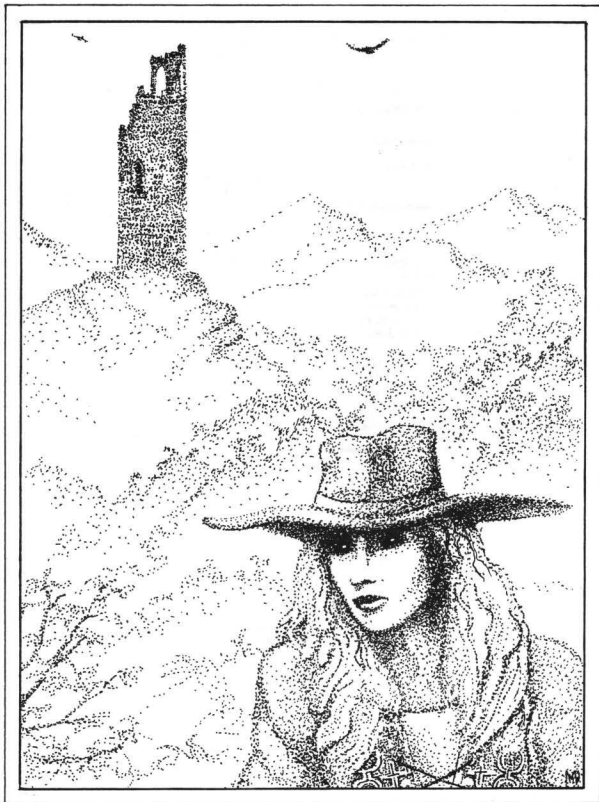


matrix

Issue 113

The newsletter of the
British Science Fiction Association



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February – March 1995

MATRIX

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The news magazine of the

British
Science
Fiction
Association

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The deadline for the April/May issue is
17th March 1995.

SPACE DOESN'T PERMIT an editorial this issue, so I will simply thank the people who helped so generously to put this edition of *Matrix* to bed.

Thanks for technical help goes to **Jim Trash** and **Tom Satterthwaite**. Valuable advice, assistance and general encouragement came from **Jenny** and **Steve Glover**, **Paul Kincaid** (whom I neglected to thank last issue), **John Madracki**, **John Ollis**, and **Andy Sawyer**.

And finally, a big wooden spoon to me for wrongly crediting **Paul Billinger's** article in *Matrix* 112 to **John Dallman** — apologies to both.

See you all at Eastercon!

— Chris Terran

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BSFA Membership

This costs £18 per year for UK residents, £9 for unwaged. Please enquire for overseas rates.

New members: Alison Cook, 27 Albemarle Drive, Grove, Wantage, Oxon., OX12 0NB

Renewals: Keith Freeman, 269 Wykeham Road, Reading, RG6 1PL

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Arthur C. Clarke

... will have the honorary degree of Doctor of Literature conferred on him by the University of Liverpool on January 26th. The presentation will — appropriately — be performed via a satellite link-up to the Sri Lankan state broadcasting organisation. The sound and vision signal will be transmitted from Colombo earth station, via the INTEL satellite, to Mercury Communications' international earth station at White Hill, Oxford. From there, the signal will be transmitted via the EUTEL satellite to the University of Liverpool. The link will be established by Brian Thomas in collaboration with Mercury Communications, Global Image and Advent Communications Ltd. Mr Thomas, a friend of Dr Clarke, supervised the satellite transmission of the Los Angeles Olympic Games.

The ceremony will also mark the final phase in the transfer to the University of Liverpool of the Science Fiction Foundation Collection. Dr Clarke is a patron of the Foundation, which is administered by Andy Sawyer. *Full report next issue.*

Noon Over America

US interest in Jeff Noon, author of the Clarke Award winning novel *Vurt*, is intense. Ann Petty, editor with the US publishers Crown, was so impressed by the novel and the pre-publication interest generated that Jeff has been invited for a three-week tour of the US in January and February, an unusual feat for a debut novelist.

British publication of *Pollen*, the sequel to *Vurt*, was delayed from November because of this and will now be issued by Ringpull Press on 28 March, when he will start a country-wide tour.

The March issue of *GQ* magazine will feature a short story by Jeff set in the *Vurt* 'universe', which explains much about its workings and background. And on 15 March he will be giving a talk at the ICA in London.

Fame At Last

Congratulations to *Warriors' Gate*, a team comprising members of the Peterborough SF Club and Telefantasy Group, who won the *Telly Addicts* title of 1994. They now go on to the Battle of the Champions League in early 1995. Besides the incredible privilege of being grilled by Noel Edmonds the team have been honoured by mentions on local news programs and an episode of *Eastenders*.

Powers Reclaims Expiration Date

Tim Powers in league with his agent Russ Galen has been involved in a game of publisher arm wrestling with Morrow/Avon. He had originally made a two book deal for \$100,000 with Morrow; the first of these, *Last Call*, won the World Fantasy award in 1993 and was considered reasonably successful. Morrow/Avon then suffered a setback in fortunes and the editor who had been working with Powers moved on and out. After much negotiation Galen managed to convince Morrow to return the US

NEWS

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Many thanks to

Brum SF Group, Peter Cox, Jenny Glover, Colin Greenland, John Willcox Herbert and Karl Johanson, Dave Langford, *Locus*, John Madracki, John Ollis, Brendan Ryder, Andy Sawyer, Jim Trash, Kirsty Watt, Bridget Wilkinson, Jessica Yates

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rights to the book, *Expiration Date*, for \$50,000 plus interest. Powers will be auctioning the rights for this and his latest novel, *Extreme Unction*, this month. He'll be hoping to make enough money to pay back Morrow and possibly get himself a cup of tea and a plate of chips too. * *Expiration Date* will be issued in the UK by HarperCollins in March.

— Jim Trash

Top Sellers

Terry Pratchett dominates the Waterstones list of sf bestsellers in 1994: *Hardbacks*

- 1 Terry Pratchett *Soul Music*
- 2 David Eddings *Hidden City*
- 3 Iain M. Banks *Feersum Enjinn*
- 4 J. R. R. Tolkien *The Lord of the Rings*
- 5 Terry Pratchett & Stephen Briggs *The Discworld Companion*

Paperbacks

- 1 Douglas Adams *Mostly Harmless*
- 2 Terry Pratchett *Men at Arms*
- 3 William Gibson *Virtual Light*
- 4 Tad Williams *Storm*
- 5 Terry Pratchett *Lords and Ladies*

Calling All Poets

Kerrie Pateman of *Poetry Now* Magazine and Cardinal Cox of the Peterborough SF Club are looking for poems to include in a new anthology of science fiction verse. Writers are invited to send up to two poems, each no longer than 30 lines, for consideration. Any poems accepted for publication will earn royalties which will be donated to the **Talking Books for the Blind** organisation. Nominations for an sf book to put on to tape are also requested; the most popular will be transferred.

Please note the closing date is **28 February** (apologies for the short notice). Send entries to: *Poetry Now*, Science Fiction Anthology, 1-2 Wainman Road, Woodston, Peterborough PE2 7BU. Contact Trudi Ramm at the same address for further information, or ring 01733 230759.

World Fantasy Awards

The 1994 World Fantasy Awards were presented at the World Fantasy Convention on October 30th which took place in New Orleans. Toastmasters were George R. R. Martin and Tim Powers.

NOVEL: Lewis Shiner, *Glimpses*
NOVELLA: Terry Lamsley, "Under the Crust"
SHORT FICTION: Fred Chappell, *The Lodger*
ANTHOLOGY: Lou Aronica, Amy Stout & Betsy Mitchell (Editors), *Full Spectrum 4*
COLLECTION: Ramsey Campbell, *Alone With the Horrors*
ARTIST: Alan Clarke & J. K. Potter (tied)
LIFE ACHIEVEMENT: Jack Williamson

Copyright and wrong

New copyright legislation comes into force on 1st July this year when the EC's Council Directive 93/98/EEC takes effect. The main change will be an increase in the period between an author's death and his or her work coming into the public domain from 50 to 70 years.

Opinions vary on the consequences. Recently many publishers (Wordsworth and Penguin, for instance) have been issuing cheap — 99p or so — editions of out-of-copyright works; some of these will, it seems, now go back into copyright, including James Joyce and M. R. James. And the work of H. G. Wells, who would have come out of copyright this year, will now have an extra 20 years grace.

What will happen to those books which are returning into copyright? Will they have to be pulped? Or it's possible, for instance, that once an edition of a work has been issued, that particular edition won't be subject to the new legislation. Judge for yourself. Here's the relevant clause:

Article 1

Duration of authors' rights

1. The rights of an author of a literary or artistic work within the meaning of Article 2 of the Berne Convention shall run for the life of the author and for 70 years after his death, *irrespective of the date when the work is lawfully made available to the public.* [My italics]

The italicised text seems to imply that the re-issued works — lawfully made available when the old copyright period expired — will go back into copyright, and therefore all those cheap editions will be illegal.

The only certainty in this appears to be fat times ahead for lawyers... O

Tom Holt

Writer of comic fantasies such as *Who's Afraid of Beowulf?* and *Faust Among Equals*, he published his first book when he was twelve. Or possibly thirteen. So overwhelming was the support and encouragement he received from his schoolfellows that he spent the next ten years associating authorship with having things shoved down the back of his neck. Moving on to two **Mapp and Lucia** sequels and a collaboration with impressionist Steve Nallon on *I, Margaret* (an unauthorised biography of you-know-who), he finally found fame and fortune by switching to fantasy. He completed this mini-profile:

Hobbies: Engineering (honest); getting under people's feet.

Favourite Author: Damon Runyan.

Favourite Drink: Coffee, preferably cold.

Method of work: Late-night huddle over word-processor.

Pet hate: Heroes. Villains are all right, because they usually know what they want to do and get on with it, but the average hero couldn't find his way out of a railway tunnel if he was chained to the back of a fast-moving train.

Ambition: To write books people want to read.

Newt Gingrich

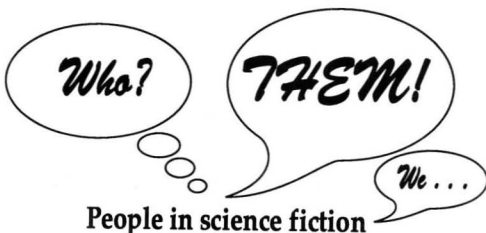
... is co-writing an alternative-history World War II novel (provisionally titled 1945) with sf author William R. Forstchen ('a genre writer of shining efficiency' — *SF Encyclopedia*). Gingrich is the new Republican House of Representatives Speaker, perhaps best known in the UK for his considered opinion of Hillary Clinton: 'a bitch'. According to *New York Newsday* he admires Asimov's *Foundation* series and Herbert's *Dune* books, and says that his leadership style is influenced by the words 'Kwisatz Haderach' ('shortening the way') from *Dune*, which conjures up a remarkable image of him riding into the House on a sandworm. He considers that 'science fiction is a key to understanding the Newtonian universe'. It seems curious for a politician with some understanding of the Einsteinian universe...

Richard Dreyfuss

... is another celebrity co-writing an alternative-world of novel, in this case with **Harry Turtledove**. The book is about a present-day America which never became independent from England, and will be published by Tor Books in the US.

Jules Verne

... won't benefit much from the recent discovery and publication in France of his second novel, *Paris au XXe Siècle* (*Paris in the 20th Century*); it was locked away after its rejection in 1863 but has now become a bestseller. English publication is scheduled for February this year. • The



book is an uncharacteristically dystopian prediction of crowded Parisian life in 1960, featuring cars, express tube trains, a fax-like device and the electric chair. The state is bureaucratic, right-wing and opposed to culture. *Plus ça change*...

Arthur C. Clarke

... as many of you will have seen, received the big red book on *This Is Your Life* on 11th Jan. Guest included Buzz Aldrin (the second man on the moon), Alexei Leonov (first space walker and artist), Heather Couper (astronomer), Helen Sharman (Britain's only astronaut), Clarke's brothers, and his old physics teacher.

Full review next issue.

Tad Williams

and Deborah Beale were married on 29 October in London; they will be moving to America in the spring.

Nicola Griffith

... featured prominently in a four-page article on feminist science fiction in the December issue of *Ms* magazine. The article centred around the history of the Tiptree Award, which Ms Griffith won last year for her novel *Ammonite*.

George Hay

was injured by a hit-and-run driver in November, suffering concussion and multiple fractures of one leg; sympathies and all good wishes from *Matrix*. He spent Christmas in hospital and welcomes hearing from the outside world: he can be reached at Cookson Ward, Conquest Hospital, The Ridge, St Leonards TN37 7RD. • George was instrumental in setting up the Science Fiction Foundation in 1971, today going from strength to strength in Liverpool; he is still a Council member. I first came across his name as the editor of *The Disappearing Future* (Panther, 1970), a 'symposium of speculation' which made a deep impression on me, particularly Samuel Delany's extraordinary essay 'About Five Thousand One Hundred and Seventy-Five Words'; this presents an exhaustive analysis of a single eight-word sentence.

Robert Heinlein

... and Gene Rodenberry have had 100km craters named after them on Mars by the International Astronomical Union. Heinlein was nominated by astronomer Dr Yoji Kondo (who has written sf under the name Eric Kotani) and co-sponsored by Arthur C. Clarke, Charles Sheffield and Carl Sagan.

Octavia E. Butler

... is a Hugo- and Nebula-winning author who lives in Pasadena, California. She has published ten novels, among them the *Xenogenesis* series, *Kindred*, and most recently *Parable of the Sower* (The Women's Press). She was one of the few omissions from the first edition of the *SF Encyclopedia* (for which the editors have made amends). She describes herself thus: "I'm a 47-year-old writer who can remember being a 10-year-old writer, and who expects someday to be an 80-year-old writer. I'm also comfortably asocial, a hermit in the middle of a vast sprawl of cities — a pessimist if I'm not careful, a feminist, an African American, a former Baptist, and an oil-and-water combination of ambition, laziness, insecurity, certainty and drive." One of the few black women writing sf, she has been influenced by many writers: at the beginning of her career at a Clarion workshop she was encouraged by Joanna Russ to stop using her initials (then still common practice for women sf writers), and also acknowledges Le Guin, Kate Wilhelm, Marion Zimmer Bradley, Leigh Brackett and Zenna Henderson. But her writing is mainly informed by the black experience in America: "I had this generation gap with my mother. She was a maid and I wished she wasn't. I didn't like seeing her go through back doors.... I also had this friend who could recite history but didn't feel it. One day he said, 'I wish I could kill all these old black people who are holding us back, but I'd have to start with my own parents.' He hadn't sorted out yet what the older generation had gone through. He thought they should have fought back. Well, it's easy to fight back when it's not your neck on the line." ○

☆ Orbit have announced that *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy*, **John Clute** and **John Grant's** companion volume to the indispensable *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, will be published in September at a price of £30.00.

☆ *Seasons of Plenty*, **Colin Greenland's** sequel to the multiple-award-winning *Take Back Plenty*, is finished and has been turned in (see *Matrix* 112 for *Colin's* thoughts on the *Jim Burns* cover). After a rest he will start work on an outline for *Mother of Plenty*, the third and final *Tabitha Jute* book.

☆ **Rudy Rucker** has completed *Freezone*, the sequel to *Software* and *Wetware*. However, his previous novel *The Hacker* and the *Ants* still doesn't appear to have a UK publisher.

☆ **Terry Bisson** has been signed to provide the novelisation of the movie of **William Gibson's** short story "Johnny Mnemonic" (see *Matrix* 112 for cast details). The book will be issued by HarperCollins and has a provisional publication date of 24 April 1995, as does the script (written by Gibson).

☆ **Samuel Delany's** notorious novel *Hogg*, written in the early 70s but unpublished because of its explicit nature, has finally been issued in America by Black Ice Books, who are based in the interestingly named town of 'Normal', Illinois. Price is \$24.95.

☆ **Larry Niven, Jerry Pournelle** and **Sven Barnes** have completed a sequel to *The Legacy of Heorot* to be called *Beowulf's Children*. Niven also has a new collection of 'Gil Hamilton's' sf detective stories due, *Flatliner*, and he is currently working on the third book in the *Ringworld* series; look for it in a year or so.

☆ **Julian May** has a new fantasy trilogy due later in the year called *The Rampart Worlds*.

Bantam
Harry Harrison *The Stainless Steel Rat Sings the Blues* (9 Feb; £4.99 pb, 230pp) — Paperback of the eighth *SSR* novel (but chronologically the third). "Jim diGriz is in the process of robbing the new Mint on Paskokaj when the heist goes terribly wrong. Threatened with a horrific death, Slippery Jim is offered a deal by the Galactic League: voyage to the planet Liokukae to bring back a missing artifact — the only evidence of alien life forms ever found. To ensure the utterly untrustworthy diGriz's co-operation, the League has given him a slow-acting poison — and just thirty days in which to succeed... or die." *SSRSTB* also features Harrison's usual cultural digs: in this case at rock music, fundamentalist religion, and a rusty macho robot called 'Iron John'.

Corgi
Simon Maginn *Virgins and Martyrs* (9 Feb; £4.99 pb, 317pp) — Impressively claustrophobic horror from the author of the widely-admired debut *Sheep*, complete with eye-crossing cover. • **Anne McCaffrey** *Lyoni's Pride* (9 Feb; £4.99 pb, 347pp) — Volume 4 in *The Tower And*

The Hive series.

Gollancz
Simon R. Green *Deathstalker* (Feb) • **Phillip Mann** *A Land Fit for Heroes, Vol. 2: Stand Alone Stan* (Mar) • **Terry Pratchett** *The Witches Trilogy* (Mar; hb) — Omnibus volume containing *Wyrd Sisters*, *Witches Abroad* and *Lords and Ladies*. • **John Whitbourn** *To Build Jerusalem* (Apr; hb) — New fantasy from the author of the award-winning *A Dangerous Energy* and *Popes and Phantoms*.

HarperCollins
Graham Edwards *Dragon Charm* (6 Feb; £4.99 pb) — First novel from a new writer: "Dragon Charm is an immensely moving, fabulous story that holds the key to ancient memories of dragons, those most strange and magnificent creatures of our mythical prehistory." • **Janny Wurts** *That Way Lies Camelot* (20 Feb; pb) • **William Horwood** *The Wolves of Time: 1: Journeys to the Heartland* (23 Feb; £14.99 hb) — First in a new trilogy based on the

hb, 370pp) — "California-born Curry writes suspense and horror fiction featuring parapsychological phenomena and the folklore and mythology of Western America. The material for her novels stems from her previous career as an investigative journalist specialising in alleged hauntings." Ramsey Campbell said of her: "Chris Curry is as inventive with sexual corruption and Gothic melodrama as with the supernatural", which sounds, er, interesting. *Thunder Road*, her second novel to be issued in the UK, will be out in May. • **Christopher Pike** *The Cold One* (19 Jan; £15.99 hb, 314pp) — First hardback adult novel from the prolific US writer of teenage fiction. "... an ages-old evil awakes in the remote East to spawn a plague of psychic vampirism and mass murder in the West."

Legend
Allen Steele *The Weight* (19 Jan; £12.99 hb) — hard sf. • **Andrew Harman** *101 Damnations* (19 Jan; £4.99 pb, 293pp) —

BOOKS

Recent and Forthcoming

revival of European wolves, from the author of *Duncheon Wood* and *The Wind in the Willows* (sequel by another hand), *The Willows in Winter*. The next 'willows' book, *Toad Triumphant*, will be published in October. • **Katherine Kerr** *Freezeframes* (6 Mar; pb) • **Robert Holdstock** *Merlin's Wood* (20 Mar; pb) • **Tim Powers** *Expiration Date* (20 Mar; pb) • **John Pritchard** *Angels of Mourning* (20 Mar; £4.99 pb) — Horror novel. • **Jonathan Carroll** *Panic Hand* (10 Apr; £14.99 hb) — First English publication of the master fantasist's collected short stories. • **Clive Barker** *Everville* (24 Apr; £5.99 pb) — Barker will be in London to launch this book and his new film, *Lord of Illusions*. • **Stephen Baxter** *The Time Ships* (27 Apr; hb) — Baxter's homage to Wells' *The Time Machine*.

Headline
Ramsey Campbell *One Safe Place* (Feb; hb)

Hodder & Stoughton
Mark Burnell *Freak* (24 Nov; £15.99 hb, 306pp) — Interesting first novel about a man who suddenly finds that he has the power of miraculous healing. Burnell's second novel, *Glittering Savages*, will be published on 16 Mar along with the paperback of *Freak*. • **A. A. Attanasio** *The Dragon and the Unicorn* (8 Dec; £16.99 hb, 483pp) — First in a series of Arthurian fantasies. • **John Douglas** *The Late Show* (8 Dec; £16.99 hb, 216pp) — UK slatter horror about an all-night movie horrorshow from a former advertising man. • **Chris Curry** *Panic* (5 Jan; £16.99

comic fantasy: "Quite appalling puns, lots of juvenile humour and even a few good jokes" (*Critical Wave*). • **Harry Harrison** *One King's Way* (16 Feb; £15.99 hb). • **David Gemmel** *Iron Hand's Daughter* (16 Feb; £15.99 hb). • **Bloodstone (16 Feb; £4.99 pb) — fantasies. • **Joe Donnelly** *Havock Junction* (Mar; hb) — Horror. • **Greg Bear** (ed) *New Legends* (Mar; hb) — Hard sf collection. • **John Brosnan** *Damned and Fancy* (Apr; pb) • **Brian Stableford** *Serpent's Blood* (Apr; hb) — First volume of his new 'space opera' trilogy.**

Macmillan
Frank Tippler *The Physics of Immortality* (Jan; £17.50 hb, 579pp) — Non-fiction (sort of) from the noted astrophysicist and inventor of a possible time machine (a very massive cylinder rotating extremely quickly). "... an astonishing and profoundly important book which presents a purely scientific argument for the existence of God and the physical resurrection of the dead." Reached the bestseller lists in the US and Germany. • **Robert Silverberg** *The Mountains of Majipoor* (Mar; £14.99 hb, 163pp) — "In *The Mountains of Majipoor* the disgraced Prince Harpirias leads an expedition into the frozen wastes of Zimroel's far northland. His near-hopeless mission, to rescue a scientific party who have gone into the region in search of evidence of the existence of the legendary land dragons and who have been kidnapped by a lost race. Their captors have conception of the size of the outside world and are expecting a Coronal to come and plead for the lives of their

hostages. And Harpirias is no Coronal ..."
 • *Sorcerers of Majipoor*, another **Valentine** book, is due later in the year.

Millennium

January's lead is **Michael Moorcock's** first novel for three years: *Blood* (26 Jan; £15.99 hb, £9.99 tp). Subtitled 'A Southern Fantasy', *Blood* is a combination of pulp sf, magic realism and the lazy tongue of the American South, with echoes of the works of Hugo Gernsback, William Faulkner and Angela Carter (to whose fond memory the book is dedicated). *Blood* is the first of three books which Moorcock sees as the culmination of the ideas and themes that have gone into the more than eighty works of fiction and non-fiction that he has published since 1961. Moorcock moved to America last year and now lives in Texas.

New English Library

Jonathan Lethem *Gun, With Occasional Music* (16 Feb; £4.99 pb, 262pp) — First UK edition of a very well received sf

the true source and nature of UFOs. This being Nazi super-science, it seems. Ho hum ... December saw the first UK edition of **A. A. Attanasio's** well-regarded and eccentric far-future epic *Radix* (£5.99 pb, 466pp) and the paperback of *Solis* (£4.99, 184pp).

Orbit

... kick off the new year with **Tom Holt's** new comic fantasy novel *Odds and Gods* (19 Jan; £14.99 hb, 282pp) and the paperback edition of *Fast Among Equals* (19 Jan; £4.99 pb, 292pp). "*Odds and Gods* is set in the Sunnyvode Residential Home, where Gods can enjoy their retirement with a comfy chair, a welcoming fire and three square meals a day. There is peace and quiet until Thor and Odin start playing around with that damn traction engine. As the world faces an eternity of chaos, only dentures can save the day!" Surely that should be 'shave'? In *Fast Among Equals* George Fausst escapes from a Hell about to be turned into a theme park. Both books

Star Wars Galaxy 2. "Over fifty of today's greatest comic and fantasy illustrators provide new visions of the *Star Wars* galaxy, offering their personal interpretations of the movie's imagery. Includes, amongst others, Howard Chaykin, Bill Sienkiewicz, Jose Quesada, Moebius, Jack Kirby, Dave Gibbons, Boris Vallejo." Both pb, £14.99.

Out in March is *The Art of Star Wars — The Empire Strikes Back* (£17.99 pb, 176pp), "an amazing full-colour celebration of the artistic and technical accomplishments in the second chapter of the most spectacular space epic of all time. Lavishly illustrated with production sketches and paintings, costume designs, construction drawings, matte paintings, storyboards and stills and complete with biographies of the most outstanding artists and technicians who created the film."

April sees the final volume, *The Art of Star Wars — Return of the Jedi* (£17.99 pb, 160pp).

The Women's Press

Octavia Butler *Parable of the Sower* (23 Feb; £6.99 pb) — First UK publication of a well-received novel: "In 2025 Los Angeles is a devastated shell of a city, where small, walled communities are fighting to protect themselves from those on the outside, including gangs of 'paints', people addicted to a drug that induces an organic desire to burn, rape and murder. Lauren Olamina is young, African-American and suffers from 'hyperempathy' — she can feel the pleasure and, more often, the pain, of others around her. Compelled to try to change the world she creates a new 'religion' and sets out on foot across California, determined to sow the seeds of a whole new philosophy of life..." TWP are also re-issuing Butler's earlier novel *Kindred* (23 Feb; £6.99 pb).

Imports

Mike Resnick (ed) *Alternate Outlaws* (Tor, Nov; \$4.99 pb, 544pp) — Anthology of stories featuring 'good guys gone bad', including Mother Teresa, Elizabeth I, Helen Keller, Elvis, and Lassie. Authors include Walter Jon Williams, Jack C. Haldeman, David Gerrold, and Maureen F. McHugh. • **John E. Stith** *Manhattan Transfer* (Tor, Nov; \$4.99 pb, 384pp) — Well-written hard sf adventure. • **Maureen F. McHugh** *Half the Day Is Night* (Tor, Nov; \$21.95 hb, 320pp) — Follow-up novel to McHugh's celebrated *China Mountain Zhang*. • **Nancy Kress** *Beggars and Choosers* (Tor, Nov; \$22.95, 320pp) — Sequel to the 1993 Hugo- and Nebula-winning novella (later expanded to a novel) 'Beggars in Spain'. "Beggars and Choosers continues the story as civilization begins to collapse under the strain of uncontrolled social change and nanotechnology gone wild. While a tiny elite gifted with beauty and intelligence rule a massive underclass of jobless drones, a new breed of radically altered superbeings known as the Sleepless withdraw to an island retreat to carry out their own agenda for humanity." • **Christopher Stashoff** *The Witch Doctor* (Del Rey, Jan; pb, 416pp); *The Secular Wizard* (Del Rey, Jan; hb, 384pp). Books 3 and 4 of *A Wizard in Rhyme*. • **James P. Hogan** *The Immortality Option* (Del Rey, Feb; hb, 320pp) — Hard sf, sequel to *Code of the Lifemaker*. O

Recent and Forthcoming

mystery. It's a mix of cyberpunk, Chandler and Dick, suffused with black humour and a rather bizarre imagination. Lucius Shepherd said: "Lethem has created a *tour de force*, a blending of speculative and noir fiction that is by turns witty, tough and profound. *Gun* ... offers the first distinctive voice of a new generation." Kim Stanley Robinson's opinion is similar, even to the wording: "By turns funny and ferocious. The Last Good Man struggles heroically to survive in a noir world getting darker by the minute." • NEL claim that **Harry Turtledove's** *Worldwar: In the Balance* (Nov; £5.99 pb, 656pp) is "the hottest sf/lite fiction property since *Dune*"; it turns out to be an alien invasion tale reminiscent of Niven & Pournelle's *Footfall* and the TV series *V*. The twist is that the lacertine aliens cast their beady eyes on Earth during World War II, giving Turtledove a chance to display his historical training again. Clearly aimed at the bestseller lists, this cast-of-thousands blockbuster is merely part one of a series (a fact not advertised in the book, which ends jarringly in mid-air); the second volume, *Worldwar: Tilting the Balance* is due in Spring. • **W. A. Harbinson** *Projekt Saucer Book 1: Inception* (Nov; £5.99 pb, 490pp); *Projekt Saucer Book 2: Phoenix* (16 Feb; £5.99 pb, 568pp) — The first two books of a four-novel expansion of his 1980 novel *Genesis*. Books 3 and 4, *Genesis* and *Millennium*, will follow later in the year. "The most terrifying, awesome conspiracy in human history starts here..." apparently. Harbinson said of *Genesis*: "[I]t could only have been written as a novel because the facts on which it is based unravel one of the most controversial mysteries of our times —

feature approving blurbs from an obscure magazine called *Vector*. • Also due: **Iain M. Banks** *Against a Dark Background* (Jan; £5.99 pb) • **Anne McCaffrey** and **S. M. Stirling** *The City Who Fought* (Mar; £16.99 hb, £5.99 pb) • **Arthur C. Clarke** *The Hammer of God* (Apr; £5.99 pb) • **Rachel Pollack** *Temporary Agency* (Apr; £4.99 pb) — "The single most gripping book I've read this year" (Michael Swanwick).

Pan

Tony Richards *Night Feast* (Jan; £4.99 pb) — Horror/fantasy from the author of *The Harvest Bride* about the return of the old Egyptian gods into the world. • **Peter Hamilton** *The Nano Flower* (Mar; £5.99 pb, 565pp) — Last in the **Greg Mandel** trilogy of sf novels set in a politically interesting near-future UK (previous volumes were *Mindstar Rising* and *A Quantum Murder*). "This is hard sf at its very best: a cunning mystery, a curious love story and a tantalising, wholly original vision of alien first contact. Facing rival companies who are claiming to have suddenly acquired technology superior to anything on Earth and worried by the disappearance of her husband, Julia Evans, head of the Event Horizon Conglomerate, has little time to concern herself with a beautiful flower delivered anonymously to her. But this flower has genes millions of years in advance of terrestrial DNA. One man can discover its origin: Greg Mandel." • **Charles de Lint** *Memory and Dream* (Apr; £14.99 hb, 400pp) — New novel from the Canadian urban fantasy and musician.

Titan Books

Released in January and February were *The Art of Star Wars Galaxy* and *The Art of*

BSFA INFORMATION GROUP

Firstly, a reminder that the BSFA has re-launched an information service. The **BSFA Information Group** is attempting to map out a role for itself and is actively seeking any questions on sf related topics or suggestions for what you would like to see the group doing.

Following the announcement in the last issue of *Matrix*, we have yet to receive any correspondence, but given that most people would not have received their copies until Christmas at the earliest and this article is being written on the 8th January (due to publishing deadlines), this is probably to be expected.

If you wish to send us any correspondence however, or would like to offer your services in any specialist area, please write to:-

Paul Billinger	Paul Allwood
82, Kelvin Road	15, West Carr Road
New Cubbington	Retford
Leamington Spa	Notts.
Warwickshire	DN22 7NN
CV32 7TQ	

The important business out of the way, I thought I'd just mention a comparatively new Internet facility I've just discovered called a Web Crawler (apologies to any of you Internet experts out there, if I'm teaching you to suck eggs!). A number of different Web Crawlers exist. Most Internet providers allow access to one directly from their home site.

BSFA NEWS

World Wide Web (WWW) sites provide hypertext (text, graphics, sound, etc.) pages on whatever subject a provider wishes to cover, along with navigation routes to other providers' web pages which may also be of interest. The problem with WWW sites is that, unlike Internet newsgroups whose contents are easily identifiable, unless someone has specifically told you the address of an interesting site, you may not know of its existence.

A Web Crawler is a facility that has been set up to allow searches through WWW site content summaries, based on user provided keywords. The results returned take the form of a set of WWW site addresses and associated summary documentation, which satisfy the specified search criteria. From this list, an Internet user merely clicks on one of the chosen selections and is connected directly to the relevant WWW site.

For example, I used "Worldcon" as my search criteria and the Web Crawler found 20 WWW pages that referred to this keyword. From these results I was

able to connect to the Canadian and LACON III WWW sites and the Intersection gopher (non-hypertext) site. The Canadian and LACON III sites are extremely good examples of WWW pages. The LACON III site even allows you to check membership details, either for yourself or for some other person.

It appears to me that the Internet is likely to become a vital tool for the Information Group and any other members who are lucky enough to have access. One way the Information Group might be of use could be to act as a source of useful or related Internet sites. Would this be a useful service? Please let us know.

In addition, although I am computer literate, I don't profess to be an Internet expert, nor do I have unlimited free access. If there are any members who would like to offer themselves as contacts whom the group could turn to for assistance in this area if needed, we would be pleased to hear from them.

— Paul J. Allwood

TIMECOP

Reviewed by Joseph Nicholas

Directed by Peter Hyams: US, 1994

The plots of time travel films are usually pretty ropery, full of unresolved paradoxes, abandoned alternate time-lines, and characters struggling to gloss over the scriptwriters' failure to grasp the relationships between cause and effect. *Timecop*, thankfully, is different. It has a fully worked-out plot, with a beginning, a middle, and an end — or, if you prefer, two beginnings, several middles, and no end — and no dangling storylines to bring one up short. This is perhaps not surprising, since the script was written by the authors of the comic on which the film is based, who would naturally have a vested interest in getting their creation through to the screen with as little interference from the studio as possible.

It's a pity, then, that with a strong plot going for it, its realisation throws up a number of common-sense objections to the manner in which the characters travel through time. Crucially, why do travellers into the past need to be hurled down a magnetic track in a capsule, when the capsule does not itself accompany them into the past, and when they can get back

from the past with the aid of nothing more than a pocket-sized homing device? Why is it that the travellers' arrival in the past is sometimes extremely precise — straight into the office of the 1929 Wall Street brokers who's actually from 2004, for example — and sometimes only approximate — dumped from a height of twenty feet into the Circular Pool in Washington DC, for another example? And if the bad guys have their own time travel operation, presumably with their own time capsules and magnetic track, how do they manage to keep it hidden from the timecops?

And of course it stars famous Belgian kick-boxer Jean-Claude van Damme as the eponymous Timecop, who still can't act but who does seem to be getting rather better material than hitherto. Indeed, both he and the scriptwriters seem confident enough about his rôle to make explicit jokes about both his English accent and his kick-boxing skills, a pointer, perhaps, to some Arnie-style irony in the future. Even so, there are moments in all the kick-boxing, and general beatings-up perpetrated by him

and the bad guys, that you wish they'd just cut the dancing and do what everyone else usually does in action films: pull a gun, and shoot their opponents instead. But van Damme does get some good support from the other players, particularly Don McGill as his cynical boss and Ron Silver as a shark-like US Senator who wants to be President and is willing to use time travel to do so.

To say more would give away too much of the story — which, despite the above caveats, has some nice science-fictional touches. The opening sequence, for example, could have been lifted straight from the well-known sub-genre of US civil war stories in which time travellers with machine-guns assist the Confederates to victory (and I wish that, the 1929 sequence notwithstanding, there had been more scenes set in the past; everything is instead confined to 1994 and 2004); and every time van Damme returns from the past he finds that each future is slightly different from the one he left (and each, until his last return, slightly worse). Such touches just about compensate for all the kick-boxing.

— Joseph Nicholas

FILM REVIEW

OBITUARIES

Peter Cushing OBE (1913-1994)

SAY THE NAMES *Professor van Helsing* or *Baron Victor Frankenstein* and one must surely think of Peter Cushing. That, for sixteen years (1957-1973) he could convincingly portray these two notable characters — playing both for and against the side of the angels — with such apparent ease was no small measure of his skill; while, if one adds that he was chosen to embody the mercurial Dr Who when he transferred to the big screen, and that to many he was the quintessential Sherlock Holmes, we have some indication of his range as well.

Peter Cushing was born on 26th May 1913 in Kenley, Surrey, and soon found himself treading the boards in local rep. After some theatrical success he decided to take a stab at Hollywood and, in 1939, having invested in a one-way ticket, he set sail for America. Over there he did six plays in Summer Stock and made half a dozen movies.

He returned to England in 1942 and resumed his stagework; playing everything from Shakespeare to Noël Coward. He also continued his film career and when, in the early Fifties, he discovered television and added a third string to his bow, he found himself continually in demand. His television appearances alone made him a national figure, and it was not uncommon for him to make up to six

films in twice as many months.

Throughout a distinguished career that covered over ninety films and many varied rôles — Himalayan explorer, avuncular TimeLord, vicious Nazi officer — Cushing was the consummate actor; a warm, genial man who was as much loved by his colleagues as by his legion of fans.

In addition to an OBE, Mr Cushing received four awards: in 1953/4 he won the *Daily Mail's* National TV Award as the 'Outstanding Actor of the Year'; in 1955 he was given the 'Best Performance Award' by the Guild of TV Producers and Directors for his portrayal of Winston Smith in the first television adaptation of *Nineteen Eighty Four*; in 1956 a Viewers' Gallup Poll earned him the 'Best Actor Award' in the *News Chronicle's* TV Top Ten; and in 1973 he was presented with the 'Licorne d'Or' (France) for his part in *Tales From the Crypt*.

Peter Cushing never really recovered from the death of his adored wife in 1971, and after a protracted illness he died on 11th August 1994. He would not have been sorry to finally join his beloved Helen.

— John Madracki

Robert Bloch (1917-1994)

IT IS VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE to pick up a book by Robert Bloch without being reminded, in huge type, that he was the author of *Psycho* — and while there is no questioning the importance of this novel in his career it does tend to overshadow his other work.

Robert Bloch was born in Chicago in 1917. His first published story, "Lilies", appeared in the semi-prozine *Marvel Tales* in 1934 when he was only seventeen, but his first important sale was "The Secret of the Tomb" to *Weird Tales* a year later — and it was through this that he became a protégé of H.P. Lovecraft. Within ten years he had written over a hundred stories and the best of these can be found in collection *The Opener of the Way*. A booklet titled *Sea-Kissed* was also published at the same time.

By 1945 Bloch had begun writing prolifically for radio, most notably with *Stay Tuned For Horror*, and was using various pseudonyms, among them being Wilson Kane, John Sheldon, E.K. Jarvis, Will Folke and Tarleton Fiske.

His most famous story from this period was "Yours Truly Jack the Ripper" — a much-anthologised tale that later found its way to TV in 1960 as one of nine episodes that Bloch contributed to NBC's *Thriller* series, which was hosted by Boris Karloff.

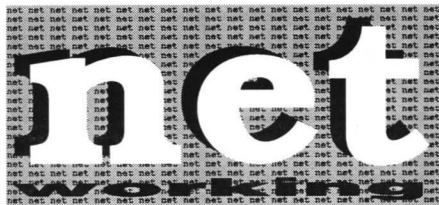
Psycho, written in 1959 and filmed by Alfred Hitchcock a year later, was only one of several novels in which Bloch explored the criminal mind of the psychopath — and other meritorious examples are *Firebug* and *Deadbeat*.

By the mid-Sixties Bloch was writing regularly for the cinema and for Amicus Productions in particular, with such films as *The Skull* (1965), *Torture Garden* (1967) and *Asylum* (1972). The Seventies also saw some worthy TV-movies: *The Cat Creature* (1973) and *The Dead Don't Die*, for instance.

Although better known for his works of Horror and Fantasy, Bloch had an enduring love of sf and supported fandom throughout his career. In 1959 he won a Hugo for his short story "That Hell-Bound Train" and 1962 saw the publication of both "Atoms and Evil" and "The Eighth Stage of Fandom" (recently reprinted).

Robert Bloch died, not unexpectedly, on the 23rd September 1994 after a prolonged terminal illness. His legacy has been a canon of work that will remain among the finest in the Horror/Fantasy genre.

— John Madracki



Welcome

... to *net working*, an occasional column devoted to aspects of the global computer network as it relates to the science fiction world.

This issue **John Dallman** makes some observations on the drawbacks of email (electronic mail) and **Tom Satterthwaite** visits the Cyberia Café in London, where you can try out the Internet over a coffee.

There Will Be War

John Dallman

[In the fanzine Attitude 3 John Dallman talked about conflicts in fandom, and realised that the next war will come from ...]

Email.

'Gosh, what a shock,' I hear you say; but this war isn't the one you've noticed. The trouble and expense of getting connected are the simple part; the more subtle issue comes in the different way that people express themselves in this weird new medium.

We're used to writing letters, and to talking. Both of these are linear forms of communication. 'Non-linear' writing, as practised by Moorcock and William Burroughs, swaps around the order in which things happen, but more or less everything does come out in the end. When a text is written by several hands, who've seen it develop linearly, but isn't presented in the order in which it was constructed, there's a problem.

Mike Westhead was complaining about Intersection's email at Wincon. In his experience of using it, one subject at a time dominated the multi-way email conversation, and with the number of issues that are important to a Worldcon, this was not efficient. He's right, but the real reason isn't obvious — I need to construct an example:

Say Andi and Bert both have an issue they want to raise. They both send out messages, and you receive them like this:

- 1 Andi says 'Relax'
- 2 Bert says 'Stand up'

People read these messages, and add some comments. The next day's mail looks like this:

- 3 Charlie on Andi
- 4 Diana on Andi
- 5 Diana on Charlie on Andi
- 6 Eric on Diana but incomprehensibly
- 7 Frederick complaining about Eric

No-one's said anything about Bert's original message, but there's been a lot of noise about Andi's. Mike, who didn't read his mail yesterday — everybody has to be able to skip sometimes — finds that there's a conversation going on. In a verbal conversation, it would be rude to change the subject when so many people are interested. Bert's message gets ignored, and that piece of information dies.

One good way to deal with this is to use software which draws lines on the computer screen to link up messages, and puts them in order of *structure*, not creation. You'd get:

- 1 Andi says 'Relax'
- 3 ↳ Charlie on Andi
- 5 ↳ Diana on Charlie on Andi
- 6 ↳ Eric on Diana, incomprehensibly
- 7 ↳ Frederick complaining
- 4 ↳ Diana on Andi
- 2 Bert says 'Stand up'

It's a lot more obvious with this layout that no-one's taken any notice of Bert's message, and that Eric and Frederick aren't relevant to what's really going on — but it's still weird, isn't it?

It isn't Intersection's 'fault' that this happens; when you have mail coming from many systems, some of them very different, then trying to get the information needed for a nice screen layout is next to impossible. The problem, as I see it, comes more from trying to get a lot of inexperienced people to use a foreign method of communication, without explaining what's going on. US Worldcons use email too, but more of their people have been using it for longer, and almost no-one had to get a computer just to use email for the convention.

This isn't just a problem for fans. I don't think that a very large proportion of the world's population will ever use email in anything like its current form, but an awful lot of journalists, writers and academics do. The 'linearity gap' is a lot stranger than the generation gap. Interesting times are a-coming.

— John Dallman

Getting Connected in Cyberia

Tom Satterthwaite

Being invited to get out of the office for an afternoon to play with the Internet for the first time was a tempting offer. Matching that up with the chance to meet up with a friend tipped the balance and three hours later after screaming down the M1 in a diesel van, I arrived at Cyberia for my initiation into a foreign land.

The much-vaunted Cyberia is the UK's first Internet café. It caters for the

growing number of people in London who want to experience the net, and while they do, mix in a bit of socialising with real people, and a bit of consumption with real food and drink. With full Internet connections at seven terminals, Cyberia is a welcome diversion for coffee addicts sick of just lino, leatherette and a dingy wall to divert their attentions.

Cyberia is tucked into a side street just off the Tottenham Court Road. It's welcoming, and because it's fairly small, not too daunting. Inside, the pine and glass furniture give it a sort of Habitat-like atmosphere: comfortable and

solid as long as you don't want to slouch. During my visit, a press launch was being held and Cyberia was packed. I'm not a journalist and I was very pleased to see that the doors hadn't been closed. Regular and new customers wandered in despite the throng of media types milling about with their wine glasses and sometime pretensions. It said a lot for the management style at Cyberia that they were relaxed enough to keep the doors open.

I eventually found a free terminal and sat down. Here I was, ready to surf the net, glide across the information superhighway, and boldly go. Although I

felt reluctant to be so provincial as to be truly excited by this, it was an exciting moment. And in the way of some exciting moments, it was quickly gobbled up by the genie of reality. I find that there are few things in life that are so implacably unwilling to negotiate as a computer, and in my case, depending on my mood of the moment, I'd either picked the Scargill or McGregor model.

Ange. I didn't want to miss a minute, and at £2.50 every half hour, I guess most people will be motivated to get going and keep going, or jump off. Within seconds, expert Cyberian fingers had snapped me back and I was off. Cyberia is linked to the Internet by Easynet. You're offered a number of options, and it is fairly straightforward, even despite my initial problems. I'd used email before and therefore didn't want to spend too much time on it. After sending a quick hello to my office, and failing to send a message to *Matrix* (I'd forgotten the email address), I moved on to browse the World Wide Web, the friendly graphical interface for net users.

Web browsing stunned me: it's as close as I've been to wandering through the biggest, most colourful and friendly library as I can imagine. If you haven't tried it yet, try and do so soon. As I had no specific agenda, I was quite happy just to flit about looking as I went. Each subject area has links to others and by just clicking on highlighted text, you shoot through to the next linked area. I wandered through the doors of NASA, the White House, and a load of other places from pizza parlours and delicatessens to universities and colleges and back again. And this is where a potential rub is: unless you want to find something specific, you'll be wading through lifetimes of reading in subject

areas that you'd rather leave to someone else. It's not unlike clearing away newspapers and starting to read them. Instead of dealing with the mountain of paper, you spend hours, don't find anything of real interest, and end up with just another pile of newspapers that really could do with a trip to the recycle tip - if only you had the time.

During my half hour slot (I didn't feel able to hog a machine for longer although several did) several people came and went. I had one of those almost cringing school situations where you either definitely don't know the answer to a question, or you definitely do, and you want to bury your head in the crook of your arm to protect the contents of your page from the prying eyes around you. I didn't feel I was browsing or surfing anywhere glamorous, and any allusion to gracefully balancing on the top of a great wave of information held tightly under the grip of my board seemed very far off as I plodded down an avenue in information suburbia. I guess that maybe going straight to NASA or Bill Clinton's outer office is a touch passé even now.

To my right, three young men happily browsed several sites before searching for and finding an area of rugby songs and jokes. With a couple of drinks inside them they were happy and laughed at even the most feeble things. They enjoyed themselves, and in the fairly laid-back style of Cyberia, no one was going to object to the bawdiness of the jokes.

To my left, a woman approached the machine in much the same way I guess I had. I want to do this but will it bite me? And in public? She had the same problems I had in getting going, and we chatted briefly while she was sorted and lightened by a waitress collecting the log-on fees. Again, once she was off, her

attention seemed locked into experiencing all that was on offer. She clicked away, and in a few minutes seemed to be looking at the ancient arts and cultures of China. I guessed that she had secretly wanted to get deeply into Ming Dynasties and the like, but perhaps the evening or the place weren't quite right for that sort of journey. She hadn't used the net before and, after the half hour, was flushed with the intensity of the event, the flowing wine and, perhaps, the glare of several journeaus peering over her shoulder.

I enjoyed my trip to Cyberia. If you're itching to try the net for yourself, and can make the journey, don't wait. I reckon that if you go when things are less hectic, you'll have a more relaxed and understandable introduction to it. If you do want to go for the food and drink as well as the connections, I'm afraid I'm not at all qualified to vouch. The coffee was cafetière-like, and the sandwiches appeared to be styled in the same vein as the furniture! I guess if you did want to eat a full meal you might feel a bit like a gooseberry at the Summer Ball.

I came away from Cyberia feeling positive about the place, but a bit dazed by the net itself. There is so much to see that I reckon you could drown in a sea of paper like Tuttle, the Heating Engineer, before you ever found the nugget you might have been searching for in the first place.

Good luck.

— Tom Satterthwaite

The Cyberia Café can be found at:
39 Whitfield Street, London W1P 5RF
Tel: 0171 209 0983
Email: cyberia@easynet.co.uk
Tom can be contacted at:
tom.satterthwaite@chaos.centron.com

♣ The Hull Science Fiction Group ♣

The Hull Science Fiction Group came into being when the original members felt that they had lost touch with the local university scene. It was felt that a more general group that would be open to everyone and not just students would be a good idea, providing even more contact with sf enthusiasts. The idea was that regular meetings would be held where science fiction could be talked about and discussions would take place.

The Hull Group started meeting regularly in a city centre pub on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month. Every 4-6 months we get together for a planning meeting where we brainstorm ideas for the future. When we've come up with a good selection we assign them a date to take place on, and a chairperson if they're discussion meetings. Usually this timetable is adhered to, only changing if we manage to get a guest author, or if for some reason the chair or person giving the talk can't make a particular meeting.

Some people have questioned our, to them, rigid programme of events, saying that they prefer to meet in a bar with congenial company and talk casually about whatever comes up. However we have found that our regular schedule works well. Discussions are often lively and the art of heckling is highly developed in the Hull Group. Individual talks are informed and interesting, with the person giving the talk using the opportunity to re-read books by a favourite

author, or just to indulge themselves in nostalgia. No-one is forced to give talks, or indeed to join in the discussions, but most do; even those too shy to join in at the beginning are now getting involved and giving talks. Nor do we neglect the social side: many of us see each other on a regular basis, and there are many parties throughout the year. If we want to get together for a quiet drink and a chat all we need to do is pick up the phone. But the second and fourth Tuesdays each month are for serious stuff!

Talks and discussions coming up in the near future include:

- 14 Feb Gay sf — Andrew Butler
- 28 Feb Sherri S. Tepper — Carol Ann Green and Estelle Roberts
- 14 Mar Food and Drink in sf — Chair Dave Roberts
- 28 Mar Iain (M.) Banks — Carol Ann Green
- 11 Apr Conspiracy Theory and Paranoia in sf — Chair Ian Bell
- 25 Apr Shapeshifting — Chair Estelle Roberts.

Meetings are held every 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month, 8.00pm at the Old Blue Bell, Market Place, Hull. 50p per meeting. If you are interested in coming along to one of our talks or taking part in one of the discussions, contact: Carol Ann Green, 5 Raglan Avenue, Raglan Street, Hull HU5 2JB (Tel. (01 482) 445804) or Dave Roberts, 97 Sharp Street, Hull (Tel. (01 482) 444291).

— Carol Ann Green

SHOCK HORROR

Dave Langford reveals the secret of perfect health

OUTDATED TECHNOLOGY has a certain bizarre charm. I can't bring myself to part with my collection of obsolescent glories like old slide rules... Remember slide rules? Or the 1950s *Astounding Science Fiction* cover for Murray Leinster's 'The Pirates of Ersatz', showing a kerchiefed space-pirate swarming through the airlock with a slide rule sinisterly clenched between his teeth? Ah, nostalgia: the big scientific rule with log-log scales, the miniature circular one, and best of all the telescopic helical model that squeezed out an extra decimal place of accuracy by wrapping a five-foot-long scale around a cylinder...

For those wondering what proto-yuppies used to carry before cellphones and electronic personal organisers, the Langford collection has the answer: the Swiss Precision Mechanical Pocket Calculator. Actually it was made in Liechtenstein, but for sales purposes the words 'Customs Union with Switzerland' establish the jewelled Swissness of the enterprise. It's a matt-black tube, looking rather like an expensive camera lens with hordes of adjustable slides and a handle on the end. You set up figures on the slides and... *add them*... by a mere turn of the handle. Subtract by turning the handle the other way! Multiply by turning it... yes, you're ahead of me there.

There are also some nifty facilities for shifting dec-

imal places: as Erich von Däniken might have phrased it, it's hard to believe such things were known to the primitive, cave-dwelling craftsmen of 1966. One imagines technofreaks of those pre-Internet days rushing each other breathlessly excited postcards about how *with* appropriate hacking the miniature Babbage Engine could be persuaded to extract square roots.

Onward to the next exhibit. The phenological bust on our mantelpiece is suspected to be a modern replica: 'You wouldn't have got it for £25 if it was *real*,' sneered an arts-and-crafts expert. My wife christened it Oliver after the great Oliver Wendell Holmes, who put the boot into the phenologists with a knockabout lecture featured in his *The Professor at the Breakfast Table*. 'At last comes along a case which is apparently a *settler*, for there is a little brain with vast and varied powers — a case like that of Byron, for instance. Then comes out the grand reserve-reason which covers everything and renders it simply impossible ever to corner a Phenologist. "It is not the size alone, but the *quality* of an organ, which determines its degree of power."

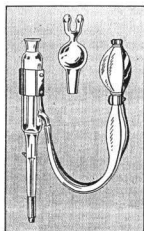
According to Oliver the most prominent bump on my head seems to indicate Acquisitiveness — presumably in the sense of Unsuccessful Acquisitiveness, but since it's a movable lump (a cyst or some such) I can always push it up a bit towards Sublimity. Now there's glory for you.

The collection's place of honour goes to the Ediswan High-Voltage Healing Box, vintage 1933, enabling you to commit high-frequency healing in the privacy of your own home. Its case is covered in imitation leather and opens to show a nostalgic vista of bakelite, with exciting knobs (one indicating cosmopolitan ambitions, since it switches between '100-125' and '200-250' volt supplies), a socketed handle that pulls out on a lead, and strange glass electrodes held by clips in the velvet-lined lid.

What you evidently do is to slot your favourite electrode into the handle's socket, turn on, and press it relentlessly against the Afflicted Part. I have offered this opportunity to all my friends, who dived under tables and out of windows in a gently diplomatic way. The lonely experimenter thus had to test the device on himself.

Switching on produces a hellish racket from what is presumably an induction coil inside, and twiddling the Intensity knob then leads to an eerie violet glow in the glass electrode and a prickle of tiny sparks

EDISWAN OZONE INHALER



This attachment has been designed for use with any of the standard High-Frequency sets.

This Inhaler will be found to give instant relief to all sufferers from Bronchitis, Nasal Catarrh, Asthma, Hay Fever, Influenza, and in fact all Bronchial complaints.

DIRECTIONS FOR USE.

Take the glass nasal piece of the Inhaler and fill it loosely with cotton wool.

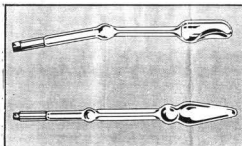
Saturate this cotton wool with a quantity of the inhalant sufficient to be absorbed by the loosely packed wool, and replace the nasal piece carefully into the main portion of the Ozone Inhaler. Insert the plated end of the Inhaler into the Applicator Handle of the High-Frequency Set, turning it gently until it is felt to engage in the square socket.

Grasp the applicator handle as low down as possible and turn on the current.

The violet fluorescence will now appear inside the tube of the electrode. Press the double nozzle of the nasal piece up the nostrils without using any force, and work the rubber bulb as if it were a scent spray.

The effect of the High Frequency is to generate pure Ozone, and a mixture of pure Ozone and Pine Vapour is driven right to the back of the nose and down into the lungs.

PROBE



Prostatic Electrode

(Insulated)
This is arranged to deliver the electric discharge exactly over the prostatic gland. There is no waste of current where the Electrode enters the orifice.
Cat. No. 86667/25 11/6 each

Rectal Dilator Electrode

The use of these Electrodes is sufficiently indicated by their name.
Cat. No. 86667/26 3" diam. 9/-
Cat. No. 86667/27 2" diam. 11/-
Cat. No. 86667/28 1" diam. 10/6
Cat. No. 86667/29 Insulated 12/6

where it touches the aforesaid Afflicted Part. This fizzy sensation, accompanied by a paralysing reek of ozone, must have persuaded users that jolly beneficial times were happening. My wife was less convinced: 'Stop! Stop! It's going to do something awful!'

Clearly 1930s punters were not so timorous, and the Edison Swan Electric Co Ltd (Ediswan House, 23/25 Constitution Hill, Birmingham) did good business in those days. The Box comes with a whole catalogue full of tempting offers — thirty-one specialist electrodes to cover all medical contingencies. My basic kit has only the bare essentials, alas: the puny four-shilling Surface Electrode, ending in a flattened glass bulb 'for use on any part of the face, body or limbs'; the appropriately-shaped Rake, 'very effective for Falling Hair, Dandruff, restoring natural colour and invigorating the hair growing system generally'; the Metal Saturator, a chromed tube that bypasses the usual route through gas-filled glass to zap the patient directly with 'a very strong current which gives powerful tonic effects'; and, most fearsome and science-fictional of all, the Fulguration Electrode.

This, undoubtedly a favourite implement in Gene Wolfe's guild of torturers, uses the principle of electric discharge from a sharp point to generate showers of vicious little sparks 'of strength sufficient to deal with corns, warts and similar growths'. Like Bumps of Acquisitiveness? Having tested this very briefly on a handy wart and uttered a few loud opinions, I've come to suspect that 'similar growths' may include fingers.

Luxury extras begin with the Roller Electrode, ideal for use when the Surface Electrode sticks or jerks in its passage over terrifiedly sweating or carbonised flesh. The Double Eye Electrode has twin cups allowing both eyes to be simultaneously convulsed ('excellent tonic effects on the eyeball and optic nerves'). Particularly elaborate is the Ediswan Ozone Inhaler at a hefty thirty-five shillings: 'a mixture of pure Ozone and Pine Vapour is driven right to the back of the nose and down into the lungs', which sounds fairly, er, breathtaking.

And some of the specialist electrodes I'd rather not go into, or indeed vice-versa; it is left as an exercise for the reader to imagine the Nasal, Urethral, Vaginal, Rectal, Prostatic and Dental Cavity models plying their trade. Excitingly, the Rectal model comes in four different sizes to suit individual tastes. Not for nothing did I keep remembering a long-ago *New Scientist* headline competition: ALTERNATIVE HEALER USED BARBED ELECTRIC ENDOSCOPE — SHOCK HORROR PROBE.

A four-page Chart of Instructions explains how the Ediswan Box will cure everything from Abscess to Warts, including Alcohol and Drug Habits ('apply over liver, solar plexus and to the spine. For Cocaine users a mild current applied to arms, legs and soles of feet, until the skin is reddened') and continuing through Brain Fog, Deafness, Dropsy, Female Troubles, Hardening of the Arteries, Obesity and Stiff Neck. Cynics might wonder why the magic current, so good at making boils, goitre, piles and warts shrink quietly away, has an entirely opposite effect when applied to Breast Development or Impotence.

Funny you don't seem to see this on sale any more.

If only the wonderful Box were still widely used, the time would have come to combine my litter of technologies like a problem-solving hero in *Analogue*. Elaborate slide-rule calculations would ascertain the phrenological location of the Bump of Fandom. This, I estimate, must lie in the general region which on Oliver is labelled: 'Sublimity . . . Grandeur . . . Sense of the Terrific'. (Paul Kincaid used these very words as a fanzine title for some while, to general bafflement.) It would only remain to have a special electrode designed, purpose-built to blast powerfully energising voltages at inspirational frequencies directly into a withered or ailing Node of Fannishness — and then maybe we'd see a few more volunteers to help run the BSFA . . .

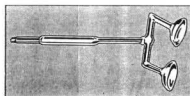
—© David Langford 1994



Fulguration Electrode

This is constructed so as to give a spark of strength sufficient to deal with corns, warts and similar growths. It is very efficient and usually a few applications only are required.

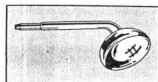
Cat. No. 86667/12 ... 7/6 each



Double Eye Electrode

(Use as No. 86667/10)

Cat. No. 86667 11 ... 12/- each



Breast Electrode

Specially designed for breast development. The treatment consists of applying this electrode with a rotary action around the breast, encouraging the growth of firmer and more flesh.

Cat. No. 86667/35 ... 16/6 each

SF AND FANTASY ON VIDEO

Geoff Cowie

Since I last wrote a column for *Matrix* there has been a continuing stream of animation releases of interest to sf and fantasy fans. The big event has been the entry of Pioneer, known for their audio, video and laserdisk products, into the UK anime market. Pioneer have been building a reputation among fans for making anime of strikingly high quality. Their *Tenchimuyo* was a popular hit, first in its native Japan, and latterly with anime fans in the USA. The bilingual closed caption laserdisk sold well enough in the USA to prompt the release of dubbed and subtitled tapes.

Videos so far released or confirmed in the UK include *Tenchimuyo* episodes 1 to 6, *Moldiver* episodes 1 to 6, and *Green Legend Ran* parts 1 to 3. All are dubbed, and all conform to Pioneer's self-declared policy of releasing only "soft" anime, i.e. animation suitable for family viewing.

TENCHIMUYO vol 1 to 3 (eps. 1 to 6) 60m each, cert PG, £12.99

Tenchimuyo, roughly translated, means "No Need for Tenchi" or "good for nothing Tenchi". Tenchi is a typical Japanese high school student who find himself in a whole heap of trouble when, on summer vacation with his grandfather, he unleashes a demon which his forefather had imprisoned in a shrine 700 years earlier. The series follows Tenchi's adventures while he battles with the beautiful and mischievous demon Ryoko and meets the other strange characters who also want to see Ryoko back in her eternal prison.

In episode 1, Tenchi disobeys orders not to enter an old shrine, finds an ancient sword hilt and unwittingly releases the demon. When he returns to school the demon follows him there. She terrorises the hapless Tenchi in the deserted halls of the school. Just as he faces defeat, the sword he removed from the shrine reveals its magical powers and Ryoko disappears, only to reappear later in Tenchi's bed!

In episode 2, Tenchi discovers that Ryoko is from outer space, and that she wants to possess his magic sword. Meanwhile, Aeka, crown princess of the planet Jurai travels to Earth in search of her fiancée Yoshio who had disappeared years before following a battle with Ryoko. From space, Aeka spies Ryoko who is desperately trying to raise her own spaceship Ryo-Okii. (The spaceships are made of wood.) Aeka takes both Ryoko and Tenchi prisoner on her ship and there they meet Sasami, Aeka's cute little sister who innocently releases them. On being told that Yoshio is long dead, an enraged Aeka battles with Ryoko until both ships fall to Earth and are destroyed. Now Tenchi has even more house guests!

In episode 3, my favourite episode, Ryoko is still trying to find the magic sword. Aeka despairs of ever returning to her home planet. One day Ryoko comes home with a big black egg which hatches a cute kitten-like animal. To annoy Aeka she claims that she and Tenchi are its parents. Actually, the egg was produced by Ryoko's ship and will grow up to be just like it.

An opportunity for Tenchi and Aeka's love to blossom presents itself. Later, they come across a tree which Aeka realises is Yoshio's spaceship transformed. She realises that Yoshio imprisoned Ryoko in the first place and returns the sword to Tenchi — Yoshio's descendant.

In episode 4, two new characters are introduced. The much-wanted space bandit Kagato is heading towards Earth and the utterly incompetent airhead Mihoshi, granddaughter of the Galaxy Police commissioner, is sent to capture him. Back on Earth, Tenchi and the girls are visiting a hot spring resort. Mihoshi's ship falls to earth and she is saved by Tenchi.

In episodes 5 and 6 the decisive battle with the space criminal Kagato takes place. Pioneer evidently put a lot of effort into the English (actually Canadian) dub. I'm not so keen on the voice of Aeka, who doesn't sound dignified enough, but I really liked the voicing of Wasyuu. This is a series that everyone interested in light-hearted science fantasy or anime ought to watch! If it doesn't make you an anime addict, nothing will... The soundtracks also are excellent and viewing with hi-fi stereo is recommended.

MOLDIVER (Pioneer) vol.1 to 3 (eps 1 to 6), 60m each, cert PG, £12.99.

In *Moldiver* two young people, Hiroshi, a technologist, and his sister Mirai, are able, courtesy of a special research project, to transform into American-style superheroes. Unfortunately the powersuits only work for a maximum of 666 seconds and then deliver them back in an unclotted condition. Also featuring a handsome hunk, Masaki, a mad scientist, Dr Machinegal and his female androids, this is definitely a fun series with much silliness and rather sends up superheroes, as well as deriving much amusement from the passions of the average Japanese girl for fashion, men and idol singers. The dubbing works quite well and the animation is up to the usual Pioneer standards. I usually give superhero stuff a miss but I quite enjoyed the early episodes of this.

GREEN LEGEND RAN (Pioneer) vols 1 to 3, 45 mins each, £12.99.

An all-action sf adventure series with an 'eco' message, this is set in a future where there is no longer free water or clean air. Six large mysterious aliens control the only water sources. It never rains and the "oceans" are giant dustbowls roamed by armed landships. The aliens are worshipped by the élitist "Rodoist" class. Opposed to them are the revolutionary "Hazzard" faction. A teenage orphan boy, Ran, longs to join the Hazzard, and to avenge his mother whom he saw killed by a man with a scar, in factional fighting. He meets the beautiful Aira, a girl with silver-blue hair who seems to hold a key to the alien mysteries.

This is a highly original series, at once sf adventure, love story and cautionary tale, and guaranteed to entertain. The animation contains some superb 'vision' sequences experienced by the characters, as well as some striking background artwork, and the videos have enough depth and subtlety to satisfy the more discerning adult viewer. Deserves to become a classic; a "must" buy for anyone interested in screen sf or animation, and infinitely superior to *Star Trek*, *Star Wars* and their ilk.



Manga Video have also been busy as usual. Amongst other things, they have released a nine-part "Cyber-punk" video collection, comprising three series: *Cyber City Oedo 808*, *Ad Police*, and *Genocyber*, each in three parts. The cert. 18 collection is targeted at the mass youth market where MV has enjoyed considerable commercial success, and has singularly little in common with the Pioneer

releases. Recently *MV* sold their millionth animated video. Does this mean that "manga" is now more popular in the UK than printed sf?

CYBER CITY OEDO #808 File #1,2,3 (Manga Video), 43 mins each, cert. 18, £9.99.

A three-part series, set in a high-tech future, about three convicts, Sen Goku, Benteen and Gogul, who have special skills and are pressed into service as expendable cyber-cops with the promise of sentence reduction. The action is violent and the air blue with four-letter words, but the technology which pervades Part 1 is unconvincing. Verdict: contains the usual ingredients calculated to appeal to Manga Video's target audience.

AD POLICE #1,2,3 (Manga Video) 26 mins each, cert 18, £9.99.

The 3 part series is set in the same world as *Bubblegum Crisis*, released by rival subtitling label Anime Projects. However for no sensible reason *MV* have dubbed the androids "Voomers", rather than "Boomers". This is quite a decent series, taking as its theme (as in *Bladerunner*, to which it owes an obvious visual and thematic debt) the uncomfortably narrow boundary between human and machine displayed by advanced androids.

In #1, policeman Leon has to deal with Boomers which lose control and go on destructive rampages. It turns out that the Boomers have been abused. There is only the slight suspicion that the plot has been written so as to let the hero shoot some women. In #2, a female executive, subjected to competitive stress, replaces too many of her female organs with synthetic Boomeroid substitutes, with violent and tragic results. A young policeman too is tempted to undergo replacement surgery for a minor eye complaint. When I saw an American subtitled version of this, it struck me as one of the most sophisticated and moving pieces of animation I had ever seen, showing a female perspective on the future, but the dubbing diminishes it considerably to something rather average.

GENOCYBER (Manga Video) #1 46min, #2 23min, #3 23min; certs. 18/18/15, £9.99/£6.99.

From a manga (Japanese comic) by Tony Takezaki, who also penned the *Ad Police* manga. The visuals in #1 are often quite stunning, with an unusual range of backgrounds, graphics and character designs of surprising beauty. It's very violent and bloody, and there are scenes where the screen looks like a butcher's shop. In common with *Oedo 808*, the dub incorporates gratuitous swearing. As for the plot, it's the usual rubbish of a powerful and secretive corporation developing a cyber-weapon which gets out of control and demonstrates homicidal tendencies. The only novelty is that it looks like a young girl. #2 has inferior visuals and more of the same nonsense.

Worth seeing #1 (in any language, it doesn't matter) for the visuals.

MV are continuing the *Guyver* series, more mass-market power suit escapism much liked by boys, and concluding the intermittently likeable *Crying Freeman* series with a double-length tape. They have also announced the video release of *Wings of Honneamise*, one of the most expensive SF anime movies ever made, and *Legend of the Four Kings*, a little-known fantasy series.

WINGS OF HONNEAMISE (Manga Video), 119min, cert. 15, £13.99.

This is one of the most sumptuous anime releases yet seen in the UK. Two hours of breathtaking animation achieves the rare feat of creating an entire alternative world on screen. It's an epic story of a civilisation's first faltering steps into space. The Royal Space Force is a dead-end posting for dreamers and failures, only allowed to continue because the rulers foresee cynical uses

for it. The young hero, Shirotaro Lhadatt, joins the Space force after failing selection for the Air Force. A chance encounter with a devout young woman encourages Shiro to press himself forward for selection as the first man in space. Meanwhile hostilities simmer, and the poor are demonstrating against the extravagance of the space program. As the program nears completion, the military conspire to use the launch site as a bait to trigger an all-out war.

This has everything — superb animation, high-tension action, humour, good characterisation, and a well-realised world-creation. The characterisation of the devout girl Leiguni is particularly noteworthy. The movie attracted little attention in its native Japan because of poor publicity, and has had limited attention in the West from anime fans more interested in collecting girly action comedies. Yet it deserves to be seen as one of the finest animated films ever made, and as a thoughtful piece of sf moviemaking. Should be bought by all fans of screen sf being infinitely superior to *Star Trek*, *Star Wars* and their ilk.

LEGEND OF THE 4 KINGS (Manga Video) Chap. 1 & 2, 94 min, cert. 15, £13.99.

This is a twelve-chapter modern fantasy adventure based on an original novel. The four Ryudu brothers are descended from an ancient lineage and appear outwardly normal, living quietly in a Tokyo suburb, but have inherited spectacular supernatural powers. In the first chapter, powerful corrupt forces learn of the brothers' legendary dragon-king lineage and subject them to threats, kidnappings and harassment. The brothers respond with a display of their powers, and the eldest is taken to meet the evil power behind the scenes, Gozen.

Subtle it isn't, but this action-adventure is a lot of fun, with well-realised caricatures, and the lively dubbing for once captures well the humorous tone of the videos. I was hooked into viewing the whole tape at one sitting.



Kiseki Films are issuing the *Robotach* series on video. So far, 3 three-episode tapes of a projected seven tape series have appeared. Each is about 90 mins long, cert U. *Robotach* was an 87-episode English-language US TV series cobbled together by Carl Macek from three unrelated Japanese anime series. It infuriated purists but did much to kickstart interest in Japanese animation.

The second volume covers some of the same events as the movie *Macross* — *Do You Remember Love*; though with an inconsistent continuity, different character names and a sharply contrasting style. The main interest in *Robotach* other than spotting influences was in following the characters through the 87 episodes. The second volume, featuring Lynn Minmay and her pilot boyfriend, seems more enjoyable than the first. The American production was clearly aimed at juveniles, though it had an equally large adult following. The early episodes were previously released in the UK on the "Little Gems" juvenile label. Not many people noticed.

Kiseki Films are issuing *Return of the Overfiend* #3 (subtitled) cert. 18, for those who prefer their sado-porn subtitled rather than dubbed. Kiseki are also issuing the interminable *Ambassador Magma* series in two-episode volumes, 60 mins long, cert 15. Ditto *Starblazers* (a.k.a. *Space Cruiser Yamato*) a juvenile and dated-looking space adventure series, cert. U. Maybe they had to buy these as part of a package deal.

Note: all titles are PAL and English dialogue unless otherwise stated, and all Pioneer, Manga Video and Kiseki tapes have hi-fi stereo. All videos are available from Cybertek, Agora Centre, Bletchley, tel 01908-274850.

— Geoff Cowie

four fanzines

SO HERE WE ARE in the bleak midwinter, that time of year which lacks decent television programmes, warmth, and fanzines. Everyone did their latest zine in time for Novacon and Simon Ounsley reviewed them before me. Not strictly true, he did miss a few and there were a couple that came out about a week after Novacon. And there is, of course, his own zine, *Lagoon 6*.

"One of the reasons that's always put forward for the relative scarcity of fanzines these days is that with so many cons, we all get to see each other so often that we don't need fanzines to keep in contact, but at the same time one of the incentives for producing fanzines seems to be to give them out at conventions. Does this make sense?" With this short comment Simon Ounsley has no doubt added more fuel to his already fiercely burning discussions of fanzines, fandom(s) and conventions; which are just some of the topics currently being discussed in the letter column of *Lagoon*. Others include rock music, death, Columbus, healing and books (SF at that!). And with just over ten pages there is plenty said and a lot of insights being made. This is easily one of the most vital letter pages around and probably the most coherent. I believe this must in part be due to Simon's amazing ability to wonder at the 'whys' of things that most of us don't normally even think to ponder. He's like the adult version of the child who asks you why the sky is blue. (Or the more general version of the *New Scientist*'s "The Last Word".)

This is a doorstep genzine — it runs to 65 pages — with only two of the articles being done by other people. However, he did cheat and reprinted a fourteen page article which he had done ten years ago and which recently got me into trouble at work for incessant giggling. (I've really only giggled before at the written word when it's been produced by Messrs Pratchett or Rankin, and only selected works at that.) It is essentially a con report on Novacon 14, in 1984, with bits of Michael Ashley's writings, which had appeared in a recent zine, thrown in. "Welcome To The Pleasure Dome" is highly original and ingeniously attacks the conventions involved in writing con reports, tells us it's doing this, and manages to give a much more interesting and funnier con report as a result. At points highly surreal this is a very clever piece of writing which makes the reader think about his or her own actions both at conventions and when relating back the events to others. Do we dress up the con reports to show that, besides the usual grumbles about faulty things in the bedrooms, all we did was have fun and that the whole thing was just one continuous string of amusing incidents? Is this because we feel that emotions such as anger, irritation and humiliation are not suitable for fanzines? And why shouldn't we just write up the funny anecdotes and exclude the sometimes less palatable occurrences, if that's what we want to do? But, above all, the article is hilarious.

"Art Class of '94" is an illustrated article done by D. West. It is an analysis of fanzine artwork and has an accompanying quiz

sheet on which you record your guess as to which artist drew which picture. My guess is that Mr West drew the lot and is a smugly laughing at us up his ink stained sleeve. The premise for this article is brilliant: he wants to explain to us the benefits of art in fanzines and draws examples of different fanartists work to show the diversity of styles and subject matter that are around. He also discusses how inappropriate use of illustrations detracts from both the written article and the illustration itself. However, in Don's attempt to outsmart us all I believe he may have spent some of the time doing the artwork which would have been better utilised in constructing the written piece with more care and attention. In short, he excels himself in the artwork and smartass categories but does not produce a classic piece of D. West prose.

"The Neighbours From Hell" by Steve Palmer is a piece of real-life horror writing depicting the way in which he and his wife's lives were virtually ruined by the Tories' Care in The Community programme. This is an amazing story that is told after their escape — they moved house — in which the writer's stunned disbelief of the situation still comes through very strongly. Can you imagine trying to live in just one room of your house because you're so afraid to make any noise that the neighbours might hear and complain about? You can when you read this.

In Simon's intro he actually writes something current (OK, it was a cheap dig). He writes about the local self-help group for M.E. sufferers that he has become heavily involved in and tells us that he is recovering from this terrible debilitating disease. However, it seems that when he tries to do too much he still has times when his brain "crashes" and I feel that this must be a source of great frustration for an intelligent man who is obviously wanting to be more active in many ways. Another frustration for him is trying to educate doctors that M.E. really does exist as a physical illness and it sounds like he is managing to make a difference in this respect.

Simon ends the zine with an ambitious piece, "Setting The World To Rights", about what is wrong with Britain today and his solution. This is a highly opinionated article which is more polemical than anything I have ever read, or even heard, from Simon. His usual smooth writing style suffered as he seemed to try to rush it all out as if in one breath. I was left cold at one point when he blamed feminism or, more specifically, women taking off their aprons and going out to work for the problems of unemployment, crime and drugs. Even though he went on to say, "It's no good going back to a system in which the wider abilities of so many women went unfulfilled and in which many found themselves trapped for economic reasons in unpleasant and often violent relationships. No, we've made progress in that area and it's no good going back again." I was still left with the impression that he would prefer those old ways to what we have now. In fact, that's what he said. I hasten to add that this was not his solution.

jackie

and a funeral

Overall, *Lagoon* is an excellent zine. Simon is one of the best writers around who knows how to serve up a superb mixture of interesting, humorous and thought-provoking articles.

Balloons over Bristol is a semi-erratic ritual offering from the Bristol SF Group under the rule of The Semi-Supreme Being Christina Lake. There is sadly not much at all written by Christina, whose writing I greatly admire, in this issue. The lack of Christina Lake writing does change the normal flavour of the zine: it is brought more down to earth than usual — even though this issue claims to be a product of the Bristol UFO Society — and, for me, suffers some for its grounding.

That's not to say, though, that it is unenjoyable. There's an interesting, if somewhat glib, interview by Christina of Peter-Fred on his recent trip to China, where he lost his passport. Though you don't feel as sorry for him when you learn about the jet-setting life he is currently living. The best article (points for style and humour) comes from Steve Brewster who gives us the low down on Wincon III and shows that it is possible to enjoy a con whilst sober — due to a prescribed penicillin course. Though this does lead me to speculate that he has a rather favourable allergic reaction to penicillin. (Personally I prefer to be pissed at cons as it can prove to be a very useful excuse for some of my behaviour, though I suspect that this could be a Catch 22 situation.) Another article, chronicling a day outing for the Bristol group, shows us just how debauched they are. Their day out having been a kind of scaled up version of a pub crawl. They had gotten hold of a list of cider makers in the area and off they went with a rather large van and came back with the same large and, by then, suspension-less van carrying fifteen varieties and several gallons of cider! Thank you Brian Hooper for confessing all eloquently and with no mention of a hangover. Timmy Goodrick writes about his experiences with a downstairs neighbour, Miss Lee, who communicated with him by leaving him notes. As time went on the notes became more and more bizarre, and it became obvious that all was not right in the head of Miss Lee. I know it's not right to laugh at these poor people but it was funny. I'm really beginning to think that Care in the Community is a seriously bad idea — just this week a friend's flat was flooded by his upstairs community-cared-for neighbour.

One of the fanzines I have received since Novacon is **Malade**, a perzine from Kev McVeigh — though I had to turn to the back page to find out both these facts. Kev is a fan who has done a few zines before, mostly sercon and a few one-off perzines, but hasn't published anything for about five years. It starts:

"ARE YOU NOW . . .
OR HAVE YOU EVER BEEN . . .
... afraid?"

Malade is only six and a half pages long, though this is all one

story. It is a catharsis for a recent incident in Kev's life. I do not think that the nature of the incident need be cited; the course of events is a familiar one to many, though perhaps not as violent as in this case.

It all started when Kev expressed a common sentiment at work that in a conflict where there are two sides then both sides have to be judged fairly. This was related to a specific case. A work-mate then took the 'Sun newspaper mentality' view and said that this meant that he was a sympathiser with the less popular side. Kev tried to explain that that was not what he had said, and that he had merely meant . . . Does this sound familiar to anyone? A few years later, when Kev was leaving a local pub, he was stopped by a guy who'd heard that he was a sympathiser and maybe even one of them. Another drunk joined with the guy and said that he knew him to be one of them. Kev denied all this and tried to laugh off the most ludicrous of their claims. As he went to walk away from them he was struck and then punched and kicked by both of them. Kev was beaten very badly, but it is the emotional effects that caused him the most suffering. His definitions of the feelings which he felt both during and after his ordeal leave the reader no cause for confusion.

Two and a half years after the assault he heard one word clearly directed at him whilst waiting at a bus stop. He writes, "all my pain came back with the anger and the fear mixed and added." His full account is powerful and precise.

This is a fanzine done for the right reasons. It is impassioned and truthful. His writing flows and he has an uncanny knack for being able to use exactly the right words to convey his meaning. What impressed me most was the way his writing asked only for understanding from the reader, not sympathy.

Cybrer Bunny 3 is described as a fanthology edited by and written for Tara and Robert Glover — you've probably heard of their more infamous parents, Steve and Jenny. This is a very well produced zine, it is excellently laid out and beautifully illustrated. Consisting mostly of short stories for kids, it also has a regular column on anime and a lively letters page which seems to have settled on the title "Of Cabbages and Kings".

There were a couple of stories which I felt were of professional quality (and without doubt better than most — especially those written by people whose names start with HRHJ). My favourite was "The Troubles of Roderick" by Jack Davies. This was a charming piece about the hatching of a baby dragon who was known to be special from the unique silver colour of his shell. The story was left with his just having hatched and being christened Roderick Rufus, and there were definite hints of great things to come. I sincerely hope that this turns into a regular series and we get to hear more about poor Roderick who, we are told, is unable to roll his "Rrrrr's".

The other story which I feel requires mentioning was by



microbert

Mike 'Simo' Simpson. Entitled "Grounded", it is the story of a nine and a half year old boy called PJ, who awakens one morning to discover that everyone in the world can fly and think it perfectly natural that they can. The only exception is PJ, who cannot fly and also remembers the day before quite clearly when they also could not fly. Simo has produced a fully realised story which shows the emotions encountered by a child who realises by turns the benefits for others of this ability to fly and the fear of himself being different. The story twists cleverly near the end and finishes happily. Simo's style is gentle and humorous, which makes this story enjoyable by all ages. If anyone knows where I can get hold of more of his work then please let me know.

All the stories in *Cyber Bunny* are well written; I mentioned the two above as I thought them to be of exceptional quality. I hope that *Cyber Bunny* continues to grow and wouldn't be surprised if another Narnia were discovered within its pages. This is a treasure trove of tales for children of all ages and no few adults, and could possibly only be improved upon if we could occasionally read something from the editors themselves.

Alison Freebairn has produced another edition of *From the Kelpie's Pool 2*. This makes me sick, not from its contents, but because she has produced 24 pages in the time it's taken me to produce this review column, and she even cut four articles from hers! The Bitch! It's OK, she's also my best friend so I'm allowed to call her that. And she managed to get an absolutely brilliant cover drawn by Sue Mason.

What can you expect from a person who, at the time of her writing the zine, is a newspaper sub-editor who has her own column as a day job, and writes music reviews and features in her own time? What you can expect, and what you get, is a zine full of cool witticisms, incisive observations and music.

Kelpie has a definite sense of fun but also has strong currents of seriousness coursing through it. She looks at the death of Kurt Cobain and laments at the recriminating coverage given by the press at the time of his death whilst showing how his life, works and suicide affected her. Alison writes eloquently about the emotions his music evokes in her and of how her own life reached a critical point as she realised that she was no longer happy with her job and the direction her life was going in. In another piece, entitled "A P.C. Pyrrhic Victory", she vents her anger over the ineffectiveness of today's police force due to the rigid restrictions which have been put in place in a bid to counter the corruption of the seventies and eighties. She looks back to the fifties and sixties to show that even though the police's methods then were not always politically correct

the results were more effective.

She does take off her investigative reporter hat quite often throughout the zine to put on what can only be described as a very camp cap. With headings like "Kick Me With Your Leather Boots" and "Travels With My Camp" we are shown the sordid side of Alison's life. In "Kick Me With Your Leather Boots" we learn of the small town where she grew up and a B & B therein applying to become a licensed brothel — our only surprise being that she no longer lives there. "Travels With My Camp" is about the exploits of Alison and her toy boys when let loose on London town. And what were they doing there? Going to see an episode of *Absolutely Fabulous* being filmed and attending a Rocky Horror show. Need I say more?

In addition, many fannish things are covered by Alison. We hear of her eventful journey back from Sou'wester and her report on Alabacon '94. There is also another piece by her on Intersection and why she will persist in her optimism over it and tells us that it will be largely up to the attendees to make it a successful convention. In the introduction she talks about her writing and how she feels about it; "My opinions are as transitory as the public's attention, and that's the way I like it." However, I believe that there is much in *Kelpie* that can bear the ravages of time and think that she could be a little less down on her writing and opinions. But I am the one who told her to publish and be damned. I mentioned above that Alison's work life is currently uncertain and I feel that the strain shows in the often 'down' endings to her articles in this issue. I'm hoping that the next *Kelpie* will be more upbeat than this one as Alison has a brilliantly sharp sense of humour which I know will impress and entertain her readers.

Fanzines Reviewed

Copies are available for "the usual" which is either a large stamped addressed envelope, a fanzine in trade, a grovelling letter promising a letter of comment in return, or, if desperate, money.

Lagoon 6 by Simon Ounsley
25 Park Villa Court, Leeds LS8 1EB
Balloons Over Bristol by Bristol SF Group (c/o Christina Lake)
12 Hatherly Rd, Bristol BS7 8QA
Malade by Kev McVeigh
37 Firs Rd, Milnethorpe, Cumbria LA7 7QF
Cyber Bunny by Tara and Robert Glover
16 Aviary Place, Leeds LS12 2NP
From the Kelpie's Pool by Alison Freebairn
The Police Houses, Lochwinnoch Rd, Kilmacolm PA13 4LG
— Jackie McRobert

A Summer Day's Dream

Reviewed by Jessica Yates

Written by J. B. Priestley. BBC2 Nov 94.

After nuclear war Britain has become a backward while world civilisation is carried on by an alliance of Russians, Americans and Indians. Priestley's vision of the future ignores the long-term effects of radiation, not surprisingly, as it was written in 1949. Set in 1975, the purpose is to show how Britain enshrines certain pastoral cultural values which in the end defeat the team of experts who want to dig up the Sussex Downs chalk for industrial purposes. The play is full of hints and warnings about the future — if we don't change our ways, woe betide us.

I find from the *SF Encyclopedia* that he wrote other holocaust-warning works (as well as being the first, possibly, to use the term 'inner space').

Hints of future Britain: there are no cars because there is no petrol. Back to horses for farming. No telephones. The capital city is Shrewsbury. British labour won't be any good for the chalk project, the workforce must be imported. Food is bartered — not much money. Beer, not wine, is drunk. Everything in the UK broke down after the Third War — the cultural centres were blown to bits. Most of the population then emigrated, and the

rest of them opted out of running the world. Presumably Priestley's first audience was meant to be struck by Britain not having an Empire anymore. The rest of the world has the 'TV-com' for communication — we haven't quite got there yet! Eventually the pastoral dream wins and the scientific team departs.

The play was distinguished by the performance of Sir John Gielgud as the owner of the Sussex estate, and Mike McShane as the American industrialist who falls under the spell of the presiding genius of Shakespeare.

— Jessica Yates



WHERE IS FILK going? Well, first we need to know what 'filk' is, and where it has been.

There are many definitions of filk. Most commonly heard is "Filk is what filkers sing at a filksing." While this has wide acceptance within the filk community, it has little meaning to anyone who actually needs a definition for the word. In more specific and less circular terms, filk is the music of science, science fiction, and fantasy. Filk has a long and colourful history. The word itself dates back to the 1950s, when it first appeared as a typo in the headline of an article by Lee Jacobs about *The Influence of Science Fiction on Modern American Folk Music*. However, the roots of filk can be traced back even farther in time, to both 'traditional' folk songs and major vocal and instrumental works by such renowned composers as Mussorgsky (*Night on Bald Mountain*, *Pictures at an Exhibition*), Brahms (*The Erlking*), Wagner (*The entire Ring cycle*), and Greig (*Hall of the Mountain King*). When the temper of the Classical and Romantic eras in music turned towards the creative aural picture-painting of the Impressionistic period, composers began to search legends and folk tales for suitable source material. They found a rich, imaginative source there in the fantasy of their time. Filk has very deep and obvious roots in this 'legitimate' music, as well as folk music!

Much of this interest (among professional composers) in fantastic themes died out with the dawn of the twentieth century. The 'name' composers of that era were more interested in experimenting with micro-tunings, atonality, minimalism, and the strange harmonies and rhythms of the new style called "jazz". The rich lode of fantasy-based material was all but ignored, and folk music became the only repository of these themes. However, with the rise of fandom came an interest in music based on the same concepts found in the stories. In the 1950s, fan began writing lyrics based on the stories of their favourite authors and setting them to existing songs, and a few were even writing completely original works. Most of these people came from a folk background, and had a large number of traditional songs in their repertoire. Those that weren't guitarists (or didn't play something equally portable) were quickly converted, taking advantage of the availability of relatively cheap instruments that could be easily carried.

This was pretty much the situation in filk until the 1970s.

What happened then? There were a number of changes that served to bring far more people into the "filkfold". First, it became possible to buy relatively inexpensive and portable recording gear of reasonable quality. This made it possible to do both 'live' and 'studio' recordings of filksongs, and remove filk from the exclusive realm of the convention. Fan no longer content to hear their favourite songs only in a live setting, and the technology made it possible to carry their favourite performances with them... and not incidentally, to play them for others who were not attending conventions. Second, there was an influx of very talented newcomers into filk, and, combined with the existing "old guard", there was an increased variety in both the voices and style of material available. Third, we saw the introduction of the first truly portable electronic keyboards. While they have, as yet, not penetrated the filk circles in substantial numbers, there is a growing minority of filkers who choose keyboards over guitars as their accompaniment, and they have even seen use as background instruments in recordings by otherwise 'traditional' filkers.

One thing that is destined to have a great impact on the future of filk is the advent of affordable and portable digital recording technology. Now, we have the capability to make crystal-clear recordings in relatively inexpensive home studios, and to turn out a product that meets broadcast standards. Filk is beginning to feel the stirrings of what is possible with this technology, and some recordings have already been released on compact disc. This trend is sure to continue, as recording equipment costs come down, and the cost of CD pressing becomes more reasonable.

The "formal" aspect of filk has also re-awakened, and can be found in recorded music, in live theatre, and on the movie screen. Recordings such as *War of the Worlds* by Jeff Wayne and *Lord of the*

Rings by Johann de Meij echo the concepts of oratorios or pure music meant for the concert hall. Productions such as *Cats*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *Into The Woods*, *Return to the Forbidden Planet*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, and even *The Rocky Horror Show* have brought the concepts of music and songs of fantasy and science fiction to the stage, while movie versions of those shows and classic film and TV scores for the *Star Wars* films, *Star Trek*, *Alien Nation*, *The Neverending Story*, and Disney's *The Little Mermaid*, *Beauty and the Beast* and *Aladdin* (among others!) have done the same for the mass market. It is significant to note the Academy Award winners for "Best Song" and "Best Score" in this list!

Oddly enough, while some of the above-mentioned works have won awards such as the Sudler Prize, Tony Awards, and Academy Awards, fandom has largely ignored the resurgence of interest in music with fantastic themes. While the Hugo awards recognize nearly every area of professional and fanish endeavour, and even the Worldcon Masquerade receives attention on a par with the Hugos, there is no award comparable in scope or prestige for achievement of musical excellence in the field of science fiction. For a group that prides itself on its eclecticism, totally ignoring this single aspect of the performing arts seems rather strange.

Why is this? Well, the reasoning usually follows one of two paths.

First, there is the traditional resistance to giving another Hugo, for any reason. Most often, this relates to the claim that "It takes too long already!" This seems a remarkably specious argument. If we were talking about another award for yet a further subdivision-by-length-of-text story, then there might be some validity to this, but this would be a long-overdue recognition of a completely neglected art form. I cannot believe that another 10 minutes would be that badly begrudged. The other argument presented by some would claim a 'dilution' of the 'value' of a Hugo. Again, the reasoning escapes me. This would not be a duplication or subdivision of an already existing award, but a recognition of the contributions of the only art form that currently has no category in which it could be nominated. Even dance and stage presentations could currently be recognized under "Dramatic Presentations", but no means exists for the recognition of musical composition in any form.

The second path usually follows the line that "Filk doesn't deserve an award because it isn't good enough." Even if someone were to propose an award specifically for filk, rather than for music with sf thematic content which could include filk, as well as mainstream music, this is simply no longer true. However, this is where the very egalitarian nature of a filksing works against it. Those fan who limit their exposure of filk to what they hear at a convention severely handicap their



Past Present and Future Filk Joe Ellis

judgment in this matter. Filk in an open circle has no 'editor', no-one to winnow the grain from the chaff. Keep in mind Sturgeon's Law: "90% of everything is crap." Now, think about those piles of rejected manuscripts at every publisher that never see the light of day. The difference between the perception of filk and the perception of sf as a whole lies in the fact that at filksing, no one selects who may sing and who may not. No other aspect of fandom is as democratic, and as open to new performers, as is filk.

Because of this, many of the best talents don't perform as often, and the public perception of the general quality of filk can be degraded. However, if you listen to the recordings, you will find a far different story. Here, you will find the best of the songs and the singers. Even in an informal, "recorded live" setting, you can hear the life and urgency you only get when a performer has a passionate belief in their music.

Even if fandom chooses to continue its neglect, though, filk will continue to flourish and grow. Much like a dandelion, it can be trampled, ignored, even poisoned, but will return undaunted and stronger than ever. The growing interest of

professional musicians in the field, the interest in scholarly research into various aspects of filk, even the attention of as prestigious a publication as the *Wall Street Journal* (Leisure & Arts section, 'Songs of Tomorrow Today', by Tessa DeCarlo, Nov. 1, 1993) all indicate the burgeoning of a potentially powerful new force in music.

So, where is filk going? It has already been to space. Filk songs by filk artists have been used as wake-up calls to shuttle astronauts. Ron McNair was supposed to record a soprano saxophone track for Jarre's *Rendezvous* on the ill-fated last flight of the Challenger. Neil Diamond wrote and recorded "Heartlight", and John Denver, "Flying for Me". The musical mainstream is on the verge of discovering that people have been writing songs like these for well over 40 years.

There really is "only one way to go from here," and "the only way to go from here is out!" (1)

(1) "One Way To Go" © 1981, Diana Gallagher

— Joe Ellis

STARGATE



Reviewed by Joseph Nicholas

Directed by Roland Emmerich
US, 1994; 121 minutes; cert. PG

The omens were not good. Director Roland Emmerich's previous two films, *Moon 44* and *Universal Soldier*, were chiefly notable for their inconsistent plotting, indifferent scripting and acting, and an excess of action and special effects to compensate for these shortcomings. But his films clearly make money; *Stