each individual person.

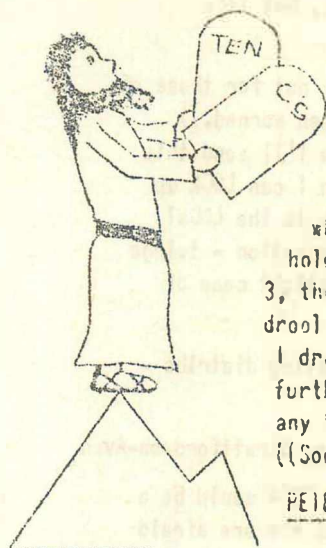
((Dear me, David, if we all came up with self evident definitions like that where would be the fun in the argument. It's also not true, if I wrote a western and said, "this is SF" that wouldn't make it SF, not even if some people actually believed me.))

CYRIL SIMSA. 18 Muswell Ave, London, N10 2EG

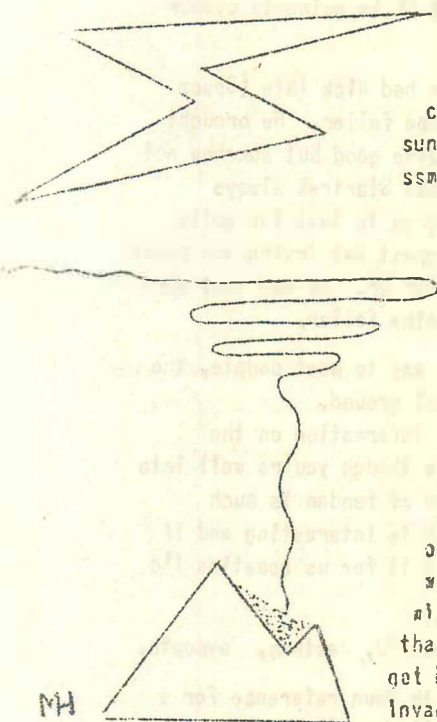
Firstly, to T. Briggs: what is this about squabbling spiders? As a fly who once thought SF^m represented British fandom (we were all naive at some time), I found the BSFA as alluring as an anaconda.

As for Dr. Who films, Dennis Gifford's book SCIENCE FICTION FILM agrees with the TIME OUT data - so closely, infact, that I suspect TIME OUT culled it from Gifford in the first place. I scarcely think that the first film could have been made in 1960, though - after all, it was a spinoff from the TV series and that didn't start until 1963.

And now to Wynfor Jones: I hope you have been practicing your contortionism recently since you may find yourself in need of assuming the shape of a clove hitch knot. I agree with Harlan Ellison. I doubt it would matter much to you that Blish wrote STARTREK books, you were a Blish fan long before STARTREK was ever thought of. But a new reader (such as me), when they are confronted by James Blish's work will notice the STARTREK part and will automatically become suspicious of the rest; as a result, I have read nothing by James Blish. Not even the fact that Blish was a Hugo award winner (which I discovered about 1½ years ago) managed to dispell my suspicions. It is only recently that I have taken steps towards rectifying this state of affairs by buying the new paperback edition of DR. MIRABILIS. This now dutifully



WHAT HAPPENED TO THE S.F. THEN ?



NH

awaits attention in the tower-block
"to be read" pile on my shelves,
((I can understand your reasoning,
but you must not miss out on "Flash
who was a good writer and, on
occasion a great one, eg A CASE OF
CONSCIENCE and BLACK EASTER.))

Finally my praise to OTHER TIMES, but
where are you? I can only seem to get
hold of Issue Nos. 1 & 2 - what happened to
3, the one with Bradbury and Watson? (Slaver,
drool - my typewriter is getting quite wet as
I dream of it). What has happened to the
further issues we were promised, has anyone
any information?

((Sorry, I can't help, can anyone else?))

PIETER R. ELLIS, 3 Unley St, Norwich, Norfolk

I joined BSFA 2 or 3 years ago
at the time of the disaster,
a child of the crash you could
say, and thinking that my
money had been wasted I was
dubious about continuing
when the rebuilding programme
began. However since then
I have come to look forward to
the mailings and can now pro-
claim my membership to all and
sundry without any trace of embar-
assment or feeling that I belong to
a lunatic fringe.

VECTOR, I feel, is an
excellent journal, and I was
only sorry that it did not
arrive this month, the last
being a double or no. I must
say I was staggered by the
accounts sheet and last year's
massive loss - where have all the
members gone? - wiped off the face
of the earth by some alien invaders
worried that the heroes of the BSFA
will discover them yet. ((Would
that it were so simple - we could
get Mac Naisenn to deal with alien
invaders. Our trouble was a committee
that alienated lots of members and

potential members. I still cry when I think of all those members
we missed out on who wrote in enquiring after the first SFM advert.
It would be very difficult to reach that number of people again
and even if we did they would be suspicious after being ignored the
first time.))

The discussion about "cliquism" in fandom seems to drag on
from one issue to the next with fervour on both sides unassuaged,
and I find myself nearly always agreeing with the "new" members -
probably because I'm still new to fandom myself. Three years ago,
an avid reader of SF and an eager writer, I had no idea of the
organised fans, gobbling up anything and everything written by
their heroes and buddies. Now, as a member of BSFA, at least I can
look on as the fans chatter at their typewriters, producing an

ever growing mountain of fanzines - no
wonder the post travels at snail's pace; how can
a snail run with that great load of paper?
They need elephants, not snails.

It seems to me that fandom is a time
consuming business (I don't know how you
manage it) ((neither do I)), and much as I
would like to take part my consumption is already
too great. In any case as far as local fans
are concerned, they seem to be non-existent
(well, almost) and I think that looking through
the last members list I only found one or two
addresses within 30 miles of here (OK, don't
all descend on me at once).

Another hardy annual seems to be the "back
to the gutter" discussion. Much as I'd hate to
see a return to the bad old golden days when
SF was for kids or hidden behind a copy of the
Times, I am always wary of announcements of
courses in SF, whether short term or in university
curricula. It strikes me that when anything
becomes institutionalised or the time and
motion academic bureaucracy move in then that
subject is on the way out, drowned in an ocean
of paper garbage and pseudo academic rhetoric
- look at science in the era of BIG science, look
at the health service, look at anything. No, I
am quite happy with the way that SF is at the
moment (except I wish there was more of it),
a good mixture of good old hard SF of the Asimov
variety, modern sensible, fast moving, adventure
SF in the Harry "Stainless Steel Rat" Harrison
mode, and deadly serious, literary SF (or what I
call literary, anyway) Frank Herbert, J.G. Ballard,
Brian Aldiss style.

((Somehow I never thought of Frank Herbert as
literary - I shall now await death from burial
in a sand-dune from all his fans.))

CELIA L. PARSONS, The House in the Field, May Hill,
Longhope, Glos.

MATRIX...Ma-trix...hmm. I suppose it is meant
to be punny; well, to continue in the same line,
Maya never runcut of puns, (sorry, I do suffer
from the occasional aberration.). Still, it's
a good title; I suppose (to drag up some math-
ematical dregs) that the LOCs form the determinant?
((Oh dear, I thought we'd reached the depths
of pundit last time but I see you've reached
new depths with this paragraph and, scanning
your letter, I see that you get even lower as
the letter continues. You have been warned, brave
reader.))

Anyway, here I am taking up Mr Thomson's polite
invite to climb on a soapbox (this could be a
slippery excuse for a lee!)

Tentcon? Out of interest, just when in the year
would such an alfresco extravaganza take place?
And where? We're not all of the Everest
expedition calibre, or even YHA members. No
thanks.

Now what about this BNF cult? I can think of what the letters stand for, but I don't think you'd print it. What are the neos supposed to do anyway? worship the idols or develop their own civilisation until they are big enough to cast them down? Please let the neos in (yes, including me, you've guessed it). Remember when you, O BNFs, first encountered the art? - or did you materialise from Alpha Centauri specifically to crush interest in SF and hence any chance of a Terran invasion of dear old Centauri?

Next over the horizon looms Alison Lowe who suggests that "by encouraging amateur fiction we may see another Clarke or Asimov being born" NO, HELP, NEVER Please do not suggest a comparison. Clarke and Asimov are great because each is unique. If you suggest that then why not conjure up another H.G. Wells too? You see, SF is a dynamic not a static system. It must change (and does), gradually. We are past the "Golden Age". I agree that we cannot, and should not, try to regain it. We must go on to better things (strains of United Earth anthem & camera shot of stars in dark infinity of space etc, etc).

However I do agree with some of Ms Lowe's ideas, such as NO to LORD OF THE RINGS film, and no great enthusiasm over Moorcock.

Answering Hugh Davies. Yes, there are fans who prefer to talk SF rather than BBBSB (see his letter in M8). In fact I am one of them, and as it happens, I will be in London for the next 9 to 10 months. I certainly know more about SF than (wait for it) fandom; So... ((I hope you meet plenty of fans in London, there are some good people there - what traitorous talk for a Yorkshireman. Sounds as though "The Einstein Intersection" is a good place to start, try visiting it some dinner-time.))

To prove I prefer SFSpeak to FanSpeak. Has anyone read the short story "Blastoff" by Kyril Bonfiglioli? It is not bad at all (praise indeed), besides which I wonder if anyone can tell me which collection it is published in? I read it a couple of years ago and it stuck in my mind, but I can't find it in my personal library anymore.

The rest of M8 was pretty good; I even agree with some of the opinions/ideas! Also I've got the new Hawkwind album. It is related to SF - it's called ASTOUNDING and tracks include "The aubergine that ate Rangoon" and "Chronoglide Skyway". Despite all that it is quite good.

Perhaps we could ask the editors of Pears Cyclopedia (L. Mary Barker & Christopher Cook this edition) to compile a list of multi-temporal tenses used by the great authors of outstanding SF books both before and after 1940.

I wonder how many times our friendly neighbourhood door-to-door editor has inserted himself in this otherwise well written (please don't destroy the illusion) loc? ((Now would I do that?)) Never mind, anything to humour him until the little men with white coats get here - they came for me last week but I just

said "Not today, thank you" and returned to my shrunken head collection - I've only got one so far, and it's still attached to my neck, but it's definitely my favourite....

((This next, at final, paragraph is not for those of a nervous disposition - you have been warned.))

When I can LOCate an envelope I'll send this eLOCquent epistle on its way. Then I can LOCK up my steaming typewriter and get back to the LCCal pub...(Please excuse the slight aberration - twinge from the old war wound you know - slight case of anencephaly.).

((I am truly shattered by this rambling diatribe - watch out London.))

MRS. A. GLDHAM. 8 South Green Drive, Stratford-on-Avon

I agree regional branches of BSFA would be a good idea. I too have many friends who are afraid (really afraid) of SF and won't even natter about it.

I've recently been to the TERRACON (Startrek) at Leeds, yes thanks had a lovely time. I was one of the fiction judges and the standard was quite high, oh there were a few wandering stories but I expect mine wander (into editors' waste baskets!). I don't think any branch of SF is going to wither away.

Oh yes, of course, we had Nick Tate (Space 1999) as a guest, a very nice feller. He brought along an episode, it was quite good but somehow not terribly realistic. At least Startrek always felt realistic and we all grew to love the quite natural swagger. Also as guest Mat Irvine who makes models and visual effects for Dr. Who and many more serious projects, another nice feller.

Cons are the easiest way to meet people, the atmosphere is, well, neutral ground. ((Thanks very much for the information on the Startrek con. It sounds as though you're well into Startrek fandom. This form of fandom is much larger than SF fandom which is interesting and if you feel like writing about it for us sometime I'd be pleased to see it.))

CHRIS MORGAN. 81 Knightsdale Rd, Westham, Weymouth.

I'm very interested in your reference for a possible conference for writers. First let me say that I'm in favour of anything designed to help beginning writers. Now, I'd like to make a couple of rather negative points. The pro writers already have a conference - the first was organised in Dublin in Oct 1976 by Harry Harrison, and it looks like being an annual series. (It pulled in writers, editors and publishers from Europe and the US, and appears to have been a great success.) Some pros may be willing to give up another weekend for something smaller and probably less helpful to them, but most will quite likely be too busy. Also, I feel that a 2 day conference may prove too expensive and difficult to organise. (It's going to require hotel or hostel accommodation.) Why not a smaller one day

affair to start with, just to see how much response there is? You could still have talks, seminars and discussions, and anybody travelling more than, say 60 miles could still stay overnight at a hotel if they wished. A further point is that though I'm glad somebody has bothered to read my article in CYCLOTRON on writers meetings, you seem to be confusing a writers' meeting, a writers' workshop and a writers' conference. Obviously, these terms can be used indiscriminately to describe a multitude of activities, but it would be much easier for all concerned if we were to stick to common definitions. As far as I'm concerned a writers' meeting is a relatively small gathering (say 5 to 15 people) where each has brought or precirculated a story for comment and criticism by the others; a writers' workshop is a longer lasting affair (say a week or more) at which participants actually write stories in between seminar sessions; a writers' conference is akin to a live issue of CYCLOTRON in front of an audience of several dozen. Anyway, whatever you have in mind I'll be glad to help if I can. ((Since this letter I've met and spoken to Chris at Novacon and now accept his ideas on terminology. We have also agreed to accept a further term, supplied by Dave Langford; critical session, this is a small version of a writers' meeting held within the larger framework of a conference. I've had some good feedback to this idea and shall be looking more closely into a possible venue.))

