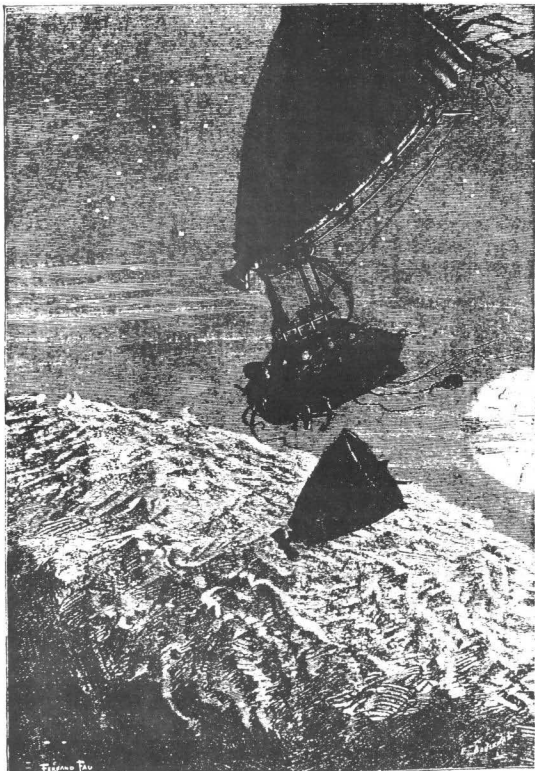


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14 September 1993

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The cover art is an engraving by **Ferdinand Fau** and represents a spaceship in trouble over the Moon.

News

From: S J Bull, Jim Bumgardner, Pete Cox, Terry Edhouse, Mike Eisenberg, Ellen Key Harris, Bill Higgins, Edward James, Harry Payne, K C Rubin & W. Jose Castellon, Brian Stableford, Jim Thomas & Gordon Meyer, Sue Thomas and your editors

A Library for Mars

The Planetary Society, in co-operation with the Russian Space Research Institute (IKI), will create "Visions of Mars" to travel aboard Mars '94 when it is launched to Mars next year.

"Visions of Mars" will be a collection of science fiction stories, sounds and images on a compact disc that chronicle humanity's fascination with Mars and its imagined Martians from HG Wells to the present day. A copy of the disc will be placed inside each of the two small stations that Mars '94 will land on the surface of the red planet in September, 1995. This collection is intended as a gift from our era to the future generations of humans who will one day explore, and perhaps settle, Mars.

Dr Carl Sagan, President of the Planetary Society, describes the rationale behind "Visions of Mars": "Before our technology caught up with our dreams, the way to Mars was described by the great writers of modern Science Fiction. Those who built and operated the first robot explorers of Mars, the Mariners and Vikings, and those who are now designing new missions — for robots and for humans — often recall how they were motivated by science fiction. The first adventures of space exploration were some mix of fiction and reality, interacting in the minds of the spacecraft pioneers.

"Now, in 1993, we are preparing the first mobile robotic explorers of Mars, and human exploration of Mars is becoming more and more feasible. It seems appropriate to place a collection of these works on Mars — as a motivation and memento for future explorers there. These will be the first volumes in "Visions of Mars."

Future recipients of the discs will find them in protected locations inside the small landers. A label on the exterior of each lander will announce in five languages the presence of the disc and how to play it. A microdot on the surface of the disc will contain additional technical information about its operation. The five languages on the disc label — English, Finnish, French, German and Russian — reflect the languages of the Mars '94 mission team participants.

"Visions of Mars" will contain the equivalent of several thousand pages of fiction from writers around the world, from HG Wells to Isaac Asimov, Alexei Tolstoy to Kurt Vonnegut.

At the press conference, the editors issued a special call for additional submissions from non-English speaking countries. All stories will be recorded onto the disc in the language in which they were written.

The disc will also include a portion of the Orson Welles radio broadcast of "War of the Worlds" that panicked thousands of people when it was aired on Halloween in 1938; an audio recording made the night that the Viking I lander made the first successful landing on Mars, featuring reactions from Gene Roddenberry, Robert Heinlein, Ray Bradbury and others; and brief messages to the future inhabitants of Mars from key figures such as Arthur C. Clarke.

A portfolio of artwork will document the changing views of Mars in the popular imagination with images from classic science fiction stories and films as well as works of astronomical art. Artists include Kelly Freas,

Frank R. Paul, Frank Frazetta, Chesley Bonestell, Andrei Sokolov and Robert McCall.

Jon Lomberg, the artist and journalist who was on NASA's Voyager Interstellar Record design team, is supervising the production and editorial content of "Visions of Mars". Science fiction writer and anthologist Judith Merrill is consulting Editor of the selected stories. The Merrill Collection of Science Fiction, Speculation and Fantasy, a major science fiction library in the Toronto Public Library system, is co-ordinating story research and selection. John Robert Colombo, and anthologist and science fiction scholar, and Lorna Toolis, Head Librarian of the Merrill Collection, serve on the Editorial Board choosing the stories, together with Lomberg, Merrill and Sagan.

Dr Who Special

First of all, here is a list of release dates for forthcoming *Dr Who* merchandise. Some release dates are provisional and may be subject to change.

TV Programme: It is being written by Adrian Rigelsford and directed by Graeme Harper and stars all five remaining Doctors and possibly Brian Blessed. It will be mainly filmed on location and broadcast as close as possible to the anniversary date, possibly on Sunday 28 November.

Radio Programme: This will be broadcast on Radio 5 on Fridays at 6.30pm between 27 August and 24 September in mono. A stereo audio cassette release will occur on 6 September. The producer is Phil Clarke and the script is written by Barry Letts and edited by John Whitehall. The title is *The Paradise of Death*, starring Jon Pertwee, Elisabeth Sladen and Nick Courtney in their regular *Who* roles, while Peter Miles is the major villain Tremayne. Co-stars are Philip Roald, Andrew Wincott, Dominic Letts, Brian Hall, Jilly Meers, Richard Pearce, John Taffer, Jane Slavin, Emma Myant, Michael Onslow, David Holt and Julian Rhind-Tutt. The programme is being broadcast in five thirty minute segments and paves the way for future radio shows. One of the conditions that Jon Pertwee put on him doing this is that BBC Audio release *The Tomb of the Cyberman* audio cassette.

Musical: It appears that Mike Leander is negotiating with BBC Enterprises to bring a *Doctor Who* musical to the stage in London in 1994. Six songs have already been written.

Repeats: The BBC is certainly interested in doing another series of repeats later in the year. There is a rumour that part of the evening on 23 November may be devoted to *Doctor Who*.

The New Adventures: These are published by Virgin Books, currently priced at £4.50 with a variable number of pages.

15 July	<i>Shadowmind</i> by Christopher Bulis
19 August	<i>Birthingright</i> by Nigel Robinson (no Doctor in this one!)
16 September	<i>Iceberg</i> by David Banks (no Companions in this one. It's a prequel to <i>Wheel in Space</i> and of course the Cybermen are in it).

Then begins a five book series — the Alternative History Cycle.

21 October	<i>Bloodheat</i> by Jim Mortimore (featuring the return of lots of old companions and villains and monsters)
18 November	<i>The Dimension Riders</i> by Daniel Blythe
16 December	<i>The Left-Handed Humming Bird</i> by Kate Orman
20 January 1994	<i>Conundrum</i> by Steve Lyons (rumoured to be a <i>Doctor Who</i> meets <i>The Prisoner</i> style book)
15 February	<i>No Future</i> by Paul Cornell (more old friends and monsters!)

March	<i>Tragedy Day</i> by Gareth Roberts
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April	<i>Legacy</i> by Gary Russell (previously called <i>Terror of Peladon</i>)
May	<i>Theatre of War</i> by Justin Richards

Terrance Dicks would also like to write another one — if he can find the time. John Peel would like to write the last Davros story, called either *Legacy of the Daleks* or *War of the Daleks*.

Other Virgin Books:

19 August	<i>Evil of the Daleks</i> by John Peel
21 October	<i>The Illustrated History of Doctor Who</i> (this book will celebrate thirty years of <i>Doctor Who</i> with colour on every page, four pages per season. Rumoured to be reprinting a certain set of photos of Katy Manning and a Dalek).
18 November	<i>Dr Who Handbook — The Sixth Doctor</i> by David Howe, Mark Stammers and Stephen James Walker.

As yet **unscheduled**: *Resurrection of the Daleks*, *Revelation of the Daleks*, *Return of the Autontio*, probably to be written by Eric Saward. Also rumoured is a one off book of short stories edited by Howe, Stammers and Walker featuring stories with old Doctors in them.

Target Reprints: These are reprints of out of print novelisations of *Dr Who* stories that were on TV. All have new covers by Alister Pearson and are currently priced at £3.50.

16 September	<i>Invasion, Silver Nemesis</i>
21 October	<i>Daemons</i> (video artwork), <i>Leisure Hive</i>
18 November	<i>Invasion of the Dinosaurs</i>
16 December	<i>Web of Fear</i>
20 January 1994	<i>Robots of Death, Talons of Weng Chiang</i>
17 February	<i>Horror of Fang Rock, Invisible Enemy</i>

BBC Video: *Remembrance of the Daleks* will be released on 6 September in a special Dalek tin with a booklet on Daleks by Andrew Pixley (note that the individual tapes are in cardboard sleeves) price £29.99. The complete *Trial of a Time Lord* will be sale at £34.99 on 4 October in a special TARDIS tin. The Fan's Choice: *Resurrection of the Daleks* (£10.99) and *Two Doctors* (£16.99) will be sale 1 November.

Audio: Silver Screen were rumoured to be doing a CD of Mark Ayres' *Ghostlight* music and one of his *Downtime/Wartime* music. Also rumoured are a CD of Paddy Kingsland's *Who* music and one of Geoffrey Burgen's *Who* music. *Fury from the Deep* will be released on 4 October.

Marvel: The Year Book is on sale from this August and contains three thousand word stories and comic strips from previous New Adventure writers. It also contains the ultimate list of Doctor Who facts and figures.

Other Videos: The BBC Film Club/Bill Baggs' next production will be a feature length production to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary and will be available (hopefully) from September. It should star Colin Baker, Sylvester McCoy and Peter Davison and is written by Philip Martin. This is, of course, assuming that filming can be worked in with the schedules for the Anniversary special.

Reeltime Pictures' next video will be a drama called *Downtime*, which is written by Marc Platt and directed by Chris Barry. Finance permitting, it should be fifty minutes long and available from 23 November onwards. It stars Nick Courtney, John Levene and Sam Kelly along with a couple of Yetis. Mark Ayres is doing the music and a soundtrack CD should be released simultaneously. Produced by Keith Barnfield. Their next interview tape will be with Sylvester McCoy (cameos by Nick Courtney and Sophie Aldred) and this will be shot at Rutland Water (location for *Battlefield*). It will probably be released in September, but whether this year or next remains to be seen.

Assorted: *Drabble Who* is a small hardback book to be published by Becon Books and edited by David Wake and David Howe. It is a collection of one hundred stories each one hundred words long by various *Who* personalities and notable fans. Alister Pearson is rumoured to be producing some artwork for a series of *Doctor Who* plates later this year. Alpha Marketing have released a mug and metal pin badge set (both with the thirtieth anniversary logo on). Also coming Dalek and TARDIS badges containing microchips which make noises and flash lights. Furthermore, they will also be producing a TARDIS money box which apparently makes a wwoop-wwoop sound as the money is inserted (and they claim that the money does not, quite, materialise).

Although the Anniversary special has been mentioned above, it has apparently also been cancelled, probably because it couldn't be done in time for the chronological anniversary.

Graphic Novels

Despite rumours from An Author who may have found graphic novels easier to construct than to sell, Gollancz refute the rumour that their graphic novel line will be a short one and Legend report their entry into this market.

Legend trace the rise of the graphic novel back to 1986 with the publication of Frank Miller's *The Dark Knight Returns*, a story which brought an ageing *Batman* back to the ultra violent streets of a modern American city. This success led many people to expect that a graphic novel boom was underway, though it has been difficult to see full materialisation of this hope. However, Random House UK believe that there is a bright future for graphic novels and that they should be treated with the respect treated to any other story-telling medium — as they are in the USA, the Far East and in Europe. Consequently, they announce the forthcoming publication of David Gemmell's *Legend*.

Legend relates the story of a small group of heroic defenders battling against the might and magic of a colossal army and the spectacular artwork has been produced by Fangorn. This publication in October, priced £9.99 will also mark the re-launch of the Legend imprint with a new logo. David Gemmell's new books, *The First Chronicles of Druss the Legend* (£14.99), *Druss the Legend* (£8.99) and *Waylander II* (£4.99) will also be published on 7 October.

Electronic Anthology of Hugos and Nebulas

In an amazing act of electronic co-operation, an anthology is now available with all the 1994 Hugo nominee works: five complete unabridged novels, an annotated version of *A Fire Upon the Deep* with over 70,000 words of author's notes detailing the book's development at every step, done in hypertext. Also: *Red Mars*, *Doomsday Book*, *Steel Beach* and *China Mountain Zhang* — full text. All the Hugo nominated short stories. All the Hugo nominated novelettes. All the Hugo nominated novellas. All the Hugo nominated pro artworks (4 plates from Dinotopia). Pro Artist Portfolios (except David Cherry). Articles by all the Fan Writer Hugo nominees. Portfolios from Fan Artist nominees (except Stu Shiffman) with sample pages from fanzine nominees (except FOSFAX). All the Nebula Nominated Short Stories. All the Nebula Nominated Novelettes. All the Nebula Nominated Novellas. Three of the Nebula Nominated Novels, including the winner! All this year's Hugo and Nebula Winners! All the losers! Samples from all the John W Campbell Award nominees for best new writer. Author bios, bibliographies and blurbs for several authors. Photos of several authors. Video introductions from several authors and artists. Pronunciation guide and reading for *China Mountain Zhang* by the author. There's 1.4 million words of nominated fiction, though two Nebula nominated novellas, "City of Truth" and "Griffin's Egg" are available within the USA only due to rights restrictions.

Perhaps the most exciting item in the anthology is the special edition of SF bestseller *A Fire Upon the Deep* by Vernor Vinge. Nominated for the Hugo and Nebula award, it has become one of the most talked about books on the net because it features prominently a Galactic USENET. This net is a parody of today's net and also is the vehicle for the plot of great galactic events in this book. AI also forms a central part of the book, which is written by a CS professor.

For automated order taking, telnet to sf.clarinet.com or modem-dial +1 408 296 3733. Then login as "sf" and type "o" to order. For phone orders, dial 408 296 0366 or 800 USE-NETS. Fax to 408 296 1668. The cost is in three versions. The full version with everything is \$29.95, whether by CD-ROM or online/FTP. A basic version with just the short fiction is \$11.95 (online/FTP). A deluxe version with everything but the novels and RHF is \$17.95.

Fermat's Last Theorem

In a lecture at the Newton Institute in Cambridge on June 24, Andrew Wiles announced that he has proved Fermat's Last Theorem. He did this by proving a large part of the Taniyama-Weil conjecture for elliptic curves. He proved that every semi-stable elliptic curve over the rational numbers is attached to a modular form. It has been known for several years, by work of Frey and Ribet, that this implies Fermat.

Wiles' proof runs to 1000 pages which rather makes one wonder just how big the margin of *Arithmetica* of Diophantos was, the book Fermat just happened to be reading when he realised that "to resolve a cube into the sum of two cubes, a fourth power into two fourth powers, or in general any power higher than the second into two of the same kind, is impossible; of which fact I have found a remarkable proof. The margin is too small to contain it".

Foundation Handbook

Edward James reports that he and Farah Mendlesohn are assembling a handbook to Science Fiction courses taught in the British higher education system; it will be published as a supplement to the journal *Foundation*, which is published by the Science Fiction Foundation.

The same exercise was carried out a number of years ago in the United States, but has never been done in Britain. Anecdotal evidence suggests that courses in or involving Science Fiction are being taught very widely in the UK, in departments of Cultural Studies, English, Film and Media Studies, History, Sociology, Women's Studies, as well as other departments in the arts, social sciences and sciences.

It is clear that teachers of Science Fiction in the UK are working largely in isolation from each other. Very few belong to the Science Fiction Research Association, the US-based association which operates as a world-wide network for teachers and researchers in the field of SF. It is anticipated that their handbook will alleviate this isolation to some extent, and will promote the role of the Science Fiction Foundation as the natural co-ordinating institution in this field in the UK.

They would be grateful for any details of courses in SF (or courses touching on SF, in, for instance, the field of Utopian Studies) which are being taught at any institution of higher education. Write to Farah Mendlesohn, c/o Dept. of History, University of York, Heslington, York YO1 5DD.

The idea of the Science Fiction Foundation was first mooted in 1970, during discussions among Science Fiction writers who were interested in an institution which could promote Science Fiction and provide accurate information about it to the media and to the educational establishment. Thanks to the enthusiasm and energy of George Hay, who captured the

interest of George Brosan, then Director of the North East London Polytechnic, and of Charles Barren, Senior Lecturer in the Polytechnic's Department of Applied Philosophy, the Science Fiction Foundation was created, and given a home at the newly founded Poly in 1971. Its patrons have been two of the most respected figures in the SF world: Arthur C Clarke and Ursula K Le Guin.

The objectives of the SFF were established as: to promote the study of Science Fiction; to investigate and promote the use of Science Fiction in education; to make available facilities to students and others undertaking research into Science Fiction; to publish an academic journal devoted to the history and criticism of Science Fiction; to collect books, papers, periodicals, cassettes and other literature and audio-visual material treating or bearing upon Science Fiction; to maintain and support a library and reading room for the collection and study of such materials; to organise lectures, courses, conferences or any other events in furtherance of these objectives.

In the twenty years since its foundation, the SFF has achieved all its objectives. Its collection of material, relating to SF books, magazines, critical works, manuscripts and microfilms is the largest in the European Community, and one of the two or three most important outside North America. Major collections, such as the library of the British Science Fiction Association and the Myers collection of Soviet Science Fiction have been deposited in the SFF's library, and the review copies sent to the SFF's journal serve to keep the library up to date. It has thus established itself as the obvious centre for study and research into SF within the UK, and regularly offers its services to visiting researchers from all over Europe and from North America. Its facilities enabled its first full-time Administrator, Peter Nicholls, to produce in 1979, *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*.

Since 1972, the SFF has also published a journal, *Foundation: The Review of Science Fiction*. One of the interesting features of the journal has been the series "The Profession of Science Fiction", articles in which SF authors write about their work: forty three have been published so far, and a selection of sixteen of them has recently been published as *The Profession of Science Fiction: SF Writers on Their Work and Ideas* edited by Maxim Jakubowski and Edward James (Macmillan 1992).

Strange Encouragement

Sue Thomas was awarded a European Science Fiction Association Encouragement Award for a new writer at Helicon this Easter. She was very pleased to hear this: though the first she heard of it was by reading last issue (one of the benefits of being a BSFA member). She writes "I wish someone had told me I'd been given this award because obviously I can only be encouraged by an Encouragement Award if someone has told me about it — otherwise I remain un-encouraged! Seriously though, thanks to the ESFA — and maybe the organisers can take note of this point in future!"

Her novel *Correspondence* has been getting some very exciting reviews in the States, her own personal favourite being one from *The Boston Phoenix* which raves that it is "Post-homosexual Science Fiction: it takes a woman's touch to make cyberpunk grow up". Her second novel, *Water*, is coming from Overlook Press next year. It's about a mother and daughter and their inescapable memories of an absent husband and father. It is described as being "as irresistible and satisfying as a shimmering blast of surf on a hot day" and her style has been compared to that of Erica Jong.

Overlook Press is also publishing an anthology of contemporary short stories celebrating wild women, *The Wild Woman Reader*, the essential anthology for women who run with the wolves. Focusing on the various manifestations of the Wild Woman — that feminine version of Iron John

— who has been "civilised" out of many women in today's society, the stories reveal the numerous ways that women today can search for and re-capture their lost wildness and their lost creativity through forays into the realms of spirit, mind and flesh. The authors are an exciting combination of well-known contemporary writers and some exhilarating newcomers, and include Margaret Atwood, Angela Carter, Janice Galloway, Erica Jong, Karen Karbo, Tanith Lee, Edna O'Brien, Jayne Anne Phillips, Darcey Steinke, Lisa Tuttle, Fay Weldon and Helen Zahavi. *Entertainment Weekly* comments that "Sue Thomas touches on religious, artistic and feminist implications of cybernetic channeling through a character who is equal parts of Frankenstein and the Woman Who Loves Too Much".

Publishing News

HarperCollins: In Mike Jefferies' *Stone Angels* (£8.99), Abaddon, Angel of the Pit, metamorphosed with a pagan altar, unrecognised by the Bishop of Norwich, who thinks this twice life-size carved angel must be a miracle. He puts it in the cathedral, the worst possible place — more dark fantasy by the author of the *Loremasters of Elundium*. Ursula K LeGuin has a new paperback coming in August, *Always Coming Home* (£4.99), which describes a tapestry of Northern California life, both a novel and an archaeology of the future with maps drawn by the author.

Clive Barker has illustrations in his book, *Thief of Always* (August £4.99) as well: it describes Mr Hood's Holiday House which is very welcoming and where every childish whim may be satisfied. But there is a price to pay as young Harvey Swick finds out. *The Pretender*, book two of Chaos Gate, comes from Louise Cooper in August. The demon's daughter has come of age and order and chaos are reaching out for the High Initiate and his sister Jaruth. Michael Moorcock describes Louise Cooper as "one of our finest writers of epic fantasy".



Illustration by Clive Barker from *The Thief of Always*

There's an impressive trade paperback from John Varley, *Steel Beach* (£8.99). After writing *Titan* and *Millennium*, John Varley seemed to stop writing; this book has been a welcome reminder of his talents. Earth has been destroyed by aliens and humans are living a lotus eating existence on the moon. Hildy Johnson feels ambiguous about the perfection of this life and the novel examines why one man's paradise should be another man's prison.

A massive 1160 page epic comes from Stephen Donaldson (£9.99), *The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant, the Unbeliever*. It is the first paperback publication of all three volumes in one. This is part of a Stephen Donaldson autumn blitz, which will also include the paperback publication of *A Dark and Hungry God Arises* and the hardback of *Chaos and Order*, books three and four of the *Gap into Conflict* series. A complete contrast comes from Stephen Baxter with *Anti-Ice* (£14.99). Anti-ice has been discovered by Victorian engineer Sir Josiah Traveller. While inert when cold, it releases phenomenal energy when heated; only one anti-ice shell was needed to bring an abrupt end to the Crimean War. The Victorian Age here, though, seems disjointed from history; Ned Vickers, the protagonist, goes off to the moon in search of truth.

Several David Eddings books are forthcoming. In *The Shining Ones* (£14.99), Sarabian attempts to hold the centre of his empire despite reported sightings of Shining Ones amongst the hordes. In the second book of *The Tamuli*, hidden powers for both good and evil are revealed. *Domes of Fire* (Grafton £4.99) is the first book of *The Tamuli*, where Sparhawk attempts to help the Tamuli nations. Grafton is also publishing Barbara Hambly's *Magicians of the Night* (£4.99). This completes the story started in *The Rainbow Abyss* as Jaldis the Blind and his apprentice go to the aid of persecuted wizards in another world. Only his apprentice, Rhion, survives and finds he is a prisoner of Nazi occultists determined to use magic as a military weapon. Sheri S Tepper's *Beauty* (£4.99) is another Grafton paperback: Beauty side-steps a sleeping curse and is kidnapped from her fourteenth century home to the future where her adventures begin.

Robert Holdstock's *The Hollowing* (£15.99, £8.99 trade paperback) combines the soul of a highly imaginative child, Alex Badley with the primeval forest. A film of *Mythago Wood* is in production at Columbia (where it is seen as a timely statement of the growing international concern at the savaging of natural woodland and archaeological heritage).

There is also a rough date of Spring 1994 for UK publication of Julian May's *Diamond Mask*.

Headline: In the third volume of the memoirs of Nazhuret of Sordaling, R A MacAvoy's *Winter of the Wolf* (£16.99) shows Nazhuret as no longer a man, merely the only hope for the realm. His old friend is dead; someone tries to kill Nazhuret, but his daughter saves him and they find themselves stuck on a ship surrounded by liars and potential assassins.

One book to look out for is Gwyneth Jones' *Flowerdust* (£16.99 November). Taking one episode from *Divine Endurance*, Gwyneth Jones illuminates it in imitation of the traditional Malay friezes that expand on incidents from ancient myth. The magical matriarchal Dapur are under threat from the Rulers — men who are neither cultivated studs nor emasculated boys, a race alien to all Dapur tradition. But the rebel Dervet is not tied to Rulers or to Dapur and she can see a way forward ... Another November publication is Tanith Lee's *Nightshades* (November £16.99), a novel and twelve short stories of dark fantasy, starting with Sovaz, beautiful wife and prize ornament of a wealthy olderman, she is toying with a naive young American lover while a creature of darkness prepares to feed, presumably on their tortured feelings. There's more horror from John Gideon with *Golden Eyes* (December £16.99), from Philip Caveney with *Black Wolf* (September £16.99) where author Mark Tyler unleashes a monstrous killer fan

inspired by his own imaginative writing and from Graham Joyce with *House of Lost Dreams* (£15.99), where a Greek setting, a sad dream home and a watchful shepherd are the key elements. Another Dean Koontz, *Mr Murder*, is scheduled for September (£16.99). It opens with happily married family man, Martin Stillwater, a novelist who starts getting sudden blackouts. This ties up with an amnesiac killer who occasionally sobs like a child; and with the daughter's disquiet at being faced with a man who stands, sits, moves and sounds like Daddy without being Daddy.

Legend: Sinophile Stephen Marley has produced *Shadow Sisters* (trade paperback £8.99) where the sometime vampire sorceress Chia Black Dragon puts a dagger to the throat of the Pope, threatening to send him to Jesus; and *Mortal Mask* (£4.99) where Cia is being lured to a remote bay where she may encounter an unseen evil. She is afraid (with reason, one would have thought).

The Peter Morwood *Prince Ivan* trilogy is also coming out just in time for summer reading (*Prince Ivan* and *Firebird* £4.99 each; *The Golden Horde* £8.99 trade paperback). It's an enjoyable fantasy trilogy about a Russia which never existed in history. Indolent but ultimately honourable Prince Ivan and his warrior-sorceress wife fight the Tatars and the Inquisition, but still have time for good food, good drink and fantastic love-making.

Bantam: Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman have collaborated for *The Hand of Chaos* (£14.99), the five book of the *Death Gate* cycle (there are two more to come). Fourth four came out in July, *Serpent Mage* (£4.99), where Haplo encounters giant dragons who feed on fear. He does, however, survive for book five where Haplo the Patryn has been ordered to explore the elemental realms and to instigate chaos where possible. Horror comes from John Saul with *Darkness* (£4.99). The Andersons return to Villejuve, Florida with a dream and a teenage daughter; *The New York Daily News* describes the book as "incredible horror".

Hodder & Stoughton: The Nebula winner, *Doomsday Book*, by Connie Willis is an August publication (£5.99). Kivrin is being sent to the Middle Ages over the objections of her tutor, Dunworthy, who thinks Mediaeval does not know what it's doing sending a historian to a century that had not only cholera and the Black Death, but also the Hundred Years War. And then, before they can get a fix on where and when in time Kivrin is, the time machine technician collapses over the computer with a high fever, and epidemics rage in both present and past. New English Library are publishing *Nightside the Long Sun* by Gene Wolfe, first of a new four part series called *The Book of the Long Sun*, set on a world, the Whorl, which exists within a giant starship sent from Urth to colonize a distant planet. The origins of this ship-world are shrouded in legend, ruled by strange gods who appear infrequently to their worshippers on large screens, and peopled by a human race changed by eons of time, yet familiar.

The fifth *Chung Kuo* novel, *Beneath the Tree of Heaven* (16.99) is scheduled for November. The struggle for Chung Kuo, that is, the great Chinese Worldstate of the twenty-third century, begins to intensify while on both Mars and in America the grip of the Seven begins to loosen. Kao Chen is now a Major in the T'ang security, but he is disillusioned with the disintegration of the society all about him and while he struggled to find some meaning, even balance, in the chaos all around him, he stumbles on a great conspiracy which will force him to make a choice between protecting the T'ang or allowing him to be destroyed.

The seventeenth Xanth book, *Harpy Thyme* (£15.99), by Piers Anthony opens with Gloha, a cute little harpy-goblin, who wants to see if the good magician Humfrey will help her get her heart's desire: a perfect husband. Despite appearances from Marrow Bones, the adaptable skeleton and Cynthia, the winged lady centaur, a happy ending to

Gloha's quest is promised.

Millennium: Vernor Vinge's *Across Realtime* (£14.99) combines two SF novels into one epic and is well worth reading; also *A Fire upon the Deep* (£4.99), a glorious far-future epic. Roger MacBride Allen has *Isaac Asimov's Caliban* (trade paperback £8.99), the result of a collaboration between Asimov and Allen, described as "gripping". The Uniform Moorcock edition continues with *The Prince with the Silver Hand* (trade paperback £10.99, hardback £14.99). Another August publication is *Catwoman* by Robert Asprin and Lynn Abbey. Catwoman and Batman unite in a fabulous super-heroes adventure. Phil Janes has also written *The Galaxy Game*. He writes "I started off writing *The Galaxy Game* as a short story after I'd been reading about tachyons, and the possibility of tachyon matter transference. It occurred to me that there was a story there where someone would travel from our planet to another solar system by conventional craft and while they were en route someone else would invent tachyon matter transference and get there before them. When the first guy landed on a planet in the conventional craft, he thoughts it was the first-ever meeting between aliens and humanity and said *Greetings, I come from Earth*. The alien said *That's very nice, Sir, but have you got anything to declare?* It became a comedy from then on".

No Exit Press: *Computer One* by Warwick Collins (£7.99) depicts Paul Enzo Yakuda, a Zen Buddhist, who is on the edge of retirement in California during the early years of the twenty first century. He's concerned about the international civil computer network, *Computer One*; he fears that he may precipitate the annihilation of the human race by probing too deeply into the secrets of the network.

Corgi: Diane Duane's *A Wizard Abroad* is the fourth title starring Nita, sister and friend. This time it's rich with the magic of Celtic legends (£2.99). Another fantasy comes in September, *Graunts* by Mary Gentle (£4.99) which will ensure that you never quite read Tolkien in the same way again. Robert Rankin's *The Sprouts of Wrath* (£3.99) is another fourth novel in a series, but not juvenile. The first of the Terry Pratchett's *Only you can save Mankind* (£2.99). Johnny faces rather a dilemma in his computer game when the aliens surrender. *Truckers/Diggers/Wings* are also coming as audio cassettes (£7.99 each) read by Tony Robinson, then *Lords and Ladies* (£4.99) is a November publication with *The Light Fantastic — Graphic Novel* (£7.99), audio cassettes of *Equal Rites/Colour of Magic/Light Fantastic* (£7.99 each) and *The Streets of Ankh-Morpork*, a detailed map of Discworld's capital by Terry Pratchett and Stephen Briggs, who has adapted several Pratchett books for the stage.

Tor: Long before Columbus discovered America, the Aztecs ruled central Mexico, making ritual sacrifices to the Sun God. However, *The Jaguar Princess* by Clare E Bell (October) starts with rumours of other gods. Mixcatl, a young girl, though a strange talented person, is abducted from her people and finds that in the Aztec priesthood is not enough: revolt follows.

All four Jack Vance *Planet of Adventure* stories (*City of the Chasch*, *Servants of the Wanhk*, *The Dirdir*, *The Pnume*) are published together for the first time as readers can follow the adventures of stranded Earthers Adam Reith who is traversing the deadly planet Tschai, where warring aliens and enslaved humans bar his way to freedom and home. There's a new Charles de Lint, *Into the Green*, in November. A young woman travels through the Kingdom of the Green Isles with a staff in her hand, a harp to her back, a puzzle to solve, and a quest to fulfil. Also in November, there is the hard SF, *Moving Mars*, by Greg Bear. Mars is a colonial world, governed by corporate interests on Earth and also the citizens of Mars are hardworking, brave and intelligent, they are held back by their lack of access to the best education and the young Martians, born and bred there for a generation or two, have little loyalty to Earth and a correspondingly strong belief in independence. This will

contrast well with Charles Sheffield's *Godspeed*, which describes a young man growing up in a far distant planet, one of the thousands of colony planets abruptly cut off from one another two hundred years before this tale begins, when the mysterious alien technology called the Godspeed Drive suddenly self-destructed. Plus, there is another colonist SF book coming from L. Neil Smith, *Pallas*, which is set on a small world that's been terraformed for human life and peopled by two opposing groups of colonists.

Pan: *Unwillingly to Earth* by Pauline Ashwell (£2.99) is an entertaining series of adventures of Lizzie Lee, raised on a backwater miners' planet who unexpectedly wins a scholarship to the most prestigious university in the galaxy, on Earth. It's a standard culture clash situation but it is pleasant to read: it's also publicised as a Hugo Award nominee. There are two Charles de Lint books coming in September: *The Little Country* and *Yarrow* (hardback and C format), both magical fantasy, together with Michael Flynn's *In the Country of the Blind*, his intriguing thriller.



The antlered Mynfel who inhabits Cat Midhir's dreams in "Yarrow"

Looking further ahead, Douglas Adams' *Mostly Harmless* is an October hardback. It could be very easy for Arthur Dent to get a little disheartened when his planet has been blown up, the woman he loves has vanished in a misunderstanding about the nature of space/time, the space ship he is on crashes in flames on a remote planet. Except that Arthur Dent makes the mistake of starting to enjoy life a bit ... Lois McMaster Bujold's *The Spirit Ring* is coming in December. A reluctant magician and his eager daughter are thrown into a desperate fight for survival when the father's patron is murdered. Soon, it is left to the daughter to use what powers her father has grudgingly vouchsafed to her to battle against a demon whose power threatens the world and stems from the spirit ring. One of the marketing points is apparently that, apart from being a character led Fantasy, it is strong on relationships (*The Vor Game*, one of her Miles Vorkosigan SF books is coming in A format in October; and that has some intriguing relationships as well).

There are two Niven collaborations coming later in the year: *Fallen Angels* (November) with Jerry Pournelle and Michael Flynn (a small group of SF fans trust in the supremacy of science to rescue a ship from isolated space stations which crashlands in the sub-zero wastes of 21st century North America) and *Achille's Choice* (December) with Steven Barnes (brilliant athlete must decide whether to "boost" to win which may give her a chance to win, but will inevitably lead to burnout and death within two years unless she can be connected to the link, the global international network that sustains the world, something only available to winners).

Del Rey: Anne McCaffrey's *Chronicles of Pern: First Fall* will be a November Del Rey hardcover. All the stories are thought to be new and it will be followed by another Pern novel a year later.

Also, the second book in the *Starship Troupers* series, *We Open On Venus*, will be published in March of 1994. The third and final volume, *A Slight Detour*, will be out later in the year — probably August. In the meantime, Del Rey will be publishing another Wizard book: *The Witch Doctor* in February 1994 in hardcover and December 1994 in paperback.

L. Warren Douglas came to Del Rey via the slushpile. His first novel, *A Plague of Change*, was published last year, and his second, *Bright Islands in a Dark Sea*, has just been released. Having been archaeologist, illustrator, graphic designer, cartographer, sign painter, carpenter, and stevedore (not in that order), it may be easy for him to be a full time writer. Uh-oh. This is how he starts an "average" sort of day.

"7:00 AM: Getting up is easy, with the sun shining. (This happens even in Michigan.) Brush teeth, shave, polish bald head. Let Aunt Louise out to hunt mice. Carry Sue's audit bag to her car. Decide which office to use today, and drive there.

"At home, I get lonely — and I have to get my own coffee. Restaurants are like having my own maid and central air. Special considerations: forget Mom & Pop places — big, hairy, sweaty Pop will explain how many paying customers would otherwise have used your booth as he frog-marches you out the door. Stick with franchise places, and buy lunch. Give the manager autographed copies of your books. And change restaurants often.

"Today it's Fable's Beefburgs. I open my satchel. Checklist: manuscript, outline, pen, and legal pad, plus ashtray and coffee. I start the workday reading and editing yesterday's stuff. By the time I'm done, I've had several cups of coffee and my heart has remembered how to beat. I turn to my outline, right where I left off, light years from Fable's and far away in time.

"Aya, Sister Nightingale, it were a rough blow indeed," I write as the last salty rivulets disappear between joints in the ancient wharf's stone paving. "But with your prayers, an' *Sea Serpent's* stout hull..."

His third novel is rumoured to be nearing completion, and possibly, with that clue above, with a maritime theme.

The Shock of the New

Arthur C. Clarke was described, in the magazine *The Oldie*, as "a big friendly man, rather like a kindly farmer who has just got a record price for his wheat. The voice is warm and still 100% full of his native Somerset accent and there is always a witicism hovering". He explained that part of the reason for settling in Sri Lanka was the incomparable scuba diving, lying under the water being about the nearest thing he could find to weightlessness in space. There was the scenery, also, not to mention the people: the interview comments that "From President Premadasa to Postman Perera, you can be sure of an instant and sincere

broad grin. It is such an easy country to live in".

Pat Cadigan, Norman Spinrad and Ian McDonald, who were Guests at the SF convention Mexican in Scarborough at the end of May all wrote articles for the programme book, of which short extracts are printed here. Pat Cadigan's article related to cyberpunk and she wrote: "[Cyberpunk SF is] going to be one hell of a magical mystery tour. Eventually we must change from observers to participants. I think of hypertext and interactivity and I say let's push it and see how far we can go in a landscape morphing into near-unrecognizability for the children of Gutenberg.

"Cultural shift is never about SF, but *vice versa* — and cyberpunk, being a cultural shift rather than a form of Science Fiction, cannot be declared either alive or dead because nobody owns it".

Norman Spinrad wrote about the SF publishing industry and wrote, in part, that: "I feel as much spiritual connection to and solidarity with the Industry Product that surrounds my stuff on the racks, on the order forms, in the advertisements, as a militant African-American would have, stepping off a plane in Britain, turning on the tube, and confronting *The Black and White Minstrel Show*."

"And I believe that in their heart of hearts, all Science Fiction writers who conceive to themselves as attempting to write for an audience of intelligent literate adults must feel the same".

Ian McDonald wrote a manifesto for the "Scratch" SF movement and described it as: "A Science Fiction that knows the place it inhabits, on the edge of the expanding bubble of *zeitgeist*, that knows the place it inhabits, the gospel by which we understand where we are now, what we might become, that is as comfortable in the media-mixing of Kim Newman and his and Eugene Byrne's alternate worlds stories (sampling history and re-mixing it is surely the spirit of scratch) as in Steve Baxter's parables of high physics or Eric Brown's New Golden Age of Science Fiction. It lives in Mary Gentle's revisionist fantasies, in Brian Stableford's re-mix of the familiar tropes of horror archetypes with scientific philosophical speculation, in Ian Watson's reality dubs and philosophical enquiries, in the sly boogie of Paul McAuley's Grand School of Things to a samba heartbeat".

K W Jeter is rather reacting to his latest novel, *Madlands*, which is a tale of a California gone surreal where image becomes reality and reality has become mutable, to the extent that Hollywood has literally mutated out of control, and is now reported to be putting the finishing touches to a *Star Trek* novel.

When **Terry Pratchett** spoke to the Booksellers' Association Conference, he mentioned how and why he got interested in Science Fiction as a teenager: "Science Fiction looked at the universe all the time. I make no apology for having enjoyed it. We live in a Science Fiction world: two miles down there you'd fry and two miles up there you'd gasp for breath, and there is a small but significant chance that in the next thousand years a large comet or asteroid will smack into the planet. Finding this out when you're 13 or so is a bit of an eye-opener. It puts acme in its place, for a start. ... I first came across words like "ecologist" and "over-population" in Science Fiction books in the late '50s and early '60s, long before they had become fashionable. Yes, probably Malthus had said it first — but you don't read Malthus when you're 11, though you might read someone like John Brunner or Harry Harrison because their books have got an exciting space ship on the cover". ... As a species, we [humans] are forever sticking our fingers into the electric socket of the universe to see what will happen next. It is a trait that will either save us or kill us, but it is what makes us human beings. I would rather be in the company of people who look at Mars than people who contemplate humanity's navel — other worlds are better than fluff".

Rather lengthy dramatised sections of *Johnny and the Dead* and *Only You Can Save Mankind* are appearing in a Saturday tv series as from July. The Discworld computer game is forthcoming, but no specifics until the ink is dry on the contract; however Terry Pratchett is likely to tour South Africa in early December. To mark the tenth anniversary of *The Colour of Magic*, there will be a November UK tour, mostly big cities. Cardiff and Dublin are definitely planned and hopefully Belfast with one or two Scottish cities.

Lawrence Watt-Evans, best known for the *Ethshar* fantasy series, recently and retroactively titled *Legends of Ethshar*, has sold a SF/Fantasy trilogy to Del Rey which will begin in early 1994 with *Out of this World*.

Brian Stableford is running an annual writers' workshop at the University of Reading this autumn, but for the current year, he has broadened it out to take in all the various forms of popular fiction. The course fee is £29 and it will run on Tuesday evenings, more details from The Extramural Secretary, The University, London Road, Reading RG1 5AQ.

Elizabeth Ann Scarborough and **Anne McCaffrey** collaborated on *Powers that Be*, but both authors jointly contributed both with the idea and the writing. The inspiration for the Arctic background came several years ago when Anne McCaffrey visited Fairbanks, Alaska, at that time the home of Elizabeth Ann Scarborough. When the two weren't working on a writers-in-the-school project for the Fairbanks Art Association, Scarborough saw to it that McCaffrey tasted the adventures Fairbanks in the winter had to offer: a dogsled ride, the Northern Lights, a movie about dogsled racing and moose spaghetti.

In the beginning of 1992, McCaffrey invited Scarborough to Ireland to conduct some folk music research. Inevitably, the two writers talked about writing, and folk music, and the Irish. The idea for *Powers that Be* "just grewed," despite McCaffrey's busy schedule and Scarborough's ongoing exploration of Irish music. The story will continue in two more volumes, which are to be written in the next two years on subsequent visits.

Alan Dean Foster has sold three new novels to Del Rey, all Science Fiction, including a new Pip and Flixx novel and another novel set in the Commonwealth universe, to be published in 1995.

Bruce Sterling and **William Gibson** recently gave speeches about education and technology at a convocation at the National Academy of Sciences. Bruce Sterling started by saying: "The future is unwritten. There are best-case scenarios. There are worst-case scenarios. Both of them are great fun to write about if you're a science fiction novelist, but neither of them ever happen in the real world. What happens in the real world is always a sideways-case scenario."

"World-changing marvels to us, are only wallpaper to our children."

"Cyberspace is the funhouse mirror of our own society. Cyberspace reflects our values and our faults, sometimes in terrifying exaggeration. Cyberspace is a mirror you can edit. It's a mirror you can fold into packets and send across continents at the speed of light. It's a mirror you can share with other people, a place where you can discover community."

"But it's also a mirror in the classic sense of smoke-and-mirrors, a place where you might be robbed or cheated or deceived, a place where you can be promised a rainbow but given a mouthful of ashes."

"I know something important about cyberspace. It doesn't matter who you are today — if you don't show up in that mirror in the next century, you're just not going to matter very much. Our kids matter. They matter a lot. Our kids have to show up in the mirror".

In his concluding remarks, Bruce Sterling said: "I used to think that cyberspace was fifty years away. What I thought was fifty years away, was only ten years away. And what I thought was ten years away — it was already here. I just wasn't aware of it yet".

William Gibson suggested that: "Every elementary and high school teacher in the United States of America will have unlimited and absolutely cost-free professional access to long-distance telephone service. The provision of this service could be made, by law, a basic operation requirement for all telephone companies. Of course, this would also apply to cable television.

"By the same token, every teacher in every American public school will be provided, by the manufacturer, on demand, and at no cost, with copies of any piece of software whatever — assuming that said software's manufacturer would wish their product to be commercially available in the United States.

"What would this really cost us, as a society? Nothing. It would only mean a so-called loss of potential revenue for some of the planet's fattest and best-fed corporations. In bringing computer and network literacy to the teachers of our children, it would pay for itself in wonderful and wonderfully unimaginable ways. Where is the R&D support for teaching? Where is the tech. support for our children's teachers? Why shouldn't we give out teachers a license to obtain software, all software, any software, for nothing?

"Does anyone demand a licensing fee, each time a child is taught the alphabet?

"Any corporation that genuinely wishes to invest in this country's future should step forward now and offer services and software. Having thrived under democracy, in a free market, the time has come for these corporations to demonstrate an enlightened self-interest, by acting to assure the survival of democracy and the free market — and incidentally, by assuring that virtually the entire populace of the United States will become computer-literate potential consumers within a single generation".

He then added that this proposal had nothing to do with levelling playing fields: it should not apply in any way to private education.

Genre Expansion

Science Fiction is expanding in unusual directions according to *Publisher's Weekly*, discussing the sub-genres in Romance. Among those identified are "Futuristic, Fantasy and Time Travel". In an accompanying ad., one published unveils its newest line, *Love Spell*, one book a month in each of four categories: Time travel Romance, Futuristic Romance, Historical and Contemporary. The ad. copy is priceless: "While updating her computer files, India Baldwin accidentally backdates herself to the time of Charlemagne — and into the arms of a rugged warrior".

Science/SF Interface Workshop

An International Workshop on Science and Technology through Science Fiction will be held in Barcelona June 22-24 1994. It has been organized by the Consell Social of the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC) in co-operation with the Software Department (UPC), the Physics and Nuclear Engineering Department (UPC) and World SF (Hispanic Chapter).

The aim of this International Workshop is to provide a forum for identifying, encouraging and discussing research about science and technology, or their consequences, as portrayed in Science Fiction. The

Workshop will bring together researchers, scientists, and other academics with science fiction professionals to share information and explore new ideas about the relationship between Science Fiction, science and technology.

The programme committee consists of Miquel Barcel, Joe Haldeman, Elizabeth A Hull, Frederik Pohl and Vernor Vinge, while members of the organising committee are: Miquel Barcel, Laura Cabarros, Gay Haldeman, Pedro Jorge, Jordi Jos, Louis Lemkow and Manel Moreno.

More details from: Miquel Barcel, Facultat d'Informàtica, Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, Pau Gargallo, 5 E 08028 Barcelona, Spain.

Magazines

Computer Underground Digest: edited by Jim Thomas and Gordon Meyer. Cu-Digest is a weekly electronic journal/newsletter. Subscriptions are available at no cost electronically from tk0jut2@mvs.cso.niu.edu. The editors may be contacted by voice (815-753-6430), fax (815-753-6302) or U.S. mail at: Jim Thomas, Department of Sociology, NIU, DeKalb, IL 60115. It is an open forum dedicated to sharing information among computerists and to the presentation and debate of diverse views (the most recent issue quoted the Gibson and Sterling speeches of which extracts were quoted above).

Anime UK: Edited by Helen McCarthy, the latest edition of this glossy magazine has articles on manga, modelling, continental anime and a coloured spread of *The Dirty Pair*, with copious illustrations. It's £3.50 per issue for 40 pages and a centre spread — more details from 70 Mortimer Street, London W1N 7DF.

The Lyre 2: edited by Nicholas Mahoney and Ian Sales, 275 Lonsdale Avenue, Intake, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN2 6JH. Impressive short stories: "The Universe of Things" by Gwyneth Jones, "Albania" by Todd Mecklem and Jonathon Falk, "White Loci Peak" by Peter Hamilton, "The Music Lover" by Craig Marnock, "To Put Aside Childish Things" by Angus McAllister, "Le Jour Se Leve" by Peter T Garratt plus some poems, drabbles, and reviews.



Fiction:
Gwyneth Jones
Peter Hamilton
Angus McAllister
Peter T. Garratt

Artwork:
Jack McArdle
Philip Rowlands
Dallas Goffin

Graham Joyce
Interview

The Lyre also has an interview with Graham Joyce who said that he enjoyed reading Science Fiction and dark fantasy, but didn't tend to write it: "I won't write about rocketships and rayguns. I don't write Science Fiction. I'm not clever enough to make my science add up. When I was first introduced to the idea of magnets at thirteen years old in a physics lesson, I had a problem with it. I never really felt intelligent enough to make that kind of hard science add up. On the subject of mainstream writing, at the time I was writing *Dreamside*, I wasn't writing down a genre. It was only when the book was actually sold that the publishers decided to market it as fantasy".

The Time Centre Times: Journal of the International Michael Moorcock Society edited by John Davey and Maureen Cuffe, 45 St Mary's Mansions, St Mary's Terrace, London W2 1SH. Moorcock related art and fiction with news. Michael Moorcock was working abroad on *The Vengeance of Rome* in June and July, but will be back in London for a reading from "Lunching with the Antichrist", which is a ten thousand word story for *Smoke Signals*, an anthology of new London stories published by Serpent's Tail. This will be at the Purcell Rooms, South Bank, London on September 24, in the company of Ruth Rendell, Maureen Duffy and Roy Heath. He has abandoned work on *The Stolen Georges* with Richard Dreyfuss. The decision was amicable, but it appears that he felt he couldn't continue with a project "likely to distort his own views".

Nexus produced a supplement of *The User's Guide to Science Fiction* to accompany the Spring 1993 edition and hopes to continue this with future issues. The reviews are as diverse as the reviewers. Dipping in at random, Paul Voermans' entry for *And Disregards the Rest* starts with "marvellous truly alien first-contact/time travel novel set in Australia, it compares favourably with Philip K Dick's work for sheer paranoia, but carries the additional acid of a sub-text concerning the Australian Aborigines' first contact with the European aliens" while the entry for Ben Bova's *Mars* starts "Of all the current spate of books about the colonisation of Mars, I found this by far the dullest". The magazine will appear every six months, more details from Nexus, PO Box 1123, Brighton BN1 6EX.

Gardner Dozois has had some trouble getting hold of various original anthologies and semi-professional magazines published in Britain which he'd like to look at in connection with his annual *Year's Best Science Fiction Anthology*. He points out that his definition is "somewhat elastic" and that appropriate stories are often to be found in "marginal" horror and fantasy publications. Editors will to send such materials should send them to 526 Spruce Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106, USA.

Signings

Birmingham is the place to be for signings right now: **Iain Banks** will be signing at Andromeda (84 Suffolk Street) from noon on that day and **William Gibson** will be signing copies of *Virtual Light* there on 30 September from 1pm onwards. Call 021 643 1999 for further details.

Poetry Wanted

East Anglia publishers, Anchor Books, are hoping to release a volume of Media SF poetry. Interested writers of verse about *Dr Who*, *Star Trek*, *Anderson*, etc., should know that the optimum length is twenty eight lines, though both longer and shorter will be considered. For more information, send a sae to Helen McNally at Anchor Books, 1-2 Wainman Road, Woodston, Peterborough.

The Kent and Sussex Poetry Society are also inviting entries for their Open Poetry Competition, with a first prize of £300, closing date 31 January 1994. More details from Clive Eastwood, 8 Edward Street, Southborough, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN4 0HP.

Unfinished Business

Maureen Speller

Succeeding BSFA administrators are almost invariably confronted by financial problems. The move to a professional mailing service, while of benefit to members, is eating into our reserves at an alarming rate. People still find their way to us, but it's a trickle of new members rather than the steady flow we would wish for. Our priorities are clear: we hope you agree. Immediate action needs to be taken to recruit new members and to ensure a steady flow of income to stabilise our position.

How can you help us and, by extension, yourselves?

We'd appreciate BSFA members taking every opportunity, no matter how slight and seemingly unpromising, to promote the BSFA and to attempt to recruit new members. It doesn't have to be anything complicated: something as simple as mentioning the BSFA to everyone, anyone you write to, and giving them details of membership, is bound to have effect. Even if your correspondents don't join, they might mention the BSFA to someone else. Mentioning the BSFA when you write to magazines may result in a free plug for us.

Membership forms are now available from Alison Cook (27 Albemarle Drive, Grove, Wantage, Oxon OX12 0NB). Distribute them to your friends and/or your local SF group, or take them with you if you go to a signing and pass them around. Are there local literary events coming up where you might be able to promote the BSFA? Do you have an arts centre which might be willing to display membership forms? Would your local bookshop, SF or mainstream, display our forms? What about your local library? If they won't display the form then maybe they will at least keep the information on file for future enquirers. Please ask — the worst that can happen is that they'll refuse. On the other hand, they may say yes.

There must be other possibilities we haven't thought of: have you got suggestions which may help? All we ask is that it's legal and carried out with the full approval of all parties concerned and that we are kept informed of your activities. We can provide membership forms, sample copies of magazines and so forth. Later in the year, we will also have posters and promotional bookmarks available on request. Let's see what we can do with our current resources.

We'd also like to remind you that life membership is available for the sum of £150. Colin Greenland has recently taken out life membership and it would certainly help if one or two others were to do the same.

We're very keen to encourage more advertising in BSFA magazines, as well as advertising the BSFA more widely. New advertisements have been written and a text advertisement will be available very shortly. Obviously, we will be approaching all the usual magazines, but do you have any other suggestions for appropriate but perhaps no so obvious places to advertise? Do you want to advertise your convention or organisation or publication in BSFA magazines? If so, contact us. BSFA magazines are seen regularly by over a thousand SF readers and provide an excellent method for accurately targeting your society or product.

All comments, queries and suggestions should, in the first instance, be addressed to Maureen Speller, 60 Bournemouth Road, Folkestone, Kent CT19 5AZ (tel: 0303 252939 before 10pm).

BSFA Profile

Twin profiles from the two people responsible for dealing with new members.

Alison Cook

I have been a Home Economics (sorry — "Technology — Food") teacher for twenty years — with a name like A. Cook the job was made for me. (This is why anything I write turns into lesson notes).

I have also been a Parish Councillor for six years and am Chairman of the Environmental Committee.

I can't remember not liking Science Fiction. I was allowed to stay up late, as a child, to listen to Dan Dare on Radio Luxembourg, and used to take the *Eagle* (for Dan Dare). This confused the magazine, as free gifts used to arrive addressed to Master Alison Cook.

I found out about Seacon '79 from *Analog*, and found out about fandom and the BSFA from the convention. I also went in for the "Fancy Dress" competition, as it was called then, because if the convention was unfriendly, it meant I'd be forced out of my room at least once. I competed successfully in Masquerade competitions for eight years, but decided that at the age of thirty seven, I was getting too old to flash my "bits" (all right, you don't have to do the Maths, I'm forty three in August).

I started going to the Reading collating sessions in 1980 and continued until their demise last year.

My taste in SF is eclectic, and as I can't bear to throw books away, "crap" nestles happily with "decent" on my shelves. I have a small, but select, collection of the worst of Lionel Fanthorpe! My favourites change, but for the last few years they have been the *Chanur* series by C J Cherryh — Well, to each their own!

Brian Stovold

You can probably guess my age if I tell you that, as far as *Dr Who* goes, it was the adventures of Jon Pertwee that I watched from behind the sofa. Come back Brigadier, all is forgiven! For those of you who want rather more specific info, I am 32 going on!

I caught on to the reading habit at an early age eg F.A.R.L.E.Y. R.U.S.K. and read as much as I could find. My first SF read was a collection of Arthur C Clarke short stories, that is if you don't count Jules Verne. Hence, I now have a shelf full of Clarke. I tend to find an author and work through everything I can lay my hands on. This explains why I have tons of Nevil Shute, Alistair Maclean, Ian Fleming, Terry Pratchett, Ellis Peters and Peanuts books 1 to 85. From this, you will gather that I have wide ranging tastes. Letters of sympathy should be addressed to ...

Back to SF. I like a good well constructed story. Something to excite, thrill and get the thought processes working. One of my current favourite authors is Iain Banks. I especially enjoyed *The Bridge*. I have also been collecting the works of Christopher Evans. At the last Novacon, I picked up a jolly good read *Replay* by Ken Grimwood.

Old favourites include Clarke's *The Sands of Mars* and the early Asimov is *The Foundation Trilogy*, *The Caves of Steel* and *The Naked Sun*.

Humour — warped. I was introduced at an early age to the works of Secombe, Milligan and Sellers. This explains a lot! Add to this, dashings

of *Round the Horne*, *I'm Sorry I'll Read That Again*, *I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue*, *Hello Cheeky*, *Hitch-hiker's Guide*, *Hordes of the Things* and this has rapidly turned into a potted history of radio!

Films. I was never the same after I saw *The Incredible Shrinking Man*. He was standing at a bus stop in Farnham, if I recall correctly. To be serious for a moment, the one that even now gives me the shivers is *Quatermass and the Pit*. Ugh! Not to be watched alone at night, I like the Ealing Comedies, the B&W comedies of the 50s and 60s, *Singing in the Rain*, Hitchcock (*Rear Window* and *North by North West*), *Star Trek* in all its guises.

Music. Pink Floyd, Supertramp, Dire Straits, REM, Enya, etc., etc. not to mention classical as well. Give me a good bit of Rachmaninov any day.

On the Stage. *Return to the Forbidden Planet* (currently on tour — well worth a viewing).

Other Activities. Fending off the kitten I took in some eight months ago, keeping the art of church organship alive in a local village church, attempting to restore the longest derelict/abandoned canal in the country (The Wilts and Berks), and the odd bit of convention attending.

Back to the plot. I got involved in the BSFA about six years ago when I was persuaded to attend a collating session at Reading. Where were the rest of you? This led me onto a slippery slope of conventions and other activities such as writing for the *APA Pieces of Eight*.

At Novacon, you can usually spot me at the Art Auction despite a pact between myself and Alison Cook (the co-membership secretary and the one responsible for my collating activity) that we won't enter the room.

I hereby rest the case for the defence.

BSFA Minutes

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the British Science Fiction Association held at the St Nicholas Hotel, Scarborough, 12.00pm on Sunday 30 May 1993; taken by Carol Ann Green.

Minutes of the Last Meeting

These were proposed as correct by John D Rickett and seconded by Darroll Pardoe — passed.

Treasurer's Report

Unfortunately the treasurer fell foul of Scarborough's one way system and arrived late so the report was given by Kev McVeigh. A copy of them has been sent to *Matrix*, they cover the period to 30 September 1992.

It was pointed out that the BSFA made a significant loss during the year, which was why the membership fees were raised from July 1992. Income in the year was £10,376, printing costs accounted for £6,500 of this income. Action has been taken to amend the situation.

Since the fees have gone up, the BSFA has been able to transfer some of it's funds into an interest bearing account which should help the general funds situation.

David V Barrett asked from the floor whether the fees increase had lost more members than it had gained in money. Kev McVeigh answered that

we had lost members but that it wasn't significant. The Association overall has had a slight decline in membership, but this was hoped to be recouped by advertising with Gollancz; feedback is slow, but it does happen.

The accounts were proposed by Nicholas Mahoney and seconded by John D Rickett; they were passed *nem con*.

Co-ordinator's Report

Kev McVeigh reported that we had done work this year to tidy up the banking system before embarking on anything involving investments — things are still moving in this area.

The Association has adjusted it's mailing system, moving over to use the services of The Mailing House who gave us a good rate — this has added to our expenses, but not significantly.

Turning to the future, Kev McVeigh stated his intention of resigning from the position of Co-ordinator. He stated that he was pleased with the progress he has made during his time as co-ordinator and that he hopes he has been able to consolidate and re-assess the situation.

Taking over the post of Co-ordinator jointly are Maureen Speller and Katie Cary, correspondence should be addressed to Maureen's address. Kev McVeigh is to stay on to concentrate on the areas where he has had successes and will be dealing with Special Projects.

Also resigning is Jo Raine, the membership secretary for the past eight years. Kev McVeigh pointed out that Jo has had to cope with a difficult job that has no glamour attached to it.

Taking over in this post will be Alison Cook and Brian Stovold. Hand over negotiations should now take place, looking to take effect within the next couple of months. Alison and Brian will also be looking at ways of improving what new members receive when they join the Association. Kev McVeigh pointed out that this was the next stage in improving the BSFA product.

A vote of thanks to Kev and Jo was proposed by Katie Cary and seconded by Maureen Speller.

Council

Two members of Council retired by rotation and were eligible for re-election.

Kev McVeigh: proposed David V Barrett, seconded Colin Harris — passed.

Jenny Glover: proposed John D Rickett, seconded Maureen Speller — passed.

There were also three new members standing for Council.

Elizabeth Billinger — the BSFA's new treasurer, proposed John D Rickett, seconded Darroll Pardoe — passed.

Also standing were Carol Ann Green, one of the co-editors of *Focus* and Iain M Banks. Caroline Mullan asked from the floor why Iain Banks felt he should be on the Council. Iain replies that as a published author, he felt able to publicise the BSFA ie by mentioning it in interviews; he would like to see the membership flourish and feels he can offer help in this direction.

Kev McVeigh also pointed out that Iain was a respected author both inside and outside the SF genre as well as being popular in the fan community.

Carol Ann Green: proposed Julie Venner, seconded Darroll Pardoe — passed.

Iain Banks: proposed Caroline Mullan, seconded Mark Plummer — passed.

There followed a short discussion about who could be available to stand for any remaining Council positions. Iain Sales asked about the possibility of an American author. Kev McVeigh responded by saying that he had contacted Bruce Sterling asking if he had any suggestions as to how we could widen our American membership. He pointed out that there is a definite market for the BSFA in America.

Caroline Mullan asked about Europe and whether Bridget Wilkinson's expertise might come in handy here. There was also some discussion as to whether another editor or agent should be offered a position on the Council, Kev McVeigh said that he had had some interest in this possibility.

Links are also in the process of being forged with the Foundation, this should be helped by the appointment of *ex-Paperback Inferno* editor Andy Sawyer to the Foundation.

Any Other Business

Caroline Mullan brought up the question of promotion BSFA literature on electronic mail; pointing out that more and more people now had e-mail addresses. Steve Glover said that news from *Matrix* could possibly be put on bulletin boards but things got more complicated when copyright was taken into account. It was agreed that this would be further investigated and any progress reported in the magazines.

Proposed Caroline Mullan, seconded Charles Stross — passed.

Nicholas Mahoney said that one of the things that ha come out of setting up an informal network to discuss the awards situation was that the dramatic presentation category was "starting to look ill". He wished to propose that the dramatic category be abolished. He pointed out that many things proposed in that category were getting remote from the Association and that it was becoming more difficult to find out who to send the award to.

Proposed Nicholas Mahoney, seconded David V Barrett — passed.

David V Barrett proposed that Jo Raine be given a life membership in recognition of her work for the Association. That was seconded by Katie Cary and passed.

John Rickett then proposed a vote of thanks to the Council for the work done during the year.

The meeting closed at 12.45pm.

[The BSFA Annual Accounts were published in issue 106 of *Matrix*]

Stop Press: Information Officer wanted:

Is there anyone out there interested in taking over as Information Officer? It can be an exciting job, because, as Phil could confirm, you just never know what question will be asked next. There's a whole team of experts waiting in the wings, and Phil will give as much help as he can — if you are interested, please write to Maureen Speller at 60 Bournemouth Road, Folkestone, Kent CT19 5AZ.

Why Science Fiction

Trevor Jones

This article was written in early 1991, but adds a retrospect to Trevor, who died in early 1993.

I suppose I can trace my interest in Science Fiction back to the age of six, when I got my hands on a children's book about Astronomy. I remember quite clearly reading about the fact that the nearest star was twenty five million million miles away! Twenty five million million. To a six year old that was almost unimaginable. That single paragraph in a children's book started my interest in astronomy, an interest which persisted for many years, including a period when I was grinding my own mirrors for reflecting telescopes.

I suppose that, having developed an interest in stars and planets, and having spent many cold but cheery nights trying to make out vague details on their surfaces through the eyepiece of a six-inch reflector, it was only natural that I should become interested in the fictional representations of life on other worlds. My first introduction was through Patrick Moore's fictional works for children, followed by a wide variety of other children's SF. As this was in the mid fifties, the standard of such books was rather crude by today's standards, but it was enough to get me hooked!

Then I discovered the SF magazines. Oh, those were the days for the magazine addict! As well as several British SF magazines (John Carnell's *New Worlds*, *Science Fantasy*, *SF Adventures*, etc.) there were the British editions of most of the major US magazines of that period. It was not unusual for me to buy eight to ten magazines per month. What a feast of Science Fiction for the addict.

My interest in SF remained constant as I grew up, although the number of magazines available diminished steadily. Then came the New Wave, which was never very much to my taste. To my mind, Michael Moorcock is the man who ruined British magazine SF. His editorship of *New Worlds* saw the magazine transformed, but not in a way I could identify or sympathise with. In the end, like so many of its readers, I gave up on it. I was not surprised when it finally ceased publication.

Gradually, as the years passed, I bought less and less SF. Magazine fiction had always been my favourite form, but the British magazines were, by the mid-seventies almost non-existent, and it became ever harder to get the US magazines, especially in a place like Huntingdon where I had by then moved to. Science Fiction had also changed, particularly in the UK, from outgoing, forward looking fiction of ideas, heavily imbued with that so-elusive "sense of wonder" to a largely introspective, gloomy and often, to my mind, totally boring genre. The critics had taken over from the fans. I drifted away from SF.

Then, in the early 1980's, my life was changed completely by the onset of kidney failure, necessitating twice-weekly dialysis sessions. For a series of complex medical reasons it was not possible for me to go onto the transplant list, so that I was aware that I would have to live with my condition for the rest of my life. I had been working in London, but commuting became impossible and I had to take early retirement. However, the generous terms of the Local Government Superannuation scheme meant that I did have a pension and a large lump sum.

After a period of contemplation, I decided that, as there was no SF magazine at the time that gave me the sort of reading matter that I wanted, I would have to do something about it myself. (*Interzone* had started up by then, but I didn't know of it at the time and, in any case, the type of fiction that I was then publishing was very much in the mould of the Moorcock *New Worlds*). Of course, the resources at my disposal

did not allow me to set up anything on a very grand scale, but I had become aware of the existence of the "small press" scene, in a general way, and I determined to join their ranks with my own publication.

So, in September 1985, *Dream* was born. To be frank, the first few issues weren't very exciting, but they pointed the way towards the type of publication I was aiming for. First off, I wanted a *Science Fiction* magazine, not a fantasy or the type of experimental material that I felt had been the downfall of British SF. I wanted a good mix of upbeat material as far as possible and I didn't for one moment accept the oft quoted cliché that fiction about space exploration and the traditional SF themes was passe.

Now, at the time of writing [early 1991], *Dream* is still going strong. George Townsend, an old friend from my days in Kent, has joined me as co-editor and we now have a (more or less) bi-monthly magazine, fully illustrated and typeset, which runs the sort of SF that both we, and, as far as we can judge, our readers, like. We have been fortunately to run early work by some of the writers who, I am sure, are going to be amongst the top names of the nineties: Stephen Baxter, Keith Brooke, P F Hamilton, Gerry Connelly, Peter Garratt and many others. If you don't know the names now, watch out for them; you'll be seeing them with increasing frequency. But that's just the start.

Later this summer, *Dream* is undergoing some changes. Firstly, it's not going to be *Dream* any more. We are changing the title to *New Moon Science Fiction*, which we think sounds more Science Fictional than *Dream*, which has often been taken to be the title of an occult magazine. We are also changing the format to A4, and increasing our word-rates to authors to bring us more into line with other professional markets. By so doing, we feel that we can attract even more of the type of SF that we require, rather than material rejected by the better-paying magazines, and originally written with them in mind.

Our resources are still limited, although our circulation is steadily climbing and people are starting to take notice. Our hope is, naturally, that the launch of *New Moon* will give us even more impetus and enable us to develop the magazine still further. Some of you may have heard of *The New SF Alliance*, a grouping of small-press magazines set up to give readers the chance to sample a wider range of publications than just *Interzone* and the other professional outlets. *Dream* has been pleased to be a part of that group and we hope that *New Moon* will continue in the same tradition.

So what of the future? Well, naturally, we have plans to expand still further. But, however big we may become, we shall remain true to our first love — true Science Fiction (yes, the sort with space craft, time machines, alternate histories and all the rest). We shall still search for "The Sense of Wonder" and, hopefully, occasionally find it. I'd like to think that a few of you reading this will come along with us.

Another Role

Leigh Barlow

The law suit brought by *Steve Jackson Games* against the US Secret Service ended in March. *SJ Games*, who were sponsored by the Electronic Frontier Foundation, won the suit, which was brought about when the Secret Service raided the companies headquarters and impounded computers and copies of the *Cyberpunk* book which is now available for *GURPS*.

TSR have brought out a new game called *The Forever Engine*. It is another multi-genre RPG with the rules being bundled with each world

book. Currently available are: *For Faerie*, *Queen and Country* and *Bughunt*.

Mage, from *White Wolf*, should be out now. This continues the Storyteller system introduced in *Vampire & Werewolf* and lets the players become, yes, you've guessed, magic users.

For the pessimists who are not happy with the dismal worlds portrayed by *Vampire* and its ilk, *Nightmare Games* have brought out *SLA Industries* — another dark future RPG which promises to have all the rain and wind needed to chill even the heartiest of players to the bone.

Amber, the game

designed by Erick Wujcik, published by Page Press ISBN 1-880494-00-0

In 1972, Faber & Faber published a book by Roger Zelazny called *Nine Princes in Amber*. It was another twenty years before the tenth and final (?) book in the Amber series was published (*Prince of Chaos*). In 1991, Page Press published another book related to Zelazny's stories, this was not, however, another story but a role playing game (RPG).

Amber is the name of the kingdom where the main character of the stories, Corwin, comes from. It is the centre of all order in a universe where every other world/reality — including our own — is made of Shadow. This Shadow can be manipulated and travelled through by Ambergites and their opposites from the Courts of Chaos, both of whom have powers and abilities that put them far above the normal people of Shadow.

And this is where the players come in. Creating a character that is a generation or two removed from those in Zelazny's books, they are thrown into the world of Amber. Of course, the idea of role playing in the universe introduced by stories is nothing new, but there are two things that make Amber RPG different.

Firstly, it does not need dice to play. This may come as a shock to many established roll players, but there is more to life than gambling ones well thought out and high powered character on the chance that you can get less than four on a twenty sided die. The second thing that may give players a shock is the way in which you create your character's statistics — every player bids against all the others in an auction.

Each player begins with one hundred points with which to create their character. There are four statistics (psyche, strength, endurance and warfare), and it is these that the players bid for. The player who spends the most points on the statistic gets first rank and so on down the line. This ranking system leads to two things: there is always a certain amount of paranoia where other player characters (PCs) are involved, as the guy who is ranked just below you could find great advantage in your character's demise (they would then gain your position). Also when players are fighting each other (and, yes, it does happen) those with lower ranks will have to fight dirty, for they can never win in a straight battle.

To many, this constant back-stabbing may appear to be a strange way for a group of characters to act while trying to complete an adventure. Like many things with the *Amber* system, however, it fits in nicely with the situation portrayed in the books where the last people Corwin trusted were his brothers and sisters.

Once each player has paid for their statistics, they can then spend what points they have left on powers and abilities. Such things as Pattern Imprint, Logrus Mastery and Trump Artistry will be known to those who have read Zelazny's books. For those who do not know Corwin's world, these are the powers that allow the people of Amber and The Courts to manipulate Shadow and contact each other when they are worlds apart.

There is no need for characters to buy skills or equipment before they start an adventure, because when in Shadow a character can create what ever they wish. Special items or creatures can be brought, if a player has any points left, the difference being that if there have been points spent on an item the character can never lose it or have it destroyed.

After buying all the powers needed for a character it is more than likely that most players will have over-spent. There are two ways to gain extra points: a character can have bad stuff: or the player can do extra contributions. Bad stuff is the equivalent of bad luck (for those characters with points left there is also good stuff — good luck), but also gives a general impression of how the character feels towards the world. With bad stuff, this means they are not only unlucky, but hate the world for it. Player contributions come in a number of forms including character diaries, campaign logs, trump pictures (Trumps in *Amber* are playing cards that have pictures of people on them, and allow the holder to talk to the person in the picture), or even poems or stories. From these contributions a player can gain up to an extra twenty points to spend on their character, but do require a certain amount of commitment as something must be done for every gaming session.

When all the characters have been generated the players then hand their character sheets into the games master (GM) never to be seen again. Now with no dice, little knowledge of how powerful your brothers and sisters are, and nothing in front of the players, the role playing really begins.

This is where *Amber* excels, when every characters move is under the players' control. They describe their intended actions to the GM and are told what actually happens. With no dice to rely on, the players are forced to be very imaginative in their role playing, and the GM equally so. *Amber* is certainly not for the inexperienced, and this is made quite clear on the back cover. A lot is demanded not only from the players, who will begin to plot against each other within an hour of the game starting, but also from the GM who has to come up with plots that test the characters' abilities and imagination.

There are, of course, some criticisms, such as the belittling of magic within the game or the use of bad stuff to define a character's alignment. The system itself also tends towards parties being split up, with players constantly leaving the room to have private talks with the G. These are, however, very minor complaints when compared to everything *Amber* offers players who are looking for intense and exciting role playing, that follows in the footsteps of Zelazny's stories.

Information Service

Phil Nichols

If there's something you want to know, this is clearly the place to turn to! I've been taken completely by surprise by the response to the (to me) obscure questions posed in last issue's column. For once, I can tie up all the loose ends.

Just to remind you, I asked for information on the books in Christopher Stasheff's *Warlock* series, and for help in identifying two half-remembered plots.

The *Warlock* books are (in order of publication): *Warlock in Spite of Himself*, *King Kobold*, *Warlock Unlocked*, *Escape Velocity*, *Warlock Enraged*, *Warlock in Missing*, *Warlock Wandering*, *Warlock Heretical*, *Warlock's Companion*, *Warlock Insane*, *Warlock Rock*, *Warlock & Son*, *Warlock in Absentia*. *Escape Velocity* is a prequel, giving the "how-it-all-began" details — or so I'm told.

The first plot described last issue (people's brains transferred into the bodies of babies when they [the people not the babies] reach the age of 40) turns out to be a more or less accurate summary of the novel *Friends Come in Boxes* (1974) by the estimable Michael Coney.

And the second plot was, as the person who originally posed the question suspected, *Healer* (1977) by F Paul Wilson.

For the answers to these questions, I must give thanks to (deep breath): Ray Smith, Andy Sawyer, Mark Ogier, John Devaney, David Symes and David Lewis.

Now, the trouble with these dreaded plot summaries, as I've pointed out time and time again, is that there's no end to the blasted things. Every time you as a SF fan "Do you know the title of the story that goes like this ...?" you get the answer "No, but I would like to know the author of the story that goes like this ..." Meiosis rules. And here follows the proof of this.

Do you remember the story that goes like this ...?

"... a book about the discovery, on Earth, of a race of tall creatures who live in tunnels of their own making beneath the surface. They appear benevolent at first, but it soon transpires that contact with them causes humans to go blind. I can't recollect the ending, but I can, believe it or not, remember the title! It was called *The Gnomids*, and it was written especially for a young readership ...! (writes Mark Ogier).

Or this ...?

"... Earth is ruled by an extra-terrestrial oppressor which has mercilessly crushed all resistance. However, the hero finds objects produced by the nuclear strafing, near the atomic explosion craters, called "probability stones" which have an unusual effect. If something is possible, but not if it is utterly impossible, these stones will make it happen by increasing its likelihood. Aided by this, and together with some refugees, he puts up a fight, eventually leading to the customary happy ending ..." (writes Dr Massimo Mauro — who points out that he read the book twenty-seven years ago, in an Italian translation!)

Given the remarkable response to the last column, I'm sure there must be many people reading this who will recognise these two mystery stories. If you're one of them, please get in touch.

And don't forget now: the Information Service is free, and will endeavour to find the answer to any question related to SF. Questions (and offers of help) should be sent — with a stamped addressed envelope if you hope for a personal reply — to the usual address: Phil Nichols, 17 Allsops Close, Rowley Regis, Warley, West Midlands B65 8JB.

Fire and Hemlock

Mexiconia

At some stage during Mexican, in a hotel which was not sliding down a cliff and allowing the press to zero in on the littered beach, there was a fanzine programme item. It could very easily have degenerated into the usual cycle of asserting that the fanzine is dead, no it isn't very boring conversation. To avoid this, Eve Harvey wrote to the 1992 Nova award winners asking if they would contribute a piece which she would collate into a booklet which could be used as a starting point for discussion. In

this way, the programme could echo a Mexican theme of "Kicking over the Traces" for, as Eve notes somewhat cynically "in most fanzine panels, a group of people have an interesting discussion about fanzines that perhaps 50% of the audience have never seen, and 20% can't remember the contents. How revolutionary if a panel, for once, started off from a point of common knowledge — the articles in the fanthology".

She ran into difficulties immediately. Dave Langford's creative energies in the last year had gone into his news sheet *Ansible*, which, though interesting, dates quickly. D West said that nothing at all written last year had stuck in his mind and produced the usual red herring of the size of the fanzine. So Eve started wondering whether using the Nova Award as a yardstick for good fanzine writing was such a good idea after all.

Because the Nova Award is the only British award for fanzines and fanzine writing, it is easy to forget that it is voted on by a very small number of people who attend an annual, though long-running, convention in Birmingham. Fanzine editors who do not attend that, or any, convention are therefore ineligible to vote, no matter how informed their judgements are, although, of course, other people can vote for them. The weakness of the Nova system can be shown by the fact that *Blackbird's Egg* from Richard Hewison came fourth in the Best Fanzine listing. If it exists at all, the circulation is confined to the Bristol Group, who used a block vote to demonstrate just how few votes were needed to win.

The other weakness of the Nova system is that the names of attendees are published in the Novacon Progress Reports and Programme Book and it is therefore possible to target where the chosen fanzine goes; though as D West implies above, very few end up with him. I would question whether it is more important to consider the recipients that to produce the fanzine: this was taken further in one of the fanzines produced for Mexican, *To Hear Leviathan*, where Simon Polley mourns the astigmatic attitude of publishers to his material. His writing is dense, descriptive, powerful, in so much as anyone can judge from the snippets he prints here, but the publishers tend to write kind letters in reply where the salient words are "I am afraid that ..." And the writing ends up in "the many drawers, boxes and cellar corners of our present residence".



LAGOON 4
WRITING BY THE SPIRITUAL SIMON OUNSLLEY
ELECTROSTENCILS BY THE SHITTY VINCE CLARKE
COVERS & DUPLICATING BY THE GODLESS D. WEST

"Had I paid any attention to market research" continues Simon "I would have written *Elf toilets of Shannara*, but I couldn't face it. All those lavatory attendants with pointy ears, and the sinister figure from the Health and Safety Executive who held the secret of Shea Somethingford's destiny in his pending file ..." In the end, it comes down to a matter of personal integrity and, in my very humble opinion, it is more valuable to keep that than to negotiate into a winning position, whether for a Nova or for a contract. But then, I'm not in the race. And I can read *To Hear Leviathan*, with only passing pangs for the loss of his potential books like *A Memory of Nazarenos* or *The Woman Who Mistrusted Penguins*.

Producing a fanzine needs some sort of spur, some irritating deviation from the normal existence to sting someone into action: Simon was in a cycle where work stopped him writing and it took yet another work burglary to provide this. They'd taken the computer, the laser printer, fair enough. But they'd also taken Simon's tiny clock radio. "The theft of that one, half-useless item upset and annoyed me more than anything else ... This petty issue finally forced me to try and face what was really wrong, why I hadn't been writing or even talking every much". So he went home and started a new fanzine and a new novel.

That's a far better motivation for producing a fanzine than being aware that there is a Nova award out there.

Simon Ounsley mentions the perennial problem on not enough fanzines in passing, but in *Lagoon*, he is more concerned with charting his progress away from M.E. There's a long and very touching article about his mother's terminal illness and how he and his father used the techniques they'd used on him to help her. After a piece like that, it seems trivial to wonder if fanzines are becoming extinct and insensitive to be like Glen Warming who shouts cheerfully "The '70's and '80's were spent bemoaning the lack of new talent coming into fandom and when somebody did turn up they were either mentally deficient filksinger or con organising navel inspectors. You've come back to a ghost town, my boy, and there's nothing there but empty buildings and tumbledweed". He totally misses the point that fanzines are about **communication**. It doesn't matter if they don't discuss Science Fiction, that normally (but not always) being a common denominator anyway. What matters is that the writer is reaching out to communicate and the readers should, really, react in some way. It doesn't matter too much if they don't — it merely makes the original writers despair sometimes and wonder if their time would be better spent throwing duplicated sheets and stamps into the wind to scatter randomly — but it all comes down, in the end, to this matter of personal integrity.

Where this leaves new fanzine editors is anyone's guess. Sandwiched between *Lagoon* and *To Hear Leviathan* in the post-Mexican pile of convention flyers and magazines and beer mats and evidence of having had a good time was a small inconspicuous issue of *Drivel and Drool*. The cover shows a very recognisable Bernie Evans from the Brum group saying "and after you've done those, write a con report, sort out Bosnia, find a cure for cancer ... oh, and do a fanzine".

So Mike Siddall did so: or at least, he deferred Bosnia and cancer for the time being and made the fanzine his top priority. It's interesting. It doesn't have the smooth cream texture of superlative writing that Simon Ounsley and Simon Polley have, but it does have a rough enthusiasm which, perhaps, they have transcended. There's a variation of the deck of cards theme, in that at the Opening Ceremony everyone else gets out their Programme Book while this fan gets out a deck of cards and lays them out then explains that the three, for example, is the Holy Trinity: Heinlein, Clarke and Asimov, while the Ace shows that "there is but one God, Larry Niven, and that by his sensitive, authorish face shall we know him". There follows a piece of fiction, for which the author apologises "[it] shouldn't be taken as a serious attempt at SF, after all, it was written on May 4th"; a piece on horse-riding (and why not?); a



Covers of Simon Ounsley's fanzine, "Lagoon"

discussion on *Star Trek*; computers ... the reader ends up with a very good impression of Mike Siddall.

So, from the point of view of communication, it's a success. Like the others mentioned above. Sure, by all means, use the Nova award as a taster for reading, in the same way that you might look at the Hugo, Nebula, Arthur C Clarke or BSFA Awards nominations, to provide suggestions for when you're at a loss for a good read and want to find a new author or a recommended book, but don't lose sight of all those authors and editor who don't reach the award goal and who even don't want to. These fanzines, like the others listed, are all available for the asking. If you like it, write back and give a pleasant stroke; if you don't, give an articulate kick; because otherwise either the editor will continue to give more of the same, or you may be responsible for an editor deciding that there are better things in life than producing a fanzine and from the point of view of communication that would be a small tragedy. Readers, it's in your court now.

To Hear Leviathan: Simon Polley, 38 Bankfield Terrace, Leeds LS4 2RE
Lagoon 4: Simon Ounsley, 25 Park Villa Court, Leeds LS8 1EB
Drivel and Drool 1: Mike D Siddall, 133 Duke Street, ASKAM-IN-FURNESS, Cumbria LA16 7AE

Fanzines Listed

Doodlebug 2 (Laurie Yates and Bill Kunkel, 805 Spyglass Lane, Las Vegas, NV 89107, USA)

The nearest this gets to Science Fiction is when Bob Shaw contemplates memories of a proposed comic strip in which the hero was a baked bean. But there is a super article from John Berry who conceived the idea of conveying the facts of life to his children via a matched pair of mice.

Erg 122 (Terry Jeeves, 56 Red Scar Drive, Scarborough YO12 5RQ) History of aircraft and pulp covers followed by a general moan on astrology and related superstitions. A pleasant read but, regrettably, no article as much-provoking as the one on hobbies in the last issue or the one on hospital procedure in the issue before.

FOSFAX (Timothy Lane and Elizabeth Garrett, Falls of Ohio SF&F Association, Post Office Box 37281, Louisville, Kentucky 40233-7281, USA)

This is a hefty fanzine: 68 pages of small type, with more detailed reviews by Joseph Major than seems strictly necessary. The latest instalment on Heinlein's *Farmer in the Sky* is interesting, though follows the plot in intricate detail. The review of *Anita Hill: the untold story* is far more revealing of Major's own personal political bias. He does try to be neutral (I think), but doesn't quite succeed.

The Light Shift (Rhodri James, 18 Harvey Goodwin Avenue, Cambridge CB4 3EU)

The letters column here is more interesting than the contents: Rhodri agonizes over the etiquette of how to deal with an anonymous letter.

The Cancer Chronicles (John Madracki, 17 Goldrill Avenue, Bolton BL2 5ND)

A slim fanzine with a surprisingly good poem on self-cannibalization (redolent of Roald Dahl or the film *Delicatessen*). The artwork is worth noting: collages with both political and humorous angles.

Zugzwang (Kim Huett, PO Box 679, Woden, ACT 2606, Australia) Another passing reference to cannibalism — and he compares eating lamb's heart to reading a novel by Piers Anthony "interesting once, but not something to make a habit of". After a pastiche on history by Marc Ortlieb, there's something on self-mutilation; "not as messy as masturbation" writes Danny Heap cheerfully.

Event Horizon (Orlando Area Science Fiction Society (OASIS), Louise M Kleba, 381 Coral Drive, Cape Canaveral, FL 32920-2020, USA) Cheerful fanzine with emphasis on space news, there is a suggestion to release oxygen from the lunar chemicals to provide breathing gas for future explorers, for example.

If you're thinking of driving in Japan: don't. "Polite though the people are, it seemed like everyone, from my genteel aunt to my same-age school teacher cousin, drove like a bat out of hell, along streets so narrow I thought we would bash side mirrors against on-coming traffic. There's a reason Japanese cars are of excellent quality — the demands that the drivers place on them would destroy a lesser vehicle".

Thingumbob 8 (Chuck Connor, Sildan House, Chediston Road, Wissett, near Halesworth, Suffolk KP19 0NJ) This is an all male issue: the all female issue to follow real soon now, Chuck being an honourary woman for purposes of editing. There's an excellent article from John Rickett looking back at his early life where, for example, it was a Managerial directive to get sweet with the girls at the telephone exchange to ensure that the telephone lines would be clear for bank business when necessary.

Ernest Heramia rings a former girlfriend socially and finds himself about to lose a friend forever as their lines of communication get blurred with religion. Andy Sawyer writes about cats; Andy Robertson writes about breasts (though doesn't come close to the Eric Linklater description of breasts like Persian cats, their tongues lazily pecking out).

Sorting out just what Chuck wanted to prove separating the sexes by issues will just have to wait until the all female issue, which will have pieces by Jane Carnall, Pat Silver, Ann Green and Jenny Glover, with artwork, hopefully, from Ann Green.

WriteBack

Letters are invited on any subject — though it does help to have some Science Fiction relevance. Please write to Jenny and Steve Glover, 16 Aviary Place, Leed LS12 2NP, by the deadline

September 14 1993

On Translation

From: M J "Simo" Simpson
Flat 3, 113 Lichfield Street, Stoke-on-Trent

Reading the latest *Matrix*, I came across the letter from Marjan Skvarca in Slovenia, and I was particularly struck by the anecdote about a Slovenian author's story being rejected by *Interzone* on the grounds of poor translation. Whilst this is obviously a great shame, it is nevertheless understandable.

The editor's job is the selection, typing in and laying out of the stories, articles, interviews, letters, etc. which make up the finished publication. be it *Interzone*, *Tales from the Broken Drum* or whatever. All manuscripts and letters which are not clearly printed and presented are a hindrance, and thus likely to receive short shrift, not out of any sense of malice, but because most editors are simply overworked. When you consider the volume of stories that a magazine like *Interzone* receives, it is perfectly understandable that the editor cannot spare the time to tidy up poorly translated foreign work, however good the ideas therein may be.

If the letter in *Matrix* is anything to go by, then the *Interzone* editor's decision is understandable. Obviously the writer's (or translator's) English is infinitely better than my Slovenian, but it is still grammatically way off the mark. Anyway, a thought occurred to me; that I may be able to help out here. I've been missing the old editorial business since I had to pass on the *Tales from the Broken Drum* reins last year, and looking for some way in which I can employ my skills in that area. Because, without wishing to blow my own trumpet, and while I would be the first to admit that I can't sing, paint, or change a wheel, and I don't know one end of a football from the other, I'm proud of my ability to handle the English language. This is why Stoke is hell for a grammatical perfectionist like myself — in this town I've even found road-signs that are spelt wrong.

So my point is this: if the SF writers of Slovenia (or indeed anywhere else in that part of the world) would like an experienced editor to tidy up their work before they submit it to English language magazines, I would be more than happy to help them out. If they can translate the stories into English of a similar quality to Majan's letter — and, believe me, in my time with *Tales*... I had submissions from British writers that were a lot worse — then I will gladly tidy up the grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc. to a level that would please any self-respecting editor. Furthermore, as I enjoy copy-editing and proof-reading, and I have a lot of time on my hands, I will do this free of charge as a gesture of international goodwill. Just call me Mr Philanthropy.

Of course, this doesn't in any way guarantee that the magazines will publish the Slovenian authors' work; they will probably still have to toil away at it for years like the rest of us, but it should put them on an equal footing. At the moment, as the *Interzone* anecdote shows, they are at a definite disadvantage.

On Book Titles

From: John Hurley
18 St David's Place, Park Site, Maesteg, Mid Glamorgan,
South Wales CF34 9LR

The wizard quiz is an excellent memory-bender, though in the last three years I have bought only five books. I do appreciate David Allsopp's time in producing his lovely little quiz.

Now as to other things ... it is July, and in a mind that is framed by impishness, I contemplate and cogitate (as a pipe is puffed and I repose close to a lofty window, potent sunlight filtered by net curtains) upon this challenge to send a list of book titles. My bookshelf holds a poor response for the pattern required, so I remembered that a couple of miles away outside town there was a charity sale, and one can usually pick up some cheap books, so off I strolled to see what was to be had.

Well, the sale was in an old hall that looked like Custer, King Harold and Samson, all had their last stand inside; the place was a confused mess. Anyway, squeezing through tables all flung at the wrong angles, I came unbruised to the book stall, which was stacked with tomes atop each other and in any old order of randomness. I began to read the spines of the first pile. *Jane Eyre* lay on top of *David Copperfield* and *What Katy Did* with *Moby Dick*. *Anna Karenina* was tightly squeezed between *The Count of Monte Cristo* and *The Last of the Mohicans*. *Shane* lay in the company of *Little Women*, while *Alice in Wonderland* was with *The Big Sleep*. *Tarzan of the Apes* was on *Treasure Island* and *What Katy Did* next with *The Old Man of the Sea*. *Dracula* was on *The Thirty Nine Steps* while *Ivanhoe* rested on *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. The *Picture of Dorian Grey* was upon *The Time Machine* and *The Eagle Has Landed* upon *The Hobbit*. *The Great Gatsby* was upon *She and She* with *Great Expectations*. I, *Claudius*, I, *Robot*, I got a neck pain from reading vertical, so I moved along to the next pile. These were "doubles" like Ace used to do. I started to read: *Frankenstein/To Your Scattered Bodies Go*; *History of the Tory Party/Take Back Plenty*. I could take no more and thought of the bright day beyond this shadowy old edifice. As I turned, I heard a customer ask the staff holder if he had any other "doubles": "I'm after *Pinnocchio/The Predator*". I hurried to get through the tables, but was halted by five ladies heading my way. As I impatiently waited for the passage to clear, I heard the reply "No, love, but I do have the 'double' of *The Iliad/Noddy Paints His Car*".

On Humour

From: John Madracki
17 Goldrill Ave, Breightmet, Bolton, Lancs. BL2 5NJ

An American TV channel, devoted entirely to SF, recently had the bright idea of using an aquarium as a test transmission in the run up to their Grand Opening, and found their ratings considerably boosted.

Unfortunately, when the programmes proper began, many viewers complained and demanded the return of the piscine players. Such was the volume of their protest that the fish tank has now been given its own programme slot, running for up to fourteen hours a day.

One can imagine how the programme must close ...

"And on the Hugo Stickleback Show tonight, E C Chub and Theodore Sturgeon were joined by Lisa Cuttle, Skate Wilhelm, William Tench and Jack Finney — with a special guest appearance from Arthur C Carp". There would be other names, but the credits would roll by so fast that they would just be a blur.

And talking of Arthur C Clarke, riffling through his *Astounding Days*, I happened upon this effective example of how PC and humour can be mutually exclusive. On page 222, Clarke relates this anecdote: In October 1959, he wrote a letter denying responsibility for the suggestion that "nice girls" should be sent into space as astronauts' companions. But ended it by saying — "You can quote me as recommending not nice girls, but naughty ones".

A harmless witticism, one would think.

Not so Clarke, who then continued, in parenthesis, with this apologetic retraction: "(This exchange, which nowadays would be rightly condemned as blatant 'Sexism' ...)".

Oh c'mon, Arthur, just who could you have offended?

On Podkayne

[Last issue commented on publishing plans to reissue the classic *Podkayne of Mars* with both the alternative endings: and let the readers choose which ending should be in future editions].

From Roger Waddington
4 Commercial Street, Norton, Malton, North Yorkshire YO17 9ES

Among my SF magazines and the *Worlds of If* issues, I've got the serial version of *Podkayne of Mars* (November 1962; January to March 1963); and that is one with the original Heinlein-favoured ending. I haven't been through it word by word or line by line to see how much was edited out to fit it all in (perhaps as editor of the time, Fred Pohl might have some comments?) but it did keep that downbeat ending, that dying fall. So did '60s magazine buyers have stronger sensibilities than the readers of today?

There does seem an increasing trend, for always happy endings; especially in pre-release screening of films where audience reaction determines the final cut. Oh, there's always room for sentiment and good feeling, as witness the box office success of the Disney re-releases like *The Jungle Book* (and book early for *Bambi* if you don't want to be trampled in the rush); but I'd have thought that Science Fiction readers at least would be better able to face reality; however fictional.

Skywatching

Mark Ogier

In May the third Astra satellite was successfully launched, and in July it started transmitting a handful of the sixteen new TV channels that owners of Astra dishes should be able to receive. But coupled with the new satellite have been announcements from BSkyB that "satellite TV is about to change forever", which usually means that either a) They have a couple of new channels in the offing, or b) They're going to start charging.

In fact, both are true. Sky have tied up a deal which includes its own channels, other existing channels and several new ones, to make various channel packages available to viewers — at a price, of course. For those who do not subscribe to any movie channels or the Sports Channel, subscribing to "Sky Multichannels" will cost £3.99 a month if they register before the end of the year. Thereafter it will be £6.99 a month.

So what do you get for your money? Without having seen any of the new channels, the phrase that springs to mind is 'quantity rather than quality'. The Multichannels package comprises existing channels Sky One, The Children's Channel, UK Gold and Sky News. Then there are channels that have been broadcasting on other satellites for several years, Discovery (the documentary channel), Bravo (classic films and general entertainment) and The Family Channel ("family" entertainment). Making up the package are a couple of channels that I have never heard of before: QVC (a twenty four hour shopping channel), Nickelodeon (another children's channel) and CMT (Country Music Television).

As a subscriber to the two movie channels, I will not have to fork out more than my £17 a month to "enjoy" the new channels, which is just as well since most of them do not appeal to me in the least.

A year or so ago, I would have included Sky One among the channels that I could live without, but recently I have found myself watching more Sky One than any other channel, including the BBCs and ITVs.

This is, of course, largely due to the screenings of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, which continues to provide entertaining and occasionally thought-provoking episodes. And Sky have announced that the new spin-off series *Deep Space Nine*, will start on 15 August — which means that if they carry on the repeats of *TNG* on weekdays, we will be able to watch *Star Trek* six days a week. If that isn't Trekker heaven, I don't know what is.

DS9 will replace the first season of *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles*, which has been a major disappointment after a promising pilot. As I said last issue, the overall tone of the series is that of a programme trying to make history come alive for youngsters, and this has been common to all episodes so far. But in taking on this task, the series has forgotten what Indiana Jones, the movies, were all about — rip-roaring adventures, bordering on the impossible, with lots of action.

While the TV programme has plenty of action most weeks, particularly in the episodes set during World War I, it is far more serious in tone, and thus loses the element of fun that makes the movies so enjoyable. The series' production values have maintained the same high standard as the pilot, but the stories are more like short historical episodes that happen to feature Indy than part of an on-going saga of a boy's life. And I hate the framing scenes, where the older Indy corners some poor soul to regale him with tales of his exploits. This is the sort of person most of us go out of our way to avoid while sitting on a train or bus, and turns a great movie hero into an unsympathetic, irritating and rather sad old man.

Elsewhere on Sky One, *The Flash* has re-surfaced for a series of repeats on Sky One. I quite enjoyed this series first time around, with its tongue in cheek approach to the comic book hero.

Dr Who is still being screened on UK Gold, daily at around 11.30pm and then in a massive omnibus edition on Sundays. Sadly, the stories have been mixed up by the channel, so one week we see the Doctor with one assistant, the next week with another, and the week after he is back with the first one. Currently, Jon Pertwee episodes are being screened and are reinforcing my opinion that he was the best of the Doctors. I hear the Beeb are planning to reincarnate the character yet again. I only hope they look at earlier episodes to get an idea of what the series was all about.

SF movies have been rather thin on the ground of late, although one did surface recently that took me way back to the days when I and hundreds of youngsters packed the local Odeon for the "Saturday morning cinema club". One of the big attractions was the weekly serial, usually starring Buster Crabbe as Flash Gordon or Buck Rogers. But my favourite was Rocket Man. Many was the time I ran home from the cinema afterwards,

arms stretched over my head and imagining that I was soaring over the streets thanks to the imaginary jet pack on my back.

The movie *Rocketeer* captures the atmosphere of the old series perfectly. It is the tale of a young pilot in 1938 who discovers a mysterious rocket pack (stolen from Howard Hughes, apparently!). It is not long before the thieves come looking for it, and our young hero becomes embroiled in a Nazi plot.

The flying effects are terrific, and really capture the feeling of speed when the jet pack is used. And while the plot is hardly original, it is a fitting homage to the original serial of the 1940s. There's a nice performance from Timothy Dalton too — cast as a villain for a change. Great fun, and one of the better SF oriented movies on Sky of late.

Club Scene

Peterborough

Local bank *The Sonic Energy Authority* are still chuffed to bits to be in Robert Rankin's *Suburban Book of the Dead*. They hope to start recording a new tape real soon now.

Hopes are high for the *Dr Who* thirtieth anniversary programme, as club member Adrian Rigelsford is working on the script.

The third Fantasy Fair on 26 September can now announce six guests. These include Rich Parsons and Tony Keaveny, authors of the ribald spoof "Colin the Librarian", Keren Gilfoyle, author of the fantasy novel *A Shadow on the Skin*, Ben Leech, author of horror novel *The Community* and headlining the list are Dave Sim and Gerhard, the team behind *Cerebus the Aardvark*. The Fantasy Fair will be held at The Cresset, Bretton, Peterborough from 11am to 4pm. Admission only £1.

Plans are already underway for celebrating the club's eighteenth birthday next May with a night celebrating local Fantasy publishers Dedalus already tentatively scheduled. For more information, write to 58 Pennington, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough, PE2 0RB.



Two more *Trek Dwarf* mini-cons are planned. On 28 August, a *Star Trek* mini-con will be held at St John's Hall, Major's Walk, Peterborough with special guest from the movies *ST5* and *ST6* as well as *The Next Generation*, David Warner (subject to work commitments, naturally). Then on 27 November, a combined *Red Dwarf*/*Star Trek* mini-con will be held at St John's Hall again. Admission to both should be £8.

Next year over the weekend of March 25-27, the second *Trek Dwarf* convention will be held at the Holiday Inn, Leicester. Membership rates are currently £30 (until 1 January 1994). Apart from a tribble hunt, 24 hour video specials, rare unseen footage and guest talks, the programme will include the Deadly Triple Fried Eff/Chilli/Chutney Sandwich competition (whatever that is). For more information, write to 47 Marsham, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough, PE2 5RN.

Oxford

The Oxford University Speculative Fiction Group meets (term time only) to discuss just about any subject related to SF and Fantasy. Video meetings take place every other Monday, 7.30pm at St Hilda's College, South JCR. Discussion meetings will take place every Wednesday 8.15pm at Wadham College, room HC1, library meetings will occur every Sunday 8.15pm at 64 Banbury Road (St Anne's College House) and there are various speaker meetings at irregular intervals. The Present is Lucy Marsterson (St Hilda's College, Oxford OX4 1DY).

Aberdeen

Greetings from the dark and chilly wastelands of the North. Our fresher fair lasts a massive three hours, and in this space of time it is physically impossible to sign up more than one hundred and eighty members, so managing eighty three is not too bad (but next year will be better ...) Initial events were a cheese and wine, a trivia nite, a Robin of Sherwood video night, a pub crawl and some silly games.

Manchester

The Manchester Pub meetings take place every second and fourth Thursdays of the month at the Crown and Anchor on Nelson Street (off Newwot Street, Piccadilly), from about 8.30pm to throwing out time. This meeting is purely a social gathering, with occasional breaks for the serious business of SF every couple of months, when Mike Don of Dreamberry Wine, delivers another order of books from his latest catalogue. Contact: Ian Brooks, Flat 4, 311 Dickinson Road, Longsight, Manchester M13 0NR (Tel: 061 224 0044).

Anime

Geoff Cowie

August Releases

Crying Freeman Part 1 (of 6), directed by Daisuke Nishio, Manga Video MANV 1015, 50 minutes, PAL, cert. 18, £8.99

Adapted from the *manga* about a man who is forced into becoming an assassin for *tong* gang. The hero, Freeman, sheds tears every time he is compelled to kill. In the sombre opener, he becomes involved with a lonely woman, the artist Emu Hino, whom he is instructed to execute because she was witness to a gangland murder. The video is typically Japanese in its juxtaposition of beauty, tenderness and extreme violence. I found this a rather uneven work; some scenes, particularly those with Emu Hino, are remarkably sophisticated, while others lapse into comic-book crudeness. And it is extremely bloody, with a body-count in double figures.

Freeman may surprise those who have only seen the early Manga Video releases. It has much to commend it; it's exciting, attractively animated and the British-dubbed dialogue is well cast and well acted. In the absence of any sub-titled editions, this well-produced and modestly

priced edition seems the one to collect. Manga Entertainment Ltd intend to release a further five bi-monthly parts.

Doomed Megapolis Part 1 directed by Kazuhiko Katayama, Manga Video MANV 2016, 50 minutes, PAL, cert. 15, £8.99

This isn't a well-known *anime*, so I was pleasantly surprised to find that it's well worth a look. Part 1 is set in Tokyo in 1908. A rapid building program is underway as the city expands. A hero of the Heian era (794-1185) is buried in what is now Tokyo and is its guardian spirit. However, an evil Satanist plans to disturb the sleeping Guardian with highly destructive results.

The cast includes a rival sorcerer, an innocent young girl, her friend, and her brother. Part 1 is very attractively animated, with interesting characters, and is exciting, with some spectacular magical happenings. It's also interesting because it's set in a real historical Japan. The villain wears a military uniform which may well be symbolic of the rising militarism of the time. And if you remember anything about the early twentieth century history of Tokyo, this adds an extra tension ...

The British-dubbed dialogue, as with *Freeman* and *Arislan*, is well cast and well acted, but this time it does sound rather incongruous in a one hundred per cent Japanese setting. According to the advance publicity, this is Cert. 15, but the preview didn't look to me particularly suitable for juveniles, as the horrific contents are on a par with *3x3 Eyes*. Parental discretion is advised.

Manga Entertainment Ltd. should be commended for bringing this video to our notice, and at the modest price asked, it's well worth buying. They plan to release another three bi-monthly episodes.

Future Releases

September: *Judge, Ultimate Teacher, 3x3 Eyes* (second [and final] part)

October: *Crying Freeman II, Doomed Megapolis II*

November: *Monster City, Heroic Legend of Arislan II* (final part)

December: *Crying Freeman III, Doomed Megapolis III*

Noticeboard

Interzone for Sale: Numbers 1 to 48 except 3 and 43 missing. All in excellent/mint condition. Best offer secures. Contact Geoff on 071 585 1031 (8 Oberstein Road, London SW11).

Crisis for Sale: For sale or even for free as long as I cover postage costs: the graphic comic *Crisis*, issues 1-53. Apply to Jessica Yates, 081 366 8551 (North London, Enfield, Hertfordshire area, accessible by public transport).

Wanted: *Lunatics of Terra* by John Sladek (any edition, reasonable condition). Also Manuals (operator and/or maintenance) for duplicators Gestner 360, Roneo Alcatel 880, electroscanner Roneo Alcatel 480, IBM Quietwriter III 24pin printer. Also *Fortean Times* 41 and compendium of 26-30; *The Skeptic* any early issues; *Strange Magazine* 1-9; *BoingBoing* 1-5; *Mondo* 2000 1,2; *Steamshovel Press* 1-4, 6. Contact Eugene Doherty, 110 North Parade, Belfast BT7 2GJ tel: 0232 645134.

Bookfinder: I accept wants lists for SF, Fantasy and Horror books. I deal mainly in out of print paperbacks but if I see hardbacks that are

wanted I will also offer them. Most 'free' searchers charge a minimum of £8, but I will only charge a nominal fee. It is my policy to encourage reading not to deter it by profiteering. I do not promise to find the books but if found I shall offer them to the interested parties before putting them up for general sale. Postage and Packing Charges 60p per book in the UK. I will also provide a clear plastic bookcover for rare or very good condition books (or on request) at 40 each. Phone (0203) 555741 if necessary and leave your details i.e. title, author, Contact address/number, condition required.

Magazines Wanted: *Future* No. 1 1978 (glossy, large size non fiction); *Famous Science Fiction* Vol 1 Nos. 3, 4, 5 & 6; *Satellite SF (USA)* 1958, December, 1958 February, 1959 February, April, July; *Galaxy Novels (USA)* digest No. 29; Doc Savage paperbacks 95, 101, 102, 105, 106, 107, 108, 115 on. Please contact Terry Jeeves, 56 Red Scar Drive, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 5RQ.

The Periodical Table

Fantasycon: The Midland Hotel, Birmingham, October 1-3, Guests of Honour Peter James, Tad Williams, Les Edwards, Master of Ceremonies Dennis Etchison, details from Mike Chinn, 137 Priory Road, Hall Green, Birmingham B28 0TG. In addition to book launches, talks and panels, all members will receive a sixty page perfectly bound Programme Book.

Novacon 23: Royal Angus Hotel, Birmingham, November 5-7, Guest of Honour Stephen Baxter, membership £25 to 1 October, details from Bernie Evans, 1 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands B66 4HS (tel: 021 558 0997).

A short story, "Omegatropic" is being serialised in the Progress Reports; the programme will concentrate on "hard" Science Fiction.

Con-Yak: Amsterdam, November 26-28, Dutch Guest of Honour Tonke Draft, International Guest of Honour to be announced later, membership £24 to 1 October, details from Richard Vermaas, James Wattstraat 13, 1097 Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Con-Yak has the reputation of being an exciting, SF-filled "sense of wonder" convention.

Vlbraphone: Oak Hotel, Brighton, February 4-6 1994, Guests of Honour Talis Kimberley, Tom Smith, Fox, membership until 30 November £22 waged, £18 unwaged, details from "Minas Istarion", 2 Duncan Cope, London Road, Bromley, London BR1 3SG.

The committee for the sixth British Filk Convention consists of Smitty (Chair), Valerie Housden (Membership), Minstrel (Hotel Liaison and Publications, John English (Treasurer) and Martin G-K (Things Technical). The hotel rate is £25 per person per night twin/double with special facilities for guests with unusual requirements. Manageable pets can be provided for. It is central: six hundred yards from the station and one hundred yards from the sea front.

Sou'Wester: Britannia Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool, Easter 1994, Guests of Honour Neil Gaiman, Peter Morwood, Diane Duane, Barbara Hambly, membership £25 from 3 West Shrubbery, Redland, Bristol BS6 6SZ.

This convention aims to offer the usual mixture to suit all tastes, though there will not be a fan room. There will be serious and not-so-serious programme items, panels, games, films, videos and costuming events.

Wincon III: King Alfred's College, Winchester, July 29-31 1994, Guests of Honour Algis Budrys, James P Hogan, details from 12 Crossbury Close, Emsworth, Hants. PO10 7TS.

Confabulation: Britannia International Hotel, April 14-16 1995, Guests of Honour Lois McMaster Bujold, Bob Shaw and Roger Robinson, membership £15 until 31 December, details from 3 York Street, Altrincham, Cheshire WA15 9QH.

The committee consists of Alison Scott, Mike Scott, Steve Davies, Giulia de Cesare and Sue Mason who aim to run a small convention but with space for anyone wanting to run their own events. Although themed programme streams are common at modern Eastercons, their only theme will be fun.

Intersection: Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre, Glasgow, August 24-28 1995, Guests of Honour Samuel R Delany and Gerry Anderson, membership £50 until 30 September, details from 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands B66 4SH.

In the introduction of the first Progress Report, co-Chairs Vince Docherty and Tim Illingworth write that "The theme of this convention is Space and Time. In particular the intersection of Time, as represented by anniversaries and events throughout history; and space as represented through other worlds parallel to our own with a different history ... In programme, our watchword is "Quality not Quantity". We see no reason to run the same old panels that no-one goes to, nor in re-hashing the same old ideas that people may attend out of some warped sense of duty. Of course, we will run a multi-stream programme including talks, panels, films, videos, extravaganzas, games and much more".

The Committee consists of Chris O'Shea II, K.I.M. Campbell, Hugh Mascetti, John Stewart, Kathy Westhead, Tim Illingworth, Mark James Meenan, Steve Davies, Martin Easterbrook, Vince Docherty, T R Smith, Oliver-Gruter-Andrew, James Steel, Bernie Peek and Jacky Gruter-Andrew. The Programme is being dealt with by John Bray, Amanda Baker, Dave Clement and Duncan Lunan (Science); Tim Broadbribb and Andy Morris (Film); Helen McCarthy and Tina Hewett (Media) and Steve and Jenny Glover (Fan). In addition, Mike Moir is masterminding the Hugos, Anne Page has responsibility for the Masquerade and Valerie Housden is overseeing Filk.

All offers of help are most welcome! There will be an Intersection filkbook with the theme of Time and Space, edited by Lissa Blackburn and including languages other than English, though preferably using the western alphabet. Also, the fan exhibits will include photographs and cartoons of fans and fan events, together with competitions to identify illustrations, logos and samples of style.



Determinants

Because *Matrix* is, by definition, a club magazine, it does not get too many reviews. A couple of months ago, one review plaintively said that the crossword was "impossible" so it was a pleasure to see Steve George's *Last Resort*. "It has enough publishing news to be valuable to SF professionals and fans" he writes "Good breakfast reading because it is divided into small sections, pockets of information here and there, lots of lists, the kind of stuff I like over coffee to kickstart my head".

That's a fair enough description. *Matrix* is not designed for continuous reading, but the information dumping is presented as readably, and with as much of a geographical spread, as possible. This also fulfils the aim of being a reference source so it is possible to look back and see last year's Hugo nominations which might have been forgotten in the euphoria of seeing the winner or people can see a club in their part of the world or a signing or a convention.

The weaknesses of this approach are obvious. The content dictates that the magazine gets picked up intermittently and flicked through or looked at deliberately for reference purposes; and it is all too easy to concentrate on local events, because they are easier to unearth. That would be satisfactory for space filling purposes, but highly frustrating to 99% of the membership.

I'm not sure, however, whether the reference aspects of *Matrix* do represent a weakness in philosophy. It's easy for me to say that because I am interested in the Nebula nominations and author signings and forthcoming books and the latest advances in science and technology, so should the members. I try to be fair though: my knowledge of and interest in Anime is strictly limited, as is my knowledge of Satellite Television, but as that does not appear to be representative, I have encouraged coverage of both subjects; nor I am personally interested in Dr Who, but it is not fair to ignore the Whovian celebrations this year. I think that what I am asking for is some feedback from members on what you want from *Matrix* and, equally importantly, what you **do** not want. I do realise that it is not part of the remit of BSFA membership for members to feel obliged to write letters or provide their own opinions, so I feel hesitant about asking: but it would be helpful.

The topic, though, which has been dominating my thoughts lately is a rather flip crack I wrote recently about the vulnerability of fantasy creations in Science Fiction. It was triggered off by a Diana Wynne Jones interview quite a while ago, where she deplored the artificial divide between the two genres and said that she would quite deliberately mix the two and, indeed, refuse to conform to this perceived split. It made me think about unicorns, for example, piloting space ships, which I thought would be exceptionally difficult: until I managed to rid myself of such humano-centric opinions and to realise, more humbly, that if intelligent beings had the capability of leaving their home to journey to or from the stars, they would surely be ingenious enough to adapt their control panels to their own special requirements. I turned, thoughtfully, to the James White *Sector General* books and re-read them with care.

I would like to explore this topic of the Fantasy/Science Fiction divide a little more closely, to assess if members think it exists, for a start, and then to see which books fall on each side or straddle the boundary. This will not be an exercise of criticism, more of personal feelings, and it may be possible to get some publishers' opinions too, if only to get some idea why Fantasy, Science Fiction and Horror are often jumbled up together on the shelves of bookshops. Over to you, then, members. Please do write: editing can be a lonely job and sometimes I feel a little out of touch with the very people I am producing the magazine for. Besides, I love getting letters and even like replying to them too.

Competition

Roger Robinson

Competition 106 Results

Firstly — **An Apology** to those of you who interpreted the rules in a matter I didn't intend. However, the apology is not too abject, as all the people who sent me LONG lists of titles are the prize winners. I had intended you to send me a list containing only one title of each length, but some of you sent me comprehensive lists with multiple titles of each length. I didn't ask for titles of only one character, but some of you sent some in anyway. The longest list was from regular entrant **Stanton Hatch** of Formby. As his list contained titles of every length from 1 to 12 and 14 (with an erroneous attempt at 13), he is the outright winner. A very close second was another regular, **Sean Friend** (2-13) with valiant attempts from David Lewis (1-12) and Vaclav Kriz (also 1-12). Hearty thanks are due to Vaclav, another regular entrant post permitting, who decided not to submit an entry containing titles in his native Czech, but sent in a list wholly in English. Thanks to all the others who entered, especially to those of you who enclose fanzines, comments, curses, etc.

A sample list, gleaned from all entrants — and using the best-known books and/or authors:

Pynchon	V
Sudak	X
King	It
Zamyatin	We
Blish	Vor
Pohl	Jem
Van Vogt	Slan
Dick	Ubik
Foster	Alien
Pratchett	Wings
Heinlein	Friday
More	Utopia
Anderson	Tau Zero
Shaw	Vertigo
Brin	Sundiver
Delany	Dhalgren
Pohl	Chernobyl
Shaw	Nightwalk
Anthony	Phaze Doubt
Heinlein	Double Star
McCaffrey	Dragonquest
Heinlein	Sixth Column
Dickson	Chantry Guild
Stableford	Halcyon Drift
Burroughs	Wizard of Venus
Hughes	Devil on my Back
High	The Prodigal Sun
Berlyn	Crystal Phoenix

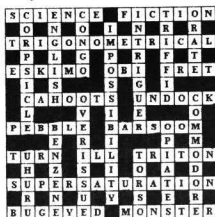
Notes:

We Can Build You, *Phule's Company*, *Dragonflight* (and several others) all have repeated letters and were disqualified, as were all title containing numbers, as was Tom Disch's non-SF title **ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPOQRSTUVWXYZ**.

Crossword 7 Results

A very healthy entry, as usual, with all but one completing the diagram correctly. I think the other may have been an oversight, as a very-well-

read fan failed to enter BARSOOM (bars + moo reversed) for 20 across. The answers are given on the grid below. First out of the hat was Sue Jones of Shrewsbury, to whom congratulations and prizes are due. (Un)lucky runners-up are Jenne White and Colin Greenland.



Wizard Results

Lucky winners here are Paul Cooper and Jan Goulding together with Dave Bell.

Competition 107: "Tele-Version"

I have been busy recently with the third Drabble book *Drabble Who*, which is being published to commemorate in drabble form the 30th anniversary of Dr Who. With this as initial spur, I thought that you might like to try to celebrate (or deprecate) in verse some of the best and/or worst of SF on TV. Please stick to short verse forms (maximum eight lines) or try your hand at limericks, clerihews, haiku, etc. The subject is very broad, so I expect a bumper post bag.

The address, as usual, is Roger Robinson, 75 Rosslyn Ave, Harold Wood, Essex RM3 0RG. Entries by 14 September please.

Crossword 8

John English

Across:

- 6 See 13A and 24
- 7 Confuse lazy Zen writer (7)
- 10 Men of letters repeat endlessly within about a third of a mile (8)
- 11 Lem's upset about Japanese sash which isn't fixed (6)
- 12 7's this of 19 can raise vehicles (4)
- 13,6,15 7's kind of treacle Grant has stirred (9,2,5,3,8)
- 15 See 13A
- 21 Featured at top of bill with furrowed brow perhaps? (9)
- 24,6 Jumping frog hit doll made by 7 (4,2,5)
- 25 What Cmapbell did — it's indeed tangled (6)
- 26 Smooth flow at close of day (8)
- 28 Used to be surrounded by wickedness as a juror .. (5,2)
- 29 ... put bent con in jar for virginal steed? (7)

Down:

- 1 See if Ra can turn black, maybe (7)
- 2 We hide, holding in drink container (8)
- 3 Man entertained by artist depicting moon of Saturn (4)
- 4 Loki's daughter encountered some headgear (6)
- 5 Assayer of bottom and top of your street (7)
- 8 Orange fly trap, perhaps (5)
- 9 7's these in 8 make nice spinner spin (4,7)
- 13 Orson Cott loses the right to be a rat! (3)
- 14 High class south eastern employment (3)
- 16 It's no good, Dan Dare at first must hold uranium (3)
- 17 Show agreement when fellow returns (3)
- 18 Longest day, maybe, or its close anyway! (8)
- 19 Where those of 8 can walk, 7's 12 of this (7)
- 20 Merchants from south with Communist craft heading north (7)
- 22 Rate varies when clutching pound in change (5)
- 23 Little boy reveals fib about total (6)
- 27 It takes ages to produce Bear's books (4)

Late News

David Garnett reports that *New Worlds 3* will be published by Gollancz in October or November and the line up will be: Introduction by David Garnett; "Spare Capacity" by Peter F Hamilton; "Gap Sickness" by Graham Joyce; "Friendship Bridge" by Brian W Aldiss; "The Mechanic" by Gwyneth Jones; "Tolkowsky's Cut" by Simon Ings and Charles Stross; "On the Shores of a Fractal Sea" by Graham Charnock; "This is the Road" by Jack Deighton; "Streetlife" by Paul di Filippo; "Children of the Revolution" by Paul J McAuley; then "Science Fiction Novels of the Year" by John Clute and "Afterward" by Michael Moorcock.