Also in M8 is an item about US fan Gil Gaier's scheme for grading SF by asking fans for their 0-100 score on each novel. This seems like a total waste of time to me, with reading tastes being as different as they are. In discussions with other SF readers (fans and non-fans) I notice that there is always somebody who will condemn any book mentioned, while at least 95% of books seem to receive praise from some quarter. Also, this grading scheme is going to run into various statistical catches. For example, opinion must be restricted to those novels which one has read and finished, so long novels (which people are not going to finish unless they like them) will tend to score higher than short novels, all other things being equal. As an index of enjoyment, surely it would be better to compile a list of books and authors which are similar as to quality and type of story. EG if you like Tolkien's work try Le Guin's EARTHSEA trilogy and Lanier's HIERO'S JOURNEY; if you like Perry Rhodan try SPACE 1999, Buck Rogers, Mac Malsenn, etc. ((But surely by saying, these books are alike, the quality is the same you've made a personal judgment which not everyone will agree with. The good thing about Gil's scheme is that the large number of gradings for each novel mask out the occasional very high, or very low, mark. You'd be surprised at just how few books do have a wide spread of marks. To attempt to classify SF into tight sub-genres, which is basically what you are suggesting, such as Tolkienesque fantasy, would give rise to the same kinds of problem we have in defining SF.))

You define fan fiction as being "written by fans, not about them". I beg to differ, Tom, but it's both,

though not all of both. And while I'm on the subject let me say that fan fiction is as difficult to define as SF, for similar reasons. The dividing line between fan fiction and pro fiction is remarkably unclear: fan references abound in THE FLYING SORCERERS by Niven and Gerrold and in much of Wilson Tucker's SF, while three stories (by Rob Holdstock, Rob Jackson and myself) in a particular issue of SFINX, the Oxford University fiction zine, were later sold to SFM for such vast sums of money that the magazine was forced out of production. There are plenty other examples.

((This is another difference of definition. For simplicity sake I defined fan fiction as that fiction written by fans as against pros. I know this is not the definition used by hard-boiled fans but it served its purpose for most BSFA members. I would agree that the borderline between fan and pro is hazy, to say the least and that's why we redefined TAAGENT as being a fiction magazine for stories written by BSFA members.))

With reference to James Parker's article on SF in rock music, surely incomplete surveys of this kind (and I've seen a lot of them in zines over the last year or two) are pretty futile. Anybody who takes the trouble to look can see that about 95% of all current rock (though not folk or soul) is either looking back (the nostalgia kick) or looking forwards (SF/fantasy orientation), with the latter in about a two-to-one majority. Thus something in excess of 60% of rock has a connection with SF or fantasy. This may be in the lyrics, titles, synthetic quality of the music, sleeve art, or stage presentation, but inddisputably it's present. The trouble is that most amateur commentators on the rock scene concern themselves with one tiny segment of the field and ignore the rest. I'll offer just one example out of the hundreds which exist. I've never seen Van der Graaf Generator mentioned in connection with SF in rock, yet everyone of their 8 albums has SF or fantasy themes in the lyrics, some contain SF artwork and one actually mentions Asimov as an influence. ((There is some truth in what you say, but I don't think this detracts from the merits and worth of the article. The field is wide and I doubt if it could be covered in one article, an overview of some of the main tributaries of this large field, such as James Parker gave, is surely useful?))

STUART RIDGLE. 8 Buccleuch Terc, Newcastleton, Roxburgh

I thought James Parker's article was very good but I disagree with him on some points. I think that "Sgt. Pepper" merely started a production revolution as opposed to a musical one. The ability to dub on extra instruments to a track is not going to fundamentally change the face of music, which is what happened, you are just going to get the same old stuff only neater and with extra instruments and effects. The Beatles always played their stuff in a dreary old R.B style, like loud acoustic guitars; they were not into the cosmic freeform and feedback music of the early Floyd; they were not a progressive, art-rock group; they just played clever pop

like 10cc today. "Sgt Pepper" could not have influenced Floyd anyway, as they were recording "Piper at the Gates of Dawn" at the same time as the Beatles were recording their piece (next door as it happens). There's a book out called FUTURE ROCK by David Downing which sets down a list of far more convincing social, political and technological reasons for the advent of progressive rock. "Sgt Pepper" was not the instigator of the revolution, only a minor symptom. Overproduction is one of the things that is wrong with modern rock today; it's caused Floyd to lose all feeling and spontaneity. I agree with him about the poor quality of the lyrics used by some of the groups (Yes leap to mind). I think the reason that so many groups went for SF is that they thought it would provide easy imagery and that they would be able to toss off any piece of spacey crap and hear ecstatic gasps of "lay out, man" and "Cosmic". Some SF writers probably have the same problem. I think both reviewers were better than SFM's Maxim Jakubowski. I am still annoyed by his constant petty digs at the German groups which he threw in at every opportunity, no matter how irrelevant, and his desperate review of the Wings album.

Onto the subject of bookmarks. I think that whatever their design they should have a "Please leave this in the book so that others may benefit" (or words to that effect) on them otherwise they will just get wasted. I also think that they should only be left in books that are popular, so that more people see them, and of high quality, because no matter how irrational it seems, if the bookmark is found in some grubby little piece of literary crap, it will reflect unfavourably on the BSFA. I don't think money should be mentioned either, just a "for further information send s.a.e. to...." ((I would agree with all your comments with regard to bookmarks, though there's no real way to stop people keeping them. Your point about the types of book they are left in is certainly valid though we must not give the impression of being snobbish, after all we do try to cater for all types of reader.))

GEORGE BARNETT, 3 Coleford Bridge Rd, Mytchett, Surrey.

Thanks for an absorbing issue of MATRIX. Like you said (or one of your colleagues), SF fanzines, on the whole, fall well behind comics and fantasy fanzines on slickness of production, but make up for it with written material that makes un-put-downable reading.

As you said "and I hope that will be the last word on SF" I won't tell you how I disagreed with much of Raj Rattan's piece. I won't tell you how his phrase "stick in a cartoon for the kids" annoyed me, or how he went on to say how the people who would enjoy the "cartoon strip" (the younger readers), wouldn't bother to write in to the poll of features you like best. Yes I will. Now you've got me, editor of comic fandom's best selling fanzine (that's not meant to sound big headed or anything), whenever I read derogatory comments about comic strips I be

writing in like a shot. The strip in SFM wasn't a kid's strip - it wasn't very good, to my mind anyway, but nonetheless it wasn't aimed at children!

I've only been getting SF fanzines, quite a wide variety of them, recently, and there seems to be a trend of using the words "comic strip" as a kind of insult to a magazine or whatever if a fan doesn't like it. Oh shame! Like in L.A. Thomson's piece about SF DIGEST "clutching what looked like a second rate comic book in my hand" etc.

There seems to be a kind of paranoia amongst some fans who hate being looked down upon by non-SF readers because they read and enjoy SF, Christ, you think what it's like for a comic fan. Anyone seen to be buying comics during their later years, when all their friends, etc, have discarded such things with their childhood, must suffer umpteen times as much. I've given up trying to justify my interest in the comic strip. But anyone who feels so superior to me because of this obsession is only too welcome to visit me anytime (in the evenings) and I'd be oh so happy to place a few better examples before him/her which, if they fail to be impressed, will leave me most surprised.

((I would agree that now SF is "accepted" comics are receiving the brunt of the abuse. It's also true that some of the worst abuse comes from SF fans. Now, the majority of the comics I've seen would rate the abuse but I have seen some true works of art. Let's remember SF used to be in this state - some would say it still is - so let's look at comics with a critical but unbiased eye.))

James Parker's bit on SF influenced music started off well enough, fell down when Hawkwind was gone into (how I hate that band), but picked up and thoroughly impressed me when Rungren, Amon Duul and various others were mentioned. A great surprise and delight. Too many people ignore the real SF type music of the cosmic German innovators. But Yoko Ono should have had a mention.

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

For a few issues now I have been growing uneasy about your policy of printing all of every letter you receive. I have not mentioned this before, however, because I was sure you, with all the experience you've had editing, would eventually change your policy when you started getting very good response (in terms of quantity I mean - not quality).

How about starting to edit letters and including a WAHF list? I think you will be loathe to do this but MATRIX is beginning to be less promising than it once was and this would be the first move to set it back in the right direction.

((I am now editing letters, believe me it's not an easy task to do that and retain the cohesion of the original letter. I won't have a WAHF list. The reason being that I edit a BSFA zine, not my own. If members put themselves out to write then I feel duty

bound to reply and as I haven't time to reply individually to each I do so through the columns of MATRIX. And you must admit this seems to have paid dividends.))

TREV DENTON. 18 Commercial Close, Retford, Nott.

I'm writing mainly to express my thanks for James Parker's SOUNDS OF SPACE - nice to read music reviews by someone with a wide enough knowledge to approach the subject comprehensively - even though he left out GO by Stumo Yamashta - still he's forgiven - and also forgot to mention that Hauss Schulze used to be a member of Tangerine Dream.

Is there any chance of the BSFA as a body putting pressure of some kind, ie petition etc, to get that great TV programme of latter days THE VILLAGE reshown on TV?

((You've got me here, I thought I was a compulsive watcher of TV SF but I haven't heard of THE VILLAGE. Could it be THE PRISONER that you are referring to? This was set almost completely in a village? If so I would like to see this series again, I'm told that it is, in fact, being shown at present on one of the Northern networks.))

GYNFER JONES. 34 Bryngwynt, Amlwch Port, Anglesey, Gwynedd

I don't agree with Jim Barker's short reference to the AMAZING STORIES play. I thought it a very funny and entertaining story (didn't someone knock this play in a BSFA publication not so long ago-). Joe Melia was superb as a larger than life SF fan (fanatic) at odds with the rather perplexing problem of a rather apathetic, indifferent sort of world and even more apathetic family. The play is a send up of the SF fan and convention attenders. I would have thought that this would have gone down well (if you can't occasionally laugh at yourself...?). I doubt whether Howard Schuman tried to be malicious in his very funny play. I particularly liked the scene where the traditional 1930's (ERB type) writer is confronted by the modern progressive writer - complete with leather gear and polaroid bifocals (horrors!). ((From the various descriptions of people and events this sounds like a documentary not a play.))

It's rather unfortunate that the GPO seem to be dictating the editorial policy of MATRIX, ie the pruning down of the letter section to short essential comment only. I thought the letter column was the focalpoint of the zine since VECTOR has already adopted a mild form of printing selectivity in its feedback from readers.

((As you can see I'm still printing reasonable amounts from each letter. What I'm pruning are those bits which are covered in more depth by another writer. I've only started doing it with this letter column and, touch wood, it won't offend you letter writers too much.))

KEITH D. PUGH. 34 Simmonds Rd, Little Bloxwich, Walsall.

I would like to know how fans find the time to read and write so much SF. I have great difficulty keeping up with the various SF mags even. Do you all possess a time dilation device? Can I borrow it? As

a mere mortal I have to work and eat, and I need my 8 hours in bed (sleeping, of course). ((I wish they'd let me in on the secret as well, my mountain of books to be read increases daily.))

By the way I liked SFM. Some of the fiction (the reprints) was OK, and the articles and artwork were great. And didn't it introduce me to the BSFA. ((That was the last word for the defence, and as Keith says if nothing else it brought in a lot of new members.))

Incidentally SPACE 1999 is also shown in the ATV region (at first it coincided with Dr Who on Saturday but has now been moved to a Thursday afternoon slot, 4.45, children's hour). I have seen 10 episodes of the 2nd series so far and there is a slight improvement. The reworked theme tune is excellent (as you can see I'm scraping the barrel to find good things to say about it). A couple of new "characters" (?) have been introduced but the scripts are still full of howlers. I've been looking at some of the writers for the first series - George Bellack, Johnny Byrne, Anthony Terpiloff, Christopher Penfold, Elizabeth Borrowes, David Weir, Art Wallace, Jesse Lasky Jnr, Pat Silver, Edward Di Lorenzo, Bob Kellet. Just who are these guys (and gals)? They surely have little connection with SF. I don't see any of them writing SF novels or any of their names appearing in the BSFA membership list! Compare the list with some of the Star Trek episode writers - such well established figures Theodore Sturgeon, Harlan Ellison, Norman Spinrad, Robert Bloch, etc. Perhaps here lies the great difference between the 2 shows. SPACE 1999 also seems to have run out of ideas. One episode of the 2nd series, "The Rule of Luton" (no, it wasn't written by Eric Morcombe) was a blatant copy of the Star Trek episode "Arena".

ANDREW MUIR. 11 Devon Gardens, Bishopbriggs, Glasgow

The play CATHOLICS has been shown twice. It was set in the none-to-distance future; to fight it's falling attendances (just like football) the Catholic religion had been modernised. You see the Pope (& Co) wearing a polo knecked shirt and playing the guitar, etc. Trouble arises when a monastery on a small island off the coast of Ireland revives the old mass with all the regalia, & even cross themselves (all this having been done away with). People flock from all over the world to the island's services, even charter flights from Rome (oh, the dramatic irony of it all). The "meat" of the play is when the "swinging" Pope goes over to meet the rebels on the island. And if you want to know what happens wait until it comes back on TV, I wouldn't like to spoil it. I am assured that the cast included Cyril Cussack and Trevor Howard.

Whilst on the subject of plays there was an excellent one on Radio Scotland (Easy!) on Saturday 6, November. It was, for a change, not merely using SF for a basis of a pathetic melodrama but an investigation of the problems an astronaut has to face when back on earth. I was really intrigued thinking

it was some well known author so I rushed out and got a RADIO TIMES, which said it was ASTRONAUT by Allen Harbinson with John Rowe, Blain Fairman and Liza Ross, produced and directed by Gerry Jones. It was a good play, wonder if it'll be published. ((You can try writing to the BBC, praise the play to the hights and ask for a copy of the script...oh well, just an idea.))

ALEX HILL. 11 Dryburgh Gdns, Glasgow.

Lo and behold, a letter from Andrew Muir. What is he saying? Oh no, he hasn't, he couldn't, he shouldn't. Not to the incomperable, much hated by SUNDAY TIMES' critics, Jerry Cornelius. He has to make Lives and Times sensible, even allegory. Oh sacrilege. Jerry Cornelius is Jerry Cornelius, please let him remain his incomprehensible self. Totally devoid of anything a mere mortal could understand.

"Sounds of Space". Poor deprived James Parker, has he never heard TO OUR CHILDREN'S CHILDREN'S CHILDREN, or ON THE THRESHOLD OF A DREAM by The Woody Blues? SF albums to beat all SF albums. Or Kingdom Come's 2 albums JOURNEY and GALACTIC ZOO DOSSIER. If he hasn't it's a pity as these albums would have added an extra dimension (oops) to his article. If he has, why weren't they included? Other things he could "cock an ear to" are JONATHAN LIVINGSTON SEAGULL (not rock but great music by Niel Diamond), and a track from Al Stewart's MODERN TIMES called "Sirens of Titan", based on the novel of the same name by Kurt Vonnegut, ((I like The Woody Blues but can't accept that the 2 albums you mention are SF, can you explain why you think they are? Your letter, plus those of lots of others, shows just how much SF oriented rock music there is around.))

Yardnote on attitudes:-

"Somebody exploded an H-bomb today, but it wasn't anybody I knew." - The Woody Blues.

((Just after putting the last issue to bed, see how the newspaper terms start to flow from his fingers, I recieved a letter from the home of girl schools, Cheltenham. Sent to me by the father of girls' schools, oooops, didn't mean that, Gra Poole - who is smaller than I am. It was an excellent LoC and I promised Graham I'd print relevant parts of it this issue. But, lo, what is this great package, surely not, oh yes, another Graham Poole LoC, a Frankenstein amongst letters. Well I'm sorry, Graham, but there's no way I'm going to print this and part of your other one, sorry. So, sit back everyone for a good read. I'm sure this is a sneaky way for him to take over this 'zine.))

GRAHAM POOLE. 23 Russet Rd, Cheltenham, Glos.

Artwork

What can I say about Jim Barker illos, except sooperb. Jim is a better cartoonist than the famed Harry Bell, unless Harry is reading this in which case Harry is better. No, stop being silly, Poole. Jim is good, however, he says that he is SUPERPROCRUSTINATOR (at least, I think that's the word he used) which is a pity because if he started to send his

cartoons to a wide range of zines he'd stand a chance of winning a Hugo. So does Harry, of course. Who knows, perhaps the 2 of them will fight it out, competing with each other, which can only result in better results from each of them and from other artists trying to raise their standards. Always assuming that neither burns himself out in the process. It's always better to adopt a style of your own, a recognisable trademark that distinguishes your illustrations from those of everyone else. Both Jim and Harry's work has this quality.

However, despite the 5 Barker illoes all together on the cover imagine how impressive they would have been if they had accompanied an article on Robert Silverberg (preferably of a humourous nature) or a Mancon report.

((You found me out. The illoes were commissioned to go with the Mancon report but the report arrived too late to go through the process of xeroxing and thermostenning, so the illoes didn't appear with it. A shame, I agree, but I couldn't see the illoes go to waste so used them as a cover.))

Misen

I'm glad to hear that you are now editing the locs after the endurance test we had to undergo in M7, a very enjoyable endurance test I hasten to add. You really have got a good thing going there in the lettercolumn. With MATRIX appearing bi-monthly it is the most regular letter forum in British fanzines today which greatly adds to its appeal. It makes comments more up to date, more immediate. And I also like the lengthy comments you add. I don't know whether witty comments inserted into the body of a letter are absolutely necessary. But if you have a long letter I think your policy of commenting after each subject covered rather than at the end of the letter is a sound idea. It is partly because of your replies to the letters that you get as much response as you do. The BSFA needed the likes of you 3 years ago. ((Simper, simper.))

Careful Poole, you're on the verge of idolising the fellow. Can't have that can we. He may get ideas. Besides, I've done with idolising things or people. I'm cynical. Yeah, really mean and nasty. Well, I've got to get rid of this nice neo-ish image haven't I? Why? Well, I don't want to be button-holed as a flattering sycophant. I want to be a Wicky Most. Truthful. And nice at times. Beneath this hard exterior lies a ~~hard/hearted~~ heart of gold. ((Hmmm, so you want to be a second Ian Williams, sorry Ian, just a bit of fun. Anyway I've passed your request onto Santa Claus, and he'll see if he can stuff another personality for you in your Christmas stocking.))

Writers' meetings ideas: Yeah, great. I'm all for it if the BSFA is willing. I'm all for it even if the BSFA isn't willing...I'm sure either within or without the BSFA a group of us could arrange something along the lines of a 1 or 2 day

workshop over a weekend. Of course, it would have to be held in Gloucester or Cheltenham. No, seriously, wherever it was held I'd definitely come. "I think I know of a suitable venue" you write. "Should it happen to be Reading, linked to the university?" ((I had thought about that but decided it might be too expensive so I now have my eye on another sight.)) ((I'm sorry I've chopped out your bits on your local writers' workshop and the Hamlyn Encyclopedic World Dictionary, which you recommend, and portmanteau & words and acronyms.))

Amateurism & Vector

You say "The question of amateurism is rank with pitfalls...the only way to ensure a fanzine is 100% amateur is to say that all its funding must come from the person or small group. After all the first subscription is the one that makes you a pro." Nuts. You continue "Let's face it, if you're going to produce an offset-litho magazine it's going to cost you money and why shouldn't you take in subscriptions or sell advertising to offset the cost?" I agree entirely. You are missing the point here. Just because MAYA, SF REVIEW and so on sell advertising and subscriptions this does not imply that they are professional publications. They may have the appearance of a pro publication but they are produced amateurishly. After all, even in your example of amateur sports costs incurred by the sportsman are reimbursed, the equivalent of receiving ad revenue and subs against fanzine costs. No fanzine makes a profit. Most make heavy losses (financially, but not necessarily culturally). With the BSFA however, there is a large organisation with funds available to back up the magazine, to have it produced 5 or 6 times a year, to cover the costs and even make a profit if necessary. If I, too, had enough funds backing me I could also produce a VECTOR type magazine. But I haven't, so I don't. This is the difference, and it is for this reason that VECTOR is best excluded from the Nova Award.

((What I was saying was if we're judging FANzines then we should judge all fanzines, by excluding those who get their finance from a particular source one has already made some kind of judgement. VECTOR and FOUNDATION don't pay their contributors, so what's the difference. Nor does frequency of production mean anything, the judgement is, or should be, on quality not quantity. All fan editors have access to the pool of writers though I admit writers will prefer to write for fanzines with a good reputation, that's why VECTOR, FOUNDATION & MAYA are the best serious UK fanzines and get the big name authors. But there's nothing to stop any editor producing good quality stuff, it doesn't even have to be written by big name authors. What it does take is WORK. The fact that Chris, and I, don't shell out from our own pockets doesn't mean anything - okay it does for MATRIX - we still have to put in at least half our free time to get the zines out. The fact VECTOR can appear bi-monthly just means Chris has to work even harder to keep up the quality. You can't buy quality

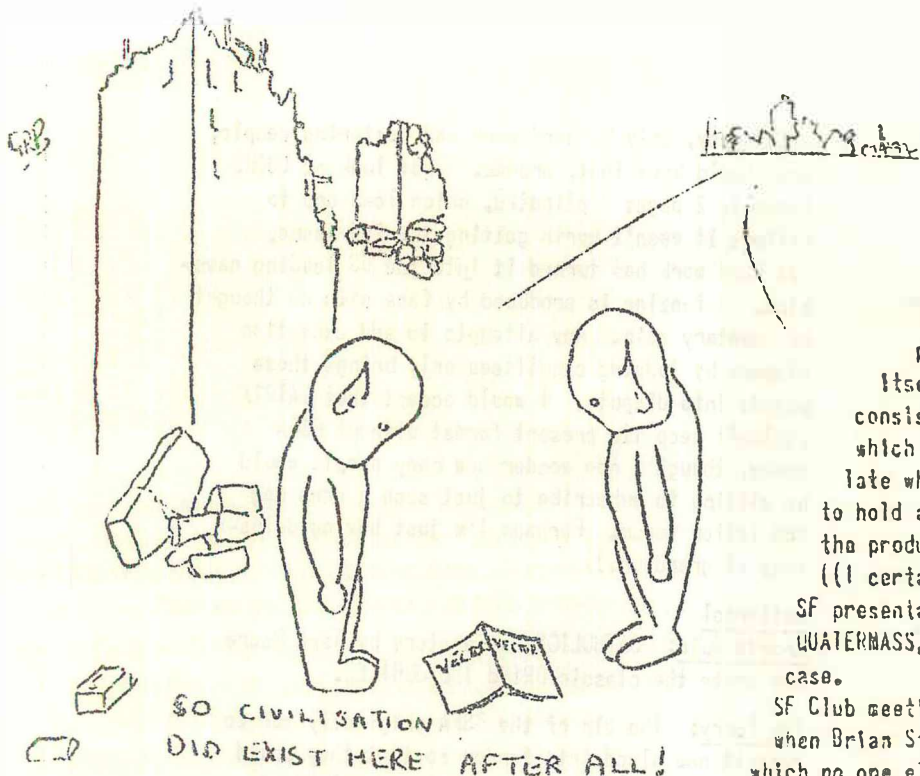
with money, only by hard work and pestering people, you should know that, Graham. Just look at LOCUS issue 1, 2 pages complicated, which lead one to believe it wasn't worth getting the 2nd issue, but hard work has turned it into the US leading newszine. A fanzine is produced by fans with no thought of monetary gain. Any attempts to add exception clauses by judging committees only brings those awards into dispute. I would accept that MATRIX couldn't keep its present format without BSFA money, though I now wonder how many people would be willing to subscribe to just such a news mag and letter forum. Perhaps I'm just having delusions of grandeur.))

Lettercol

Andrew Muir: CATHOLICS was a story by Ward Moore who wrote the classic BRING THE JUBILEE.

Tom Perry: The aim of the BSFA originally was to recruit new blood into fandom so that they could boost the attendance at conventions. At least, this is what I have been told.. Right now, I think the BSFA is doing both. It introduces the newcomers, through the letter pages of MATRIX, to fandom - perhaps exposes is a better word - and once exposed they find the prospect of conventions a better idea because they won't feel absolutely out of things - they'll know at least a few people from MATRIX. I think it is good that there is a loose body of people called SF fandom which is either separate or intermingles with the body of people called the BSFA. It is like a second reserve. If you don't like the BSFA you can "join" fandom, if you don't like fandom then you can join the BSFA. Or, as in many cases, you can participate in both. It creates alternatives and in a democratic country like ours, despite what the Left Wing is trying to do, alternatives are essential unless you want a 1984 situation. "You will join the BSFA or you will be forced to sit in a cell with only Tully Zetford to read and SPACE 1999 to watch". This is why I dislike what is being done with the education system and pay beds and nationalisation. It reaches the point where the alternatives are done away with not for any economic or social reasons but purely for political reasons. ((I'm a good democrat and socialist and could argue on some of your "political" points but won't, I do like your suggestion for recruiting more members though.))

Andy Sawyer: SPACE 1999 may not be entertaining to you, or me, but it sure as hell must be entertaining to someone otherwise ITV wouldn't be spending good money on it. Perhaps an indication of who is entertained by it can be gleaned from its programme timing. Originally the 2nd series began about 20 minutes before DR. WHO. Obviously this was a silly, back stabbing ploy to draw viewers away from DR. WHO. After only a few weeks, however, it was ITV who had to make the programme change. Perhaps too many kids switched over half way to see DR. WHO instead of vice versa. And what



A developing serial, such as SURVIVORS, could be the exception to my theory if it is well done. A series with the same characters but without the onward progression of life, character development, plot maintenance such as SPACE 1999 and STARTRECK tends to be disjointed.

Admittedly it makes it far easier to produce - each episode is a package unto itself whereas with a serial the package consists of every episode, must mention things which have taken place in the past, must speculate what will happen in the future, if it is to hold any credibility. It is not surprising that the producers go for the easy way out.

(((certainly feel that the best format for a good SF presentation is the serial, probably 6 parts. QUATERMASS, UNDERWIND I use as examples to prove my case.

At a recent Reading SF Club meeting we were discussing this very subject when Brian Stableford voiced the obvious conclusion, which no one else had noticed. TV shows are made so that people can come in and start watching them at any point in the "story", they are all action and no plot. Just look at something like STARSKY & HUTCH, the case is set up in the first 5 minutes, and resolved in the last 3. There's a lot of action, a couple of fights and a chase or two, but certainly no detection. The idea is to grab the viewers no matter how far into the show it is and you can't do this with a continuous story line which necessitates one having watched it from the start. This is the way TV programmes are going, especially US TV where viewing figures are all, even UK TV is on the same track, particularly the IBA networks though BBC is starting to follow the same trail; BBC2 is our only hope.))

Gwynfor Jones: Anderson has had plenty of experience with actors and special effects and TV shows generally but he has merely translated his wooden puppets from his earlier shows into wooden actors. Anderson, who may be described as TV's answer to Roger Elwood, would be better employed in using his skills in the special effects departments of the film and TV industries and leave the production to someone more capable. Unfortunately he seems to have made his reputation producing this sort of show for ITV and so long as people continue to watch it and so long as he gets paid for producing it he will do so. Pity. If only he could display some sort of intelligence! Surely he must have learnt something from his experience. Perhaps it is what fools the viewers are. Unfortunately this is not something limited to Anderson alone. So many other TV producers and film producers tend to treat the public as morons and give them moronic rubbish. And if you give them moronic rubbish constantly the public inevitably is indoctrinated into it until everyone is eventually sitting in front of their sets waiting for the next exciting episode of CRUSSROADS, or KUJAK or SPACE 1999. Why can't we have a BBC3 which is purely educational? After all there must be quite a few people interested in bettering themselves and a TV educational system would be a good idea. I ignore the Open University in these comments since you have to be enrolled as a student and so on. Perhaps a

time is it on now? 4.45 pm on Thursdays. This means that even if I wanted to watch it I couldn't, but all those schoolkids must really be lapping it up - poor souls. For that reason SPACE 1999 is a good thing - it is entertaining someone. For adult audiences and the image of SF, however, it is not a good thing.

Did you see the NEW AVENGERS, closely followed by BEASTS? Beautiful. We'll have to wait and see how the NEW AVENGERS develops. I did not think the first episode was all that brilliant but perhaps I've got to get used to the characters. I'm glad it has retained its silliness, the hallmark of the original AVENGERS. Imagine how bad it would be if it was serious, like the CHAMPIONS or DEPARTMENT S. BEASTS started off with a brilliant play using the fear of rats as the theme. The character portrayals of the only 2 people to be seen is excellently done. It started off with the hysterical woman and scornful husband and then as the house came under attack the husband breaks down and the wife takes charge - good character development. The rats are never seen (the imagination can conjure up far more shocking visuals than the TV effects men). The ending is not shown but implied and the opening with the white sports car and swinging skull key fob was right out of the THRILLER - shock stable - duh, get the idea I liked it. In comparison the 2nd in the series, featuring ghost of Flipper, or somesuch - Buddyboy - was a complete flop as far as I was concerned. Not even the scene of the bared breast raised the complete tedium of the episode.

You could, tentatively, call BEASTS SF - well, speculative fiction at least - and as such the first episode was one of the better examples of what can be achieved by TV if it is really trying. Why oh why cannot something of this standard be achieved with a true SF story? ((Ah good, hoped someone would write in about BEASTS. I'm having to miss them this time round but now I know which ones to watch second time round.))

Hugh Davies: THE PEOPLE was good and supports my theory that the best SF can only be produced as one-off productions rather than a series with the same leaden characters.

system that will gradually develop is a video tape system where the viewer can look through a catalogue, code the correct references into the TV set and the tape of his choice will be screened from a central computer bank into his living room. Education for the masses - with all its inherent problems. Did you see that episode of THE PRISONER where a speed learning system was used via TV and everyone wandered around able to quote history - but they could only repeat word for word what they had learnt liked mindless parrots.

((What you have suggested is akin to a system the GPO are introducing, except it's based on data for businessmen rather than your more altruistic scheme. You have a black box which connects together the telephone line, TV set and a typewriter like keyboard. We should see this system in extensive use within the next few - 5? - years.))

Raj Rattan: Raj Rattan comments on SFM "Things got so bad with all the glossiness and general outlay that the public did not want to be seen reading the magazine. Many became ashamed." I know that feeling exactly. It reached the stage where I became ashamed to buy it in the first place and so I stopped getting the mag. I couldn't bring myself to read any of it anyway, apart from the news, letters and occasional story by someone I knew. The mag was so loud, so big, completely unlike the US pocket sized editions where you could hide the cover against your lap if you felt any shame. Of course it had to be big because of the posters, which I'm sure sold more magazines than the stories. It was aimed at the poster freak market, not an SF market, this determined the size and reduced the number of stories that could be published.

Richard R. Blaikie's suggestion that the BSFA could produce a list of all UK SF in print is not a good idea unless someone is willing to come forward and do the research work needed for it. If you really want to know what SF is currently in print all you need do is be on a specialist dealers catalogue mailing list. Mind, though, you'll have to buy books from these dealers, they don't send the lists for nothing.

((Phew, whata scourcher, to quote. Graham mentions lots of other things but I've chopped them out because others have mentioned them or I forgot to type them. Thanks, Graham, can you keep it down to less than 20 pages next time?))

SIMON R. GREEN. 37 St Laurence Rd, Bradford-on-Avon, Wilts.

A fact I've often bemoaned elsewhere is the simple lack of markets for fiction in England. Apart from the late SFM (who used to return my mss promptly every 4 weeks) and the late SF DIGEST, there was and is no market for SF in the UK. Thus all stories have to be sent to the US magazines, and straight away the would be author comes up against several heavy stumbling blocks. Firstly, the postage rates, inclu-

-ding a return International Money Coupon is bloody ruinous. Secondly the American postal service is even worse than our own. The number of lost mss is unbelievable. Thirdly, the waiting period. F&SF takes 1 to 2 months, GALAXY usually doesn't answer, and FANTASTIC takes from 2 to 10 months. (I presume the same for AMAZING.) ANALOG varies but is usually faster than F&SF.

Since the only way a writer can learn is through practice, any new outlet, pro or amateur, is to be welcomed with open arms. CYCLOTRON will certainly serve a need but it can only do so much.

Re SPACE 1999. This series was a classic case of SF written by writers who had never heard of SF, and wouldn't know it if they fell over it.

I think it was Damon Knight who paraphrased the rules such writers live by:

- 1) You can't beat the old malarkey.
- 2) Only kids watch this stuff anyway so what the hell.
- 3) Nobody understands science except scientists so you can make it up as you go along.

So why did I watch it. And, more important, why did I like it so much? It's true that the visual design was imitative of the 2001 hardware, but said hardware was bloody impressive in the film, and still packs a punch in the watered down version on 1999. The acting was for the large part wooden, and the plots were purile in the extreme, but the show had one good thing going for it that almost made up for all its other many faults. It had atmosphere. This was largely the result of brilliant direction and lighting effects. True, what was going on on camera was rather boring, but the shadows hovering in the background kept you wondering what was going on off camera. There was a constant feeling of menace, due to cleverly handled shots and subdued lighting coupled with brilliant visual effects and a lack of distracting music in the soundtracks. One was constantly concerned that the monsters were doing nasty things where the camera couldn't see them, or even that there were horrible Things hiding just out of camera range, waiting to jump out and scar: the pants off us. The reason why SPACE 1999 ((first series)) was a flop was because the monsters, when revealed were usually laughable, and what they did onscreen was boring, trite and predictable.

With regard to the rather-no-SF-than-bad-SF argument I think I tentatively disagree. There was a time when any publicity for SF was good, because it meant that at least a few more people had heard of it. That was why John Campbell allowed a horrendously bad film of his WHO GOES THERE to be made. But this argument still applies. Today most people have heard of SF, and a great many have tried it at least once. Despite SPACE 1999 lack of imagination, (surely a capito; crime in SF writing), it has been a great success in terms of viewing figures, both here

and in America, and a second series has been made. And anything that convinces the money-men of TV that a successful, profitable SF series can be made, is good. This will hopefully lead to more SF series being made, and competition will force them to become better in an evolutionary struggle for survival. ((I wish I could believe that. My fear is that though more series will be made they'll be of the same poor quality - If people watch it keep on churning it out, there's no incentive to change it, to make it better. I do agree though that as long as some people like 1999 it's doing a job. This is another of the points which convince me that a good SF series will not be commercially viable.))

Continuing this argument, while most SF on TV at present is rather poor, there has got to be more SF type series running on TV at present than ever before; 6 MILLION DOLLAR MAN, BIONIC WOMAN, GEMINI MAN, THE AVENGERS(?), and DR WHO. Of these, 6 mill man started out as a better than average film series, but when transferred to the TV format lost most of its guts in the process. Lee Majors struggles heroically with bad scripts and gets nowhere, as does Lindsay Wagner in the Bionic Woman. Brawn has replaced brain in the series, and no doubt both will become extinct, like all other dinosaurs who followed the same process. Gemini Man shows more promise than the late, lamented (by me anyway) Invisible Man. Ben Murphy's invisibility is more convenient and easier to work with than David McAllums', but the scripts lack the charm and mischievous humour of the first series. And Ben Murphy's lust interest is no replacement for the delicious Melinda Fee.

The Avengers is a good example of fringe SF, where good acting, good scripts, and good effects are abundant, even if the SF is a close relative to pure fantasy. And Dr Who...well, what can you say? Brilliant, yes. Tom Baker's character is fully up to the standard of the other Doctors so far portrayed, (though I still have fond memories of the original, bad tempered and enigmatically sinister Doctor). Yet the scripts are still hampered by being aimed at a juvenile audience. All right, the kids watch it but I don't think they are by any means the majority of the audience. It is a sad fact that series aimed at family audiences end up appealing to the lowest common denominator. ((Now, I find 2 points you make here very interesting, first your comment that the SF content of THE AVENGERS is almost pure fantasy. I would have said that of all the series you mentioned it is closest to the possible. The Bionic person programmes are probably furthest from the possible whilst being set up to look like the truth. Sure we can replace parts but we don't have the engineering ability yet to make them significantly stronger, nor the surgical techniques to provide as good control as we have of the originals. Good control requires feedback via the nerves, that's how we can hold an egg with sufficient strength not to drop it but light enough not to crush it without looking at the egg. We don't yet have the techniques to hook up electrical sensors to severed nerves, nor are such tech-

niques just round the corner. The SF elements in THE AVENGERS are certainly no more ridiculous. As for Dr Who, the BBC are well aware that the majority of their audience are adults but the adults like the plots. I like Dr Who, it has the same kind of attraction as amateur operatics/theatricals; I, the audience, know it's not "the real thing" and those performing know it's not but we're all having a hell of a good time so what the hell.))

((Now a letter from a new member telling us why people join the BSFA and standing up for SF DIGEST.))

DAVID ROFFE. 23 Fairlands West, Fulwell, Sunderland

BSFA first thought - not worth wasting a stamp on because I'll more than likely not get a reply, but with the fold of SFM I thought, "what's I going to do for news?" so I wrote away and gambled a stamp. Surprise, surprise, a neatly typed letter with contents which I couldn't resist, so I subscribed.

The newsletter was good in that the letters were thought provoking and interesting with special emphasis on knocking SFM and SPACE 1999. Didn't anyone in that dark void like SFM? A glossy fanzine was the popular opinion, not having encountered this type of zine I won't comment, but, as is the case with most criticism, you expanded the bad points and forgot the good points. Did no one like Peter Weston's article "Don't laugh Earthling I'm the Ambassador from Sirius v8" in SFM 1,9, come on admit it this was a first rate article.

((I would agree that the article was okay but Pete Weston has been writing articles for fanzine, in similar style if not content for years. Similarly Mike Ashley was writing history of SF type articles ten years ago for fanzines, including my old one. This is something most SFM readers wouldn't know, and this fact was something we fans tended to forget when we criticised the zine."

Now it's SF DIGEST's turn, eh? I liked this and found the format suitable (of which Mr Thomson complained vehemently, he probably complained of SFM's format, also). Every story I'd rate above average with the possible exception of "The 2nd Generation" by Rachel Pallack. The news was faintly reminiscent of a style used by SFM, but still good. "What are they doing now" was interesting (nasty rumours?!). But having to wait 3 months for each issue (which didn't appear), well, need I say more? ((I have to admit that I thought SFD was okay, and I rated the fiction as far better than SFM, not too difficult to achieve. Okay so it wasn't in the same league as F&SF or ANALOG, but it was a better point to start from than SFM.))

DEREK A. HARKNESS. 11 Westland Cres, Cookstown, Co.Tyrone

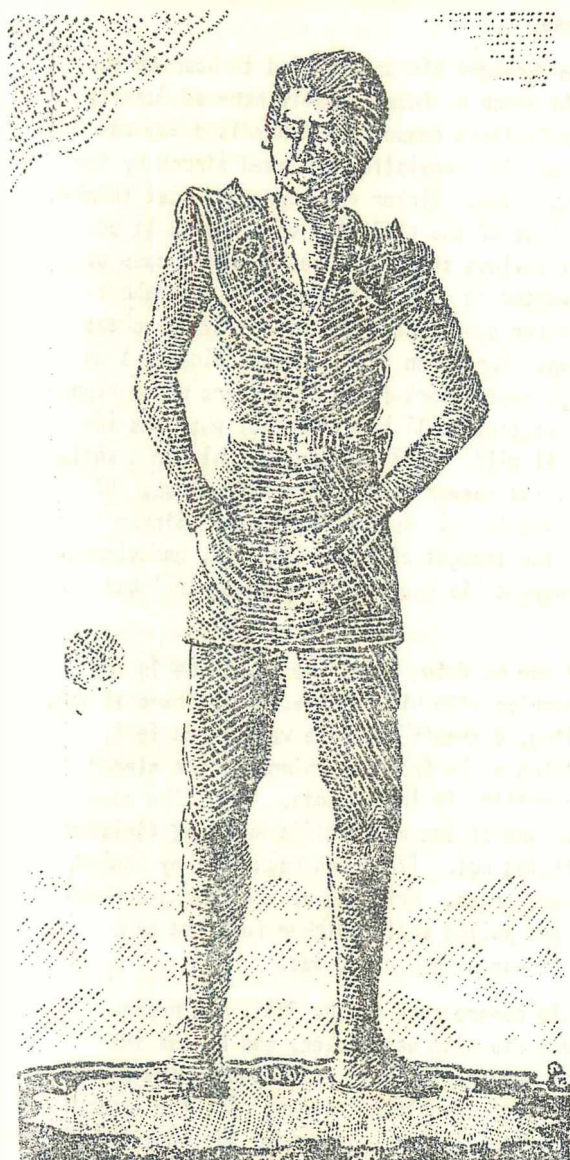
"Misen" I found informative with the bookmark competition being a great idea. Thanks go to Rob Jackson for doing the dictionary, I'll certainly appreciate it as the zine's jargon beats me.

Even though I didn't receive MATRIX 7 (I'm a neo) I was able to figure out what was in it by reading the letters. I see everybody's getting a bit in on Ian Carbutt's reviews. Well I'm standing with him. Through his review of the 3 zines in BSFA 6 ((A trial copy sent to new members!)) I decided to get DRILKJIS 2 (my first fanzine) as it sounded the best. It was all he said it was and I would recommend it to any neo. The humour was great and it contained a cartoon strip, book reviews, fanzine reviews, a crossword and an interview with Bob Shaw. Along with this the zine had a feeling of warmth and friendliness. I'd just like to take the opportunity to thank Dave Langford ((don't forget Kevin Smith)) for the zine and TWLL DEU 4. ((I hope Dave Langford is paying you well for this free advert he's getting. If I didn't know better it sounds like DRILKJIS is a replacement for SF4, it even has a comic strip - just a bit of fun, Dave.))

Fallible Freeman: Well done, Keith, those reviews are useful to us neos and, I presume, the rest of those SF fans out there (so the zines don't contain SF all the time, or any of the time, anybody can make a mistake). I wouldn't do those reviews for any money, you're likely to get mangled, castrated, throttled, etc with all those editors around. ((Well, Keith has come in for one or two bits of criticism, but you have been spared the issues they appeared in.))

Newshounds and BSFA News are both informative and if you're going to cut down the size of MATRIX don't cut these out, they're brilliant. ((There shall be no reduction of news coverage, in fact I hope to increase it during 1977, touch wood.))

ENDOFMESSAGEENDOFMESSAGEENDOFMESSAGEENDOFMESSAGE



THE RUBBERISED KEVIN SMITH MAN

((This parody of the Hook novels first appeared in DRILKJIS 1, edited by Kevin Smith & Dave Langford, my thanks to both for letting me reprint it. It's hilarious. The artwork is by Jon Langford.))

Lynan Sinker leaped the last 10 treads of the escalator from space shuttle to concrete. He was on planet again, on one of the twin worlds of Beenangonn and Dunnit, or would be as soon as the one tenth Earth gravity of the planet pulled his lightweight Rubberised body down. He'd filled his foam rubber body cells with helium gas so as to pay less on the interstellar liner. There were distinct advantages in being a Rubberised Man, even half a Rubberised Man, which was all Sinker was. As now, however, there were disadvantages too. When he finally touched ground the other passengers were all in the terminal, having taken all the luggage trolleys. Sinker cursed and bent down and took hold of his bags. When he straightened the bags stayed put and his arms stretched. At the same time he felt that unique sensation, as of sago pudding being poured down his back.

How he craved this experience.

How he loathed and dreaded this experience. He was allergic to sago.

There was a fully Rubberised Man somewhere in the vicinity, and Sinker's latent Rubberised powers were now there to be used. Or almost there. It always took a little while for him to gain full control of himself when the resonances with an R-Man made him fully Rubberised. He looked at the ground and saw it was nearer. His legs had coiled up and collapsed.

But what was an R-Man doing here?

There was a sudden scream from the terminal and a mass of humanity and others came charging across the concrete towards the shuttle. Their faces were contorted with fear and they screamed their terror as they ran. Behind them was another mass, but in front of the mass was another screaming crowd, their bodies and faces horribly distorted by the ravages of a dreaded disease. The panic and disease stricken mobs came closer and Sinker was unable to move, though he fought for control of himself. The R-Man had to be a long way off, since the conversion was taking such a long time.

"Watch out, you Sons of Rodents!" he swore, or tried to swear. But his vocal chords only twanged like rubber bands. The crazed hordes came closer still. At last he was completely in control and sprang up on his coiled legs and was immediately flattened by the first mob. Rubberised Man are very flexible, however; their Rubberised bodies can assume any shape. Sinker was very thankful that a carpet shape was allowed.

His erstwhile fellow passengers had by now all boarded the shuttle. The pilot operated the

controls and an immense badminton racket launched the shuttle into orbit. The diseased hordes came closer and he could well see why the others had fled in such terror. The terrible alien disease had ravaged the features of the planets inhabitants so that they were now all identical replicas of the Eternal Footballer. The dreaded Cluffitis had stricken the planet Durnit!

Swiftly Lynan Sinker plastered impervi-gel over his head, thankful for the moment that his suit was completely sealed up to the neck (though this had caused some embarrassing problems in the past). Now he was totally isolated from the planet's atmosphere, sealed away from the horrendous disease. As he began to suffocate from lack of oxygen, he cursed. "By icky Dikki Thrashti, I'm in a pickle. If I don't take off the impervi-gel I'll die from lack of oxy, and if I do I'll catch the dreaded Cluffitis. By the ungodly mice of Doctor Dread, curse this blasted planet!"

But wait! He was still a Rubberised Man, with all the abilities thereof, and an R-Man could go into Rubber Time! Lynan Sinker went into Rubber Time, moving at Rubber Speed. To the outside world he appeared to freeze, his heart and breathing to stop. To him everyone vanished in a myriad of streaking blurs, and in the twinkling of an eye, one of his own eyes, the space port was deserted and all was still.

Suddenly he began gasping. The air tasted like mouldy jam, furry and bitter. He was out of Rubber Time, without wishing to be. The other Rubberised Man must have left. He whipped off the impervi-gel, always having had a sado-masochistic streak in his makeup, and breathed in the good fresh air. The Cluffitis quasi-bacteria in the air would have died by now, and the affected people would have bored each other to death with countless, interminable, in-depth football match analyses so that he was perfectly safe. But Lynan Sinker took nothing for granted and took a filter-mask from one of his bags and put it on, in case some of the bacteria had decided to ignore the laws of nature. Now he should be more than perfectly safe.

Lynan Sinker never took a chance. His many years as the notorious Bull Finch, assassin, had taught him that much, if nothing more. You couldn't be too careful when exterminating vermin. Rats, mice, voles - Sinker had slain them all, and was wanted for rodenticide on half the inhabited worlds in the galaxy. The other half had no rodent problem. But he had given up that profession many years ago. The continuous slaughter, the endless massacre, the interminable execution, the non-stop annihilation, the never ending sight of mangled and maimed and bloody corpses had finally made him feel a little queasy. So Bull Finch had vanished from the face of the Galaxy, and Lynan Sinker had appeared.

He'd volunteered to be a guineapig (deciding to continue reminiscing for the moment) for an experiment carried out by ZZZZ, one of the vast multiplanetary economic organisations which were referred to in

common parlance as vast multiplanetary economic organisations. ZZZZ had originally been manufacturers of sleeping pills. The experiment had been an attempt to turn him into the first Rubberised Man by replacing his bones with soft rubber, and his flesh with foam rubber. In addition his mental powers would have been increased enormously giving him the ability to solve complex and complicated problems of addition using only pencil and paper. Being Rubberised he had the advantage of being able to erase mistakes with his little finger. But the experiment had failed, leaving him only with the Rubberised body. He was only half an R-Man, with the full powers only in the vicinity of a truly Rubberised Man, or a rubber plantation, or a bridge game.

Sinker brought his entire mind to bear on the situation in which he found himself here on Durnit; thus his reflections ceased. A Rubberised Man was also here, and the population had been struck by the terrible Cluffitis. Sinker was horrended just thinking of the fate of the afflicted ones. Thus it was immediately obvious that there was a secret camp of R-Men who wanted to clear the planet of non-Rubberised people for some arcane and antediluvian scheme of their own. More than that, thought Sinker, they had no doubt kept a work-force of workers under hypno-control to do their evil bidding. But what was the purpose of it all? What? Sinker thought for a while longer, and the answer came to him in a flash. Of course, it had to be! Rubberised Women! Sinker boggled at the thought of Rubberised sex, and strange thoughts entered his head. The hypno-control had taken him!

What was he doing here? He should be in the factory, working with his friends. Yes, there it was. The crumbling, decrepit concrete walls; the foul, black, reeking smoke from the chimneys; the stench of garbage rotting in the streets. Just like good old Earth. One of the work shifts had just finished and were filing out. Tired and haggard they looked, their clothing rags. Bringing up the rear was a man in a puce and yellow suit. Sinker felt the sago pudding. It was a Rubberised Man.

As his powers came to the full, the hypno-control over his mind was broken, and he saw the factory and workers in their true light. The shining marble building; the clean fragrant air; the immaculately cut, fresh clothes. No wonder the mental control was so strong. No wonder the mental control was so strong. No man in his right mind could work in such alien conditions. These Rubberised Men would have to be smashed ruthlessly, without mercy, showing no pity, not an iota of sympathy. They were trying to bring down the foundations of modern industrial society, and that could never be allowed. Clean air indeed!

The guards! that was the answer. In the induced unreality they were each carrying, as was standard practice the universe over, a HilfArm model

Groups I hate - Jim Turner (3pp), Rock - Michael Carlson (2½pp), Robert Crumb - Chris Couch (2½pp), Neofan Follies words reported by Lesleigh Luttrell (2½pp). Book reviews (4pp) & letters (6pp) finish this musical Starling.

ERG 56 - Oct 76: Terry Jeeves, 230 Bannerdale Rd, Sheffield, S11 9FE. Qtly. 3 issues for 50p, 7 for £1. Must be the best value for money - you know you'll get an interesting ERG every 3 months. Editorial (2pp), Rockets/- Michael A. Banks (3pp), Recent reading (short comments on books - when you get to know Terry's tastes you'll quickly know which books you'll like and which you won't - 5pp; 16 books), Stories based on last issues cover (2pp - 3 stories), letters (4pp), this issues installment on fanzine production - How to bind your fanzines (2pp). It's been around a long time (not this actual issue but ERG itself) and it shows...not by being tired and ooold but by having an unassuming expertise clearly showing throughout. Makes you realise why so many fans are chanting JEEVES FOR TAFF.

TANGENT 5 - Summer 76: David A. Truesdale, 611-A Division St, Oshkosh, WI 54901, USA. Qtly. \$1.50 a copy 4 for \$5. As with previous issues a bias towards interviews - this time Leigh Brackett & Edmond Hamilton (17pp), Jack Williamson (9pp) & Ray Bradbury (15pp) Also 3 articles taking up 8½pp, fiction (3 stories) (9pp), 1½pp of poetry, book reviews (5pp), fanzine reviews (3pp). It also has a fair bit of artwork (yes it's photo-litho) and 8½pp of letters. A fanzine I look forward to seeing but have to read in small doses.

* That's Chris' pile, now for the one Tom Jones Brought

KARASS 23 - Aug 76: Linda Bushyager, 1614 Evans Ave, Prospect Park, Pa 19076, USA. Monthly. 3 for \$1. A 12 page newszine slanted towards fannish rather than sf news. Presented in a relaxed style, and, though obviously slanted to USA, interesting to all fans.

19.10 CYGNUS 1 - undated: David Pattersen, 4 Copeland Dr, Conber, Co. Down, U.I. Next issue Jan. No price. Has quite a few of the faults that one (almost) expects of a first issue. Produced for the North Downs SF Group but almost entirely David's own work. I don't think this will ever become a collector's item but, as a first issue, David has nothing to be ashamed about. We'll see which ~~xxx~~ way things are going with number 2.

21.10 BLACK HOLE 7 - June 76: LUU SF Society, Leeds University Union, Leeds 2. No frequency or price given. Editorial (3pp), fiction - 3 stories (9pp), book reviews (4pp), poem (?) - 3pp, ManCon report (2½pp) plus plenty of artwork. Nice production from a University SF club. It seems a pity that it has a restricted circulation.

25.10 SMALL MAMMAL - another one (eg No.2) arrived on 10/11: Martin Easterbrook, Physics Dept, Royal Holloway College, Egham Hill, Egham, Surrey. A one page newszine for the London University SF Club. Mentioned here for two reasons - 1) anyone living in London might well like to know of some of the things going

on (lectures, films, etc) though they'll have to contact Martin about how to attend, and 2) Martin asks for news, in the London region, for future issues.

5.11 A FOR ANTARES 3 - Nov 76: Ian Garbutt, Brenchoile Lodge, Loch Katrine, By Callander, Scotland. Irreg. 35p+8p for post/pack. Poetry (1pp), fiction (1pp), SF in music (4pp). Photocop reproduction (hence price?). A rather slim zine that is trying hard to improve - needs a different reproduction though, I think, before it can get anywhere.

5.11 THE SPANG BLAH Vol 6, No 3 - Sept 76: Jan Howard Finder, PO Box 9163, Fort Riley, KS 66442, USA. ? Free. Despite Jan saying Spang Blah was going to turn into a ~~ffbb~~ genzine when he returned to the USA here it is, still packed with news, still needing a magnifying glass if your vision isn't 20-20. I think I'll try reading the next one on the nitrofiche reader in work...But I like it and think Jan does a great job.

7.11 SPI 6 - Nov 76: Graham Poole, 23 Russett Rd, Cheltenham, Glos. GL51 7LN. 4 to 6 months. Usual. Editorial (2pp), Indexing an SF library - Roger Pile (1½pp), Comprehensive education - Joseph Nicholas (2pp), Ian Williams on the whys, wherefors, etc about pubbing a fanzine (2pp), locs on rock music (2½pp), Ben P. Indick column (1½pp), Mae Strelkov col (1pp), Astronomy - David Patterson (1pp), letters (5pp). Graham now says this is going to be his genzine - we haven't got to try and guess what name is going to appear next from Cheltenham. With that decision I think Graham's getting down to putting SPI on the right tracks and it gets better every issue. Try one.

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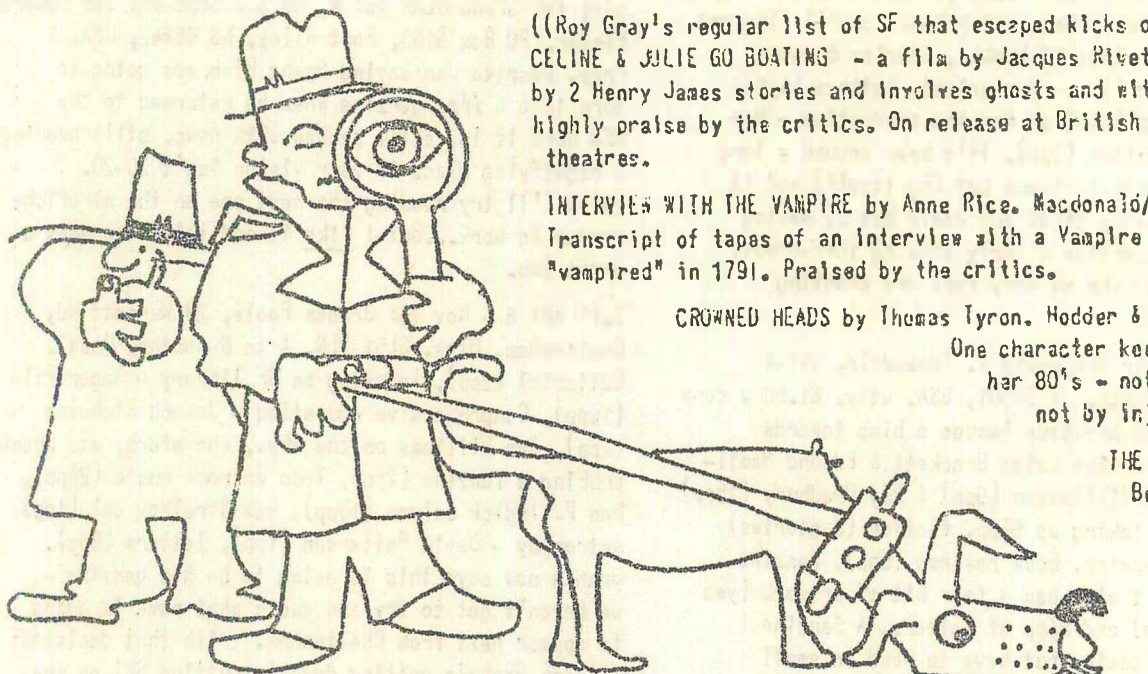
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THE SILK & THE SKIN by Rodie Sudbery. Deutsch £2.60.
TIME TRAP by Nicholas Fisk. Gollancz £2.95.

THE DOGS by Robert Calder. Hodder & Stoughton, £3.75. Could be more a thriller than SF. Experimental dog from a research station escapes to lead a killer pack.

Two of the books mentioned in these notes are "outsiders" for the Booker Prize. Kingsley Amis **THE ALTERATION** is quoted at 8-1 and William Trevor's **CHILDREN OF DYNMOUTH** at 6-1

A rock musical based on Vonnegut's **SLAUGHTER HOUSE 5** is a long running success in Moscow!

Vonnegut is working on a book about a doppelganger in New York, to be called **SPILLING IMAGE**. Vonnegut says "I'm predicting nothing. I am off into new territory."

Worldcon 1978. Phoenix won the '78 Worldcon bid, beating LA by 533 votes to 450. Membership is now over 1200. The Con is to be called Iguanacon 21. It will be held from

intuition he fired his Vulcanising Ray at the concrete wall, then unclipped a sonic impact grenade from his belt and hurled at the treated wall. The resulting explosion and shock wave had no effect on Sinker; his elasticated eardrums absorbed the tremendous sound. The puffed ears of the wall had no such protection; the wall collapsed. The water gushed out, flooding the entire ground floor, and Sinker was able to breathe again.

He squeezed himself dry and set off in pursuit. Up the stairs he ran searching every room on every floor and finding no-one. Finally he came to the roof and had to admit that they had once more evaded him. Some hundred metres away a spaceship lifted on a column of flame. They had blown it up! To one side another ship took off - forcibly - its outer hull. They were destroying every ship in the spaceport. Finally one was launched intact. The R-Men just had to be aboard. Without further thought Sinker leapt off the top of the building to the ground. Halfway down came the sago pudding sensation! But not now. It can't happen now, thought Sinker. I must retain my powers until I hit the floor, or I'm done for. He felt them fading and struggled to hold on, but there was nothing in the air to grasp. They vanished and he hit, and he bounced. The radiation overload had preserved some of the Rubberised powers within him, and the one tenth Earth gravity hadn't hindered either. Nor had his rubber body.

"By lucky Dikki Trashti, that was a stroke of luck," he swore joyfully, though he still knew nothing of the radiation dosage he'd had.

He continued bouncing across the concrete, coming to a stop in front of a space speedster which had been miraculously overlooked by the R-Men. He leapt in and

gunned the grav-motors and lifted effortlessly after them. Very quickly he overhauled them, having mounted the Vulcanising Ray in the weapons bay - a sight to behold. Matching velocities precisely he opened the weapon bay door. The enormity of the decision weighed on his mind like a soggy doughnut. Did he have the right to destroy them all, just like that? No, he had to do it, for the wellbeing of society, for the preservation of order, because they'd made a fool of him. He pressed the button. The lights went out - it was the wrong button. He tried another and the ship was bathed in Vulcanising Rays until the power pack of the gun ran out. Sinker decided against chasing after it. They would all be rigid, as good as dead, by now.

But had he destroyed them for the good of society, really? Or only because they possessed a power he craved and couldn't have? He hoped no-one would think Lynan Sinker to be that petty. To make sure no-one would think him that petty he would tell no-one about the affair. The authorities needn't know. He didn't want their empty glory, and there were no rewards. He headed the speedster for the next system. When he landed he meant to enjoy himself or know the reason why.

Back on Dunnit, the Rubberised Men emerged from hiding.

"Well," said one, "we've solved our problem and got rid of that pest. Either the radiation will kill him, or the rigged air-recycling plant, or the liquorice in the tea-bags. But if he does survive, and we meet him again, we'll have to remember to underestimate him."

THE END.

FALLIBLE FREEMAN on FANZINES

- * Another change of attack.. the date prior to the fan-
- * zine title is the I received the fanzine.. then if
- * the fanzine doesn't appear to have a date of publica-
- * tion on it I'll not put a guess. I'm also being a
- * lot more particular on the frequency - putting what
- * (if anything) is on the fanzine.. otherwise a "?".

27.9 FORTHCOMING SF BOOKS 33 - Set 15: Joanne Burger, 55 Blue Bonnet Ct, Lake Jackson, TX 77566, USA. Bimonthly. 75¢ per issue (airmail). A list of the books coming out in the next 4 months or so in the USA, new, reprints, etc. Invaluable for the bibliophile and/or serious SF collector.

27.9 TRANSYLVANIAN BRAIN SURGERY - Winter 74:
THE PANELOLOGIST 3,4,5,6 - Sept 75, Jan, May, Aug 76:
George Barnett & Graham Pierce, Archangel Thunderbird Productions, 3 Coleford Bridge Rd, Mytchett, Surrey, GU16 6DH...TBS is quarterly (and I got an old issue as later ones are sold out) - 25p per copy. PAN is 20p per issue, TBS has an editorial (½pp), article on Warlock (1pp print, 2pp illos), letters (4pp), fiction (5½pp - 3 items), index to a set of comic heros (2pp), comic

strips (8½pp), on Bertram Chandler (1pp), fan scene today and 20 yrs ago (2pp), first comics (1pp), poetry (2pp), ads (2pp). The PAN is a comic newszine with articles, letters and news. Now, I'm not a comics-fan (I leave that to the VECTOR editor) but these fanzines show SF fanzines up in every way. they're well produced and well edited. If you are a comics-freak you've probably heard of the PAN - if you haven't try a copy or 2.

4.10 DRILKJIS 2 - Oct 76: Dave Langford, 22 Northumberland Ave, Reading RG2 7PW & Kevin Smith (address below). Bi-annual. 40p per copy. Editorial (2pp), interview with Bob Shaw (4½pp), fanzine reviews (3½pp) editorial - KS (2pp), SilCon report (5pp), Book reviews (5½pp), crossword (¾pp), letters (8pp), afterthoughts (1½pp), strip cartoon (1pp). Is it a serious zine with humour or a humorous zine with some serious content? Worth getting, anyway.

DOT 1: Kevin Smith, 26 Hawks Rd, Kingston-upon-Thames, KT1 3EG. A flyer with Drilkjis and Kevin's purely personal zany comments on life (?). 8 pages. I liked it but some may find it not to their taste.

6.10 MOTA 19 --Aug/Sept 76: Terry Hughes, 4739 Washington Blvd, Arlington, Virginia 22205, USA. ? No price. Editorial (2pp), ManCon Report by Tom Perry (18pp); Peter Roberts for TAFF (1pp); My Country by John Berry (3½pp); col by David Piper (1pp), letters (7pp); fanzine reviews (2½pp). Overall impression is of good humour, fannish. I enjoyed it from cover to cover.

13.10 CHECKPOINT 74 - Sept 76: Peter Roberts, 18 Westwood, Cofton, Starcross, Nr.Dawlish, Devon. ? 5 for 50p, 12 for £1. Reclaimed from Ian Maule & a great improvement in the content - both quality and quantity. News of fans/fannish doings - that's the claim though some "hard sf" news creeps in. If the quality/quantity keeps up well worth the money.

* So much for organisation and planning..Chris Fowler has now just passed over a bundle of fanzines he/
* VECTOR got for me to list/comment upon. Here we go.

CTHULHU CALLS V.4 No.1 - July 76: Terry L. Shorb, Northwest Community College, Powell, Wyoming, USA. Mtly. \$1 per issue - various categories get it free. Printed 70 pages tending towards academia. Much poetry (7pp), some fiction (9pp), full page art (4pp), book reviews (6pp) - the best part of the mag. Rest is made up of articles, editorial and short squibs on the contributors. I wasn't very happy with it, but might well interest those who tends towards sercon fanzines.

DeTap's F&SF Reviews - June 76: 11863 West Jefferson Blvd, Culver City, California 90230, USA. Monthly. \$* each or 12 for \$9. I've covered this in almost every column I've written. Regular, packed with reviews & well worth the money.

IN THE SHADO OF THE MONOLITH 59 - July 76: Eric L. Larsen, 4012 Colby Dr, Raleigh, NC 27609, USA. 13 a year. 3 for \$1. A clubzine with news, articles, editorials and fiction. All the contents give me the impression of being very short (not, in itself, a bad thing) - average length being under 1 page.

O'RYAN 4 - July 76: Paul Ryan, 29 Morritt Ave, Halton, Leeds LS15 7EP. Mtly. 35p per issue, 3 for £1. With a title that is lasting (well, a couple of issues called the same) O'Ryan seems to be becoming one of the more interesting "new" fanzines. Editorial (3½pp), A publisher's story; Jeff Hecht (2pp), Article (see how I play it safe..by Helen Brown - 1pp), Review of Survivors (1pp), American Soccer (1½pp) 77look back at the records, Paul - see which year America beat England in the World Cup 77 Reviews of Andromeda & SF Digest (1pp), strip cartoon (2pp), Review of fanzine reviewers - Bryn Forney (2pp) and 9pp of locs. And, 11 full page illos. Well worth getting.

SF COMMENTARY 43 - Aug 75: Bruce Gillespie, GPO Box 5195AA, Melbourne, Victoria 3001, Australia. ? £3 for 5. This is the special Bob Tucker issue (which explains the date). 63 pages on Bob Tucker, fan, pro-writer etc. A little bit much to be read all at once - worth keeping and coming back to in between lighter/fluffier fnz.

SF COMMENTARY 46 - May 76: As above. Editorial that shades into reviews (20pp), letters and comments. Angus Taylor on Paris, Portugal, England (5pp), Reba

Estra on teaching/Heinlein's juveniles (5½pp). 43 is not a "standard issue" - nor is 46.

MUNICH ROUND UP 137/141 - Aug 75/Aug 76: Waldemar Kummig, Herzodspitalstrasse 5, D-3000 Munchen 2, West Germany. 50p per issue. Although some of the articles are only in German others (Con reports for example) have translations. The photo-montage covers are, however, the outstanding feature of MRU. Fat issues but (due to my ignorance of German) mostly unreadable. If you can read German I'd guess it's well worth getting.

YANDRO 236 - July 76: UK Agent Alan Dodd, 77 Stanstead Rd, Hoddesdon, Herts. Frequent. 35p per issue, 5 for £1.50, 10 for £2.50. The Coulson family take 6 pages plus 15 pages of book reviews (lost count of how many books mentioned). Also a couple of other columns (Dave Locke & Dennis Lien), a folksong lyric, an article by Jodie Offutt and letters round out the issue. I recommended it last time and haven't changed my mind.

IN THE SHADO OF THE MONOLITH 60 - Aug 76: See above. Only mentioned this one here because I realised, while reading it, that my lack of enthusiasm for it is engendered by its in-groupishness (possibly not real, but that's my feelings.).

TIGHTBEAM July 76: Lynne Holdom, PO Box 5, Pompton Lakes, N.J. 07442, USA. Bi-monthly. NSF publication. Actually says it is primarily a letterzine (thus making it virtually equivalent to MATRIX). Like MATRIX it has odd articles and reviews. Good but probably only of limited interest to UK fans.

NEW VENTURE 4 - Summer 76: Steve Fahnestalk, Rt 2 Box 135, Pullman, WA 99163, USA. ? \$1.25 per issue, 4 for \$4. 2pp editorial plus ½pp art editor editorial. Interview with Alan Nourse (6pp), column by art editor - John Gustafson (8pp including one of covers). Fiction (2½pp), conversation with Avram Davidson (5½pp) book reviews (5½pp), fanzine reviews (6½pp), fan terminology (½pp), poetry (1pp), Immortality in SF (2pp), letters (13pp). A couple of interesting articles and some nice artwork..mostly, though, the photo-litho reproduction was wasted on straightforward (non-reduced) type.

YANDRO 237 - Aug 76: see above, note I said "frequent"! Very much mixture as before with Amos Salmonson writing the article instead of Jodie Offutt.

RINKLED SHREW 6 - Aug 76: Pat & Graham Charnock, 70 Ledbury Rd, London W.11. Irreg & no price. How can one classify this as a personalzine when its contributors include Chris Priest, Roy Kettle, Merv Adamson, Dick Howett, Graham Hall & Joseph Nicholas. Yet with no price it is, obviously, only sent out as a personalzine (if I'm wrong I'm glad - it ought to be a genzine available "for the usual"). It does contain obscenities (note, this is not a criticism...but I don't want to be accused by some irate parent that I encouraged their innocent offspring to get an "obscene" publication) If you can get it I think you'll be glad you did.

STARLING 34 - Aug 76: Hank & Lesleigh Luttrell, 525 W. Main, Madison, WI 53703, USA. 3 a year ? 50¢ a copy, 5 for \$2. Editorial (3pp), Folk singers/singing - Frank Denton (4pp), Electronic Music - Leigh Edmunds (3½pp),

Groups I hate - Jim Turner (3pp), Rock - Michael Carlson (2½pp), Robert Crumb - Chris Couch (2½pp), Neofan Follies words reported by Lesleigh Luttrell (2½pp). Book reviews (4pp) & letters (6pp) finish this musical Starling.

ERG 56 - Oct 76: Terry Jeeves, 230 Bannerdale Rd, Sheffield, S11 9FE. Qtly. 3 issues for 50p, 7 for £1. Must be the best value for money - you know you'll get an interesting ERG every 3 months. Editorial (2pp), Rockets/- Michael A. Banks (3pp), Recent reading (short comments on books - when you get to know Terry's tastes you'll quickly know which books you'll like and which you won't - 5pp; 16 books), Stories based on last issues cover (2pp - 3 stories), letters (4pp), this issues installment on fanzine production - How to bind your fanzines (2pp). It's been around a long time (not this actual issue but ERG itself) and it shows...not by being tired and oold but by having an unassuming expertise clearly showing throughout. Makes you realise why so many fans are chanting JEEVES FOR TAFF.

TANGENT 5 - Summer 76: David A. Truesdale, 611-A Division St, Oshkosh, WI 54901, USA. Qtly. \$1.50 a copy 4 for \$5. As with previous issues a bias towards interviews - this time Leigh Brackett & Edmond Hamilton (17pp), Jack Williamson (9pp) & Ray Bradbury (15pp) Also 3 articles taking up 8½pp, fiction (3 stories) (9pp), 1½pp of poetry, book reviews (5pp), fanzine reviews (3pp). It also has a fair bit of artwork (yes it's photo-litho) and 8½pp of letters. A fanzine I look forward to seeing but have to read in small doses.

* That's Chris' pile, now for the one Tom Jones Brought

KARASS 23 - Aug 76: Linda Bushyager, 1614 Evans Ave, Prospect Park, Pa 19076, USA. Monthly. 3 for \$1. A 12 page newszine slanted towards fannish rather than sf news. Presented in a relaxed style, and, though obviously slanted to USA, interesting to all fans.

19.10 CYGNUS 1 - undated: David Pattersen, 4 Copeland Dr, Comber, Co. Down, N.I. Next issue Jan. No price. Has quite a few of the faults that one (almost) expects of a first issue. Produced for the North Downs SF Group but almost entirely David's own work. I don't think this will ever become a collector's item but, as a first issue, David has nothing to be ashamed about. We'll see which ~~xxx~~ way things are going with number 2.

21.10 BLACK HOLE 7 - June 76: LUU SF Society, Leeds University Union, Leeds 2. No frequency or price given. Editorial (3pp), fiction - 3 stories (9pp), book reviews (4pp), poem (?) - 3pp, ManCon report (2½pp) plus plenty of artwork. Nice production from a University SF club. It seems a pity that it has a restricted circulation.

25.10 SMALL MAMMAL - another one (eg No.2) arrived on 10/11: Martin Easterbrook, Physics Dept, Royal Holloway College, Egham Hill, Egham, Surrey. A one page newszine for the London University SF Club. Mentioned here for two reasons - 1) anyone living in London might well like to know of some of the things going

on (lectures, films, etc) though they'll have to contact Martin about how to attend, and 2) Martin asks for news, in the London region, for future issues.

5.11 A FÜR ANTARES 3 - Nov 76: Ian Garbutt, Brenchole Lodge, Loch Katrine, By Callander, Scotland. Irreg. 35p+8p for post/pack. Poetry (1pp), fiction (1pp), SF in music (4pp). Photocop reproduction (hence price?). A rather slim zine that is trying hard to improve - needs a different reproduction though, I think, before it can get anywhere.

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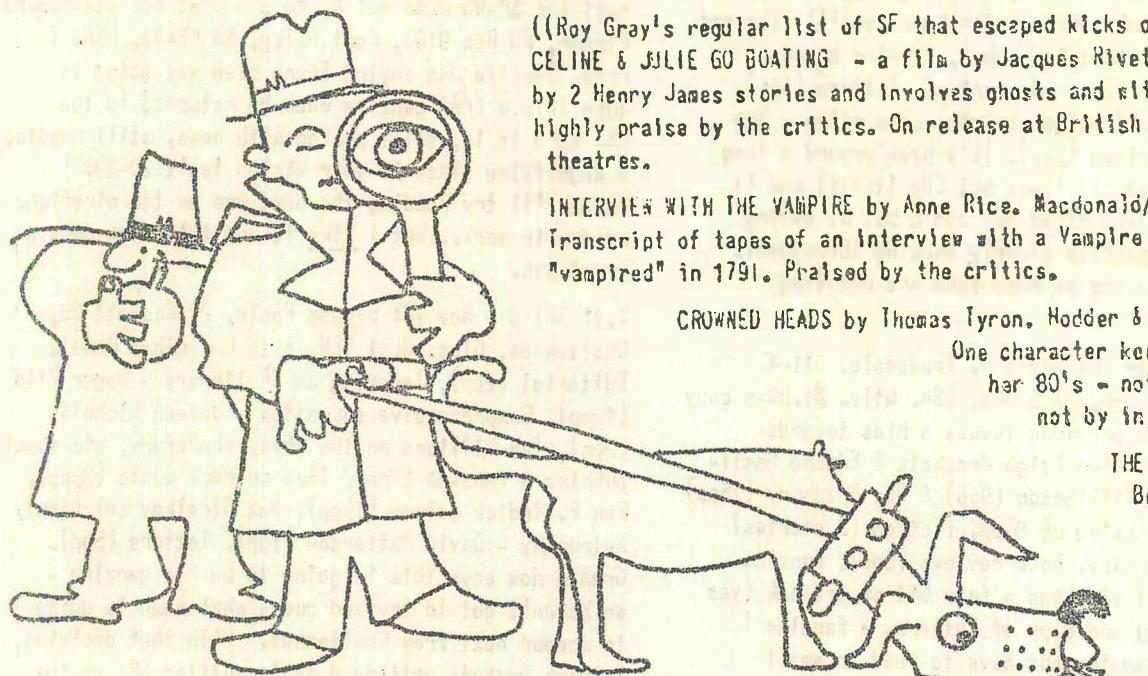
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THE EBONY TOWER by John Fowles. Panther 75p. The novel shifts around in time from early Celtic through medieval France and modern America/Europe.

Three children's books which appear to be fantasy/SF
A SPELL OF SLEEP by Nina Beachcroft. Heineman £2.50.
THE SILK & THE SKIN by Rodie Sudbery. Deutsch £2.60.
TIME TRAP by Nicholas Fisk. Gollancz £2.95.

THE DOGS by Robert Calder. Hodder & Stoughton, £3.75. Could be more a thriller than SF. Experimental dog from a research station escapes to lead a killer pack.

Two of the books mentioned in these notes are "outsiders" for the Booker Prize. Kingsley Amis THE ALTERATION is quoted at 8-1 and William Trevor's CHILDREN OF DYNMOUTH at 6-1

A rock musical based on Vonnegut's SLAUGHTER HOUSE 5 is a long running success in Moscow!

Vonnegut is working on a book about a doppelganger in New York, to be called SPITTING IMAGE. Vonnegut says "I'm predicting nothing. I am off into new territory."

Worldcon 1978. Phoenix won the '78 Worldcon bid, beating LA by 533 votes to 460. Membership is now over 1200. The Con is to be called Iguanacon 2! It will be held from

Sept 2 to 6. For information write to: Iguacon 2, PO Box 1749, Phoenix, Arz. 85001, USA. GoH is Harlan Ellison, Fan GoH Bill Bowers, Toastmaster F.M. Busby. Attending membership rates are \$7.50 until Jan 1, 1977 \$15 until Dec 31 1977. Supporting membership \$7.

SF Expo is now due to take place over Oct 22 to 25 weekend at a Playboy Resort & Country Club in New Jersey I wonder if it did?

Future Worldcon bids

1979

Great Britain. BRITAIN IS FINE IN 79

New Orleans (where?)

1980

New York,; Flushing; Baltimore; Boston.

1981

Denver

1983 & 1988

There's a strong bid to have the Worldcon in Australia in 83 and 88. Adelaide in 83 and Sydney Cove in 88. There's a move to get all Aussiefandom behind the 83 bid now and worry about the 88 bid later

ODYSSEY is reportedly having troubles, some rumours say it is to close.

Shooting starts on SUPERMAN film late 1976. Marlon Brando cast as Superman's father and Gene Hackman as his archenemy.

Star Trek lives? Paramount have now okayed the script, Roddenberry will produce; filming supposed to start Spring 77 ((I've heard this before)); Jerry Isenberg is to supervise the project; 2 London based writers, Alan Scott & Chris Bryant will script. No parts have been cast.

DANIEL F. GALOUEY died on Sept 8, aged 56. His most noted novel was DARK UNIVERSE which was piped by only 5 votes by STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND for the Hugo. His last book was THE INFINITE MAN.

If you're a fan of SPACE 1999, or just of Catherine Schell you might catch a glimpse of her at The Old Vic where she goes to watch Bill Hays, director of The Ghost Train, which is on there.

There have been mentions of a SF film of SPACE 1999, but nothing firm. Meanwhile shooting of the series continues at Pinewood.

Moorcock is currently working on an album called THE ENTROPY TANGO, a sort of Jerry Cornelius on record, except the hero's called Pierrot. About half of it is down on demo tapes.

CHANNELCON 78. This is the alternative bid to Skycon. The committee consists of; Eve Harvey, John Harvey, John Piggett, Rob holdstock, Leroy Kettle, Greg Pickersgill, Simone Walsh. Bright is the spot and the Metropole the hotel with the Bedford as the overflow hotel. For further info write to the Harveys - address in the Fallible Freeman column. They aren't taking any presupporting memberships as they feel no money should be taken until the site is decided.

MORE info on the SF Theatre of Liverpool. The first(?) presentation is a cycle of 5 plays based on the book

ILLUMINATUS. The plays are THE EYE IN THE PYRAMID: SWIFT KICK INC.: THE MAN WHO MURDERED GOD: WALPURGISNACHT ROCK: LEVIATHAN. The cycle will start on a Tuesday and run to the Saturday, first performance 23 November, 8pm, each Sunday the whole cycle will be shown, starting at 10am. The plays run for 5 weeks, no performances during Christmas week. The plays are presented at the LIVERPOOL SCHOOL OF LANGUAGE, MUSIC, DREAM & PUN, 18 Mathew Street, Liverpool 2. Tel. 051-227-2679. ((I would appreciate a review of this production which could well become a classic.))

ILLUMINATUS, the book, by Robert Shea & Robert Anton Wilson is published on 25th November by Sphere Books.

SILICON 2 is set for the Imperial Hotel, Jesmond Rd, Newcastle-upon-Tyne for the weekend of 26 to 29 August 1977. It is to be an informal con, as per Silicon 1, but with a programme of events (also as per S1). To register send £1.50 to Irene Bell, 9 Lincoln St, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear, NE8 4EE, cheques payable to the North East SF Group.

St Lawrence University are setting up a SF Communications Centre. One of the things it will do is be a clearing house for information of SF club activities and to promote interclub communication. This is a worthwhile scheme and I ((that's me)) would urge all clubs to participate. Send info on your club to SF COMMUNICATION CENTRE, Dr. James S. Van Ness, Vilas Hall, St. Lawrence University, Canton, New York 12617, USA.

The new SF mag from the States, GALILEO is to be stocked by Ken Slater at Fantast(medway)Ltd, 39 West St, Wisbech, Cambs. Ken has been told they're on their way but all transatlantic mail seems to come by rowing boat. A brief examination of a sample copy convinced me to put my name down for one.

Star Trek wargame. Rules on how to go about humanising this game originally set up to use a computer can be obtained from Marlon Stubbs, 176 Midanburg Ln, Southampton, SO2 4GX. Price 50p (UK), \$2 (USA), £1 sterling elsewhere. This is the game originally explained in CREATIVE COMPUTING. I've played it, and never beat the computer - maybe I'll do better against a human!

European Conventions

SFANCON, 8 September 1977 in Belgium.

EUROCON, 4 August 1978 in East Germany.

If you're interested send 50p for full information to Vernon Brown, Pharmacy Dept, Aston University, Gosta Green, Birmingham B4 7ET.

SF on microfiche. NEW WORLDS (1964-71): IMPULSE: VECTOR: SPECULATION: FOUNDATION: THE ALIEN CRITIC are available at £1.80 an issue. Other material is also on hand. For further info write to Oxford Microfiche Publications Ltd, Wheatshaf Yard, Blue Boar St, Oxford OX1 4EY.

Books by UK writers, due out soon

Ian Watson, THE MARTIN INCA (Gollancz, £3.75, Jan)

The editor for the 1977 Yearbook will be David V. Lewis. Here is a message from him.

I hope to cover in this volume all the many aspects of the SF scene during 1976, a review of the year's SF activity seen through the eyes of some of the people involved in different sides of the genre. There will be, I hope, something for everyone; articles not only on books, TV, films, music but also art, poetry, professional magazines, fanzines and fandom. Plus a look behind the scenes into the worlds of a writer, an artist, a bookseller and a publisher - just to provide something a little different, a spicy sauce to ease down the usual fare of lists of useful addresses which will also grace the pages of the Yearbook. I hope this will not only be a source of reference data but also an entertaining record of SF in 1976.

As this is my first venture in editing you, prospective reader, will excuse the many mistakes I may make - please - I hope this Yearbook will be a watershed in BSFA publications. If there is anything you think I have left out please write and I will carefully consider what you may have to say. We hope the Yearbook will be out in early 1977, prior to Eastercon if possible.

This used to be a BSFA service but was only saved from oblivion during the chaos by Rog Pile, whom we should all thank. Rog has expanded the service to include any interested writer. I'll let Rog tell you in detail how the service works.

First, let's get one point perfectly clear: as long as Orb is run by a human being then it will never be perfect; there are always going to be delays: people get sick, the GPO misdirect a dossier, or it lies in a sorting office for weeks on end (it happens), those writers who haven't yet attained professional standards (whatever that means) will sit on a dossier trying to think of something constructive they can say about a story by another writer who has already attained those standards. In short, Orb is as reliable as its members.

As I stated in CYCLOTRON, I've introduced a dated postcard system which works on the simple premise that, if you don't receive the dossier by a given date, you

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Sackville Street is one of those elegant Georgian streets one finds clustered in the vicinity of Regent Street, a street dominated by shops displaying their opulent wares (books for the main part) in spacious windows. Near the Vigo Street end is the Arts Council bookstore, but of greater interest to the reader of

return the card, and then I know who's hanging on to the dossier. It's a great system...provided people return their cards on time....Like I said, Orb is only as reliable as...

I don't have any sort of monopoly on writers workshops - I wouldn't want that - if anyone reading this is enthusiastic enough to want to try one, then go ahead. All you have to do is get in touch with a few interested persons, get their work together, write some comments on said work, and mail the lot off. The only difference between running Orb and simply participating in it, is that if the dossier gets delayed (as it invariably does) you're the one to get the postcards, you're the one to post or phone reminders: you've no one to blame but yourself if the thing doesn't run as smoothly as it should.

Now the question is would an Orbiter group be better run by a non-writer, or someone who has his own fiction to work at? There's no easy answer. Someone who isn't actually writing fiction himself might possibly have more time in which to concentrate on keeping the dossier moving - another point open to debate. And there's the other side of the coin: would a non-writer be able to maintain interest in criticising other people's fiction? (A writer gains by criticising another's work, as in searching for the flaws, he becomes more able to detect the weaknesses in his own work.)

Enough of this. Now the latest scheme to improve Orbiter:

Basically, this works on an "interlocking" group plan: instead of just participating in one group, members who feel the dossier circulates too slowly to keep up with their output participate in 2 groups. Simple, huh?

There would be the added advantage that, if they were for some reason dissatisfied with comments on a story from one group, then they could try passing it through the other.

If any Orb member is interested in running a group him/her self, then I could get hold of the addresses of other people in other groups, pass them along to him, and he could set up a group within groups.

I enjoy running Orb, and I've learnt a lot from it, but though when I first took it over I was full of plans and dreams as to how I'd perfect it, that there'd be no foul-ups or delays of any kind, I now realise that I'd overlooked the human element - and of course, I don't except myself in this. So if anyone out there wants to join Orbiter - don't just sit there - send a story.

Rog Pile. 46 Trenoweth Estate, North Country,
Redruth, Cornwall TR16 4AH.

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by David Wingrove

this periodical is number 31 in whose left hand window lies a richly drafted notice board. "The Einstein Intersection" it reads, and goes on to describe multifarious other activities involved in that simple pronouncement; for this is no simple bookstore, it is an attempt at creating an SF environment.

TEI (if you will forgive the abbreviation) is presently in an embryonic state. Though it has been functioning as a bookstore for some 2 months, it is only now that its full range of functions has been germinated. Set in a small downstairs section of a larger bookstore ("The World of Books") it is intended as a newscentre and information-point for SF fandom, a focal point for SF activities and lunchtime discussion in the centre of London. Whether it will achieve anything like its projected potential is, as ever, dependent upon the response of such as yourselves. Brian Ouzman is the proprietor, helpful and conversant with the genre. Consultant and "ideas man" is George Hay, himself so active in the creation of the SF Foundation.

But what does TEI offer? A full-spectrum range of modern British SF (paperback and hardback), second-hand paperbacks and magazines (a small stock as yet, but many gems among them - with a book exchange service), new US paperbacks (ordered and on their way), a "Victoriana" section (replete with 30's magazines, leather bound collectors pieces and second-hand hardbacks) and a small section on the social sciences. These are the essentials, but there is also the benefit of sitting space and a coffee machine (free at present) for those who do want to talk, a microfiche unit with accompanying reference data, and (in my opinion a departure for such ventures) a fanzine section; respectable at present but certainly not up to its potential. A wall newspaper is at present small and incomplete but will be extended and reorganised once more material is to hand.

And my impressions? Tom had asked me to do this piece and I had phoned George Hay to arrange a meeting. "Fine" he replied and I had an invite to Brian Ash's launching of HO'S HO IN SF, his latest reference work. I called in after work and talked to Brian Ouzman. Alone in the shop it was hard to gauge any type of reaction; unsophisticated and rambling was the first thought - I came away with a bag full of purchases. Friday lunchtime arrived and I walked into a crowd of 2 dozen people, was handed a glass of wine and proceeded to soak up the atmosphere. A pile of fanzines held my attention for a short while, as did snippets of other people's conversation; but it was hard not to become involved in the major activity - talking. Exceptional circumstances or not, the small (but hardly cramped) "cellar" shop is ideal for SF polemic. Whilst - as ever - many of the ideas were dubious, the company was pleasant and I (shy as I am) was drawn into numerous conversations (with Bram Stokes, George Hay and an unknown lady who asked "Do you write?"). It ended with a delightful conversation with Elke Stewart (where have I heard that name before?) which drifted between obscure poles of thought - as ever.

TEI has considerable potential providing it can find and retain an appropriate clientele. The facilities provided - rough edged and "projected" as many of them presently are - are unmatched elsewhere. No doubt Brian Ouzman will see to the foreseeable problem of finding enough rare items to woo

such as I (a lovecraftian figure in my search for rare books) though there was a plethora of such on display. As George Hay commented about a pile of UNDER STORIES; "when I was a kid they cost 3d and I couldn't afford them; now they're relatively just as expensive..". Yes, but they're there, and so are a few fanzines (FOUNDATION, VECTOR, MATRIX, DRILKJIS, TROLL-ODU and several whose names escape me, British and US). Here is where perhaps the several producers of fanzines amongst the BSFA's members can help out. To make the shop an adequately functioning focal-point for SF activities requires the sponsorship of fanzine editors willing to provide copies of their "products" on a sale-or-return basis. The fanzines will be stocked in a separate section allowing for the diversity of scope and format. But this venture can only be successful (it is hardly profitable for the owners) with the cooperation of the authors/editors/madmen who produce the fanzines. You'll be placing them in sympathetic hands (and I feel the element of "competitiveness" might do well for improving standards in this tiny sub-genre).

If you are impressed by the sterility of many modern-day book-supermarkets then TEI is not for you. The notices are hand-painted and the proprietor is as likely to argue with you about your tastes in books as is your best friend; but that all makes for a comfortable atmosphere. I'd like to see it work; I only hope it can maintain a strong enough clientele to continue its present eccentric image.

The Einstein Intersection can be reached by tube to Piccadilly Circus. Sackville Street is the second on the right heading down Piccadilly towards Hyde Park Corner.

NEW SCOTTISH SF SOCIETY - Actually it's not that new having been in existence since November 1974, but it's new to me. It's the St. Andrews University SF & Fantasy Society. It meets almost every Wednesday during term time in the "Wee Mary" Cocktail Bar of the Students Union. The society is open to all. Enquiries should be addressed to Neil McLachlan c/o The Students Union, St. Mary's Place, St. Andrews Fife, Scotland, or Charles Brenchley, Southgate Hall, South St, St. Andrews, Fife, Scotland.

That's it for another issue, hope there's something in it you like. Next issue will contain an article on how to set up a SF club by Chris Wakelin of the Peterborough SF Club, some media news from Ian Garbutt, more information on bookshops, record reviews. I shall soon be starting two series, in depth reviews of fanzines - the fanzines being looked at as a series not as single issues, and a series of interviews with BSFA members who you've heard about but may not know. Hopefully there should be details of the BSFA Council's plans for reorganising itself (it's legal now) and a short piece on the career of our Chairman ARTHUR C. CLARKE. And with that may I, and my trusted band of gnomes, wish you A MERRY CHRISTMAS and a HAPPY NEW YEAR.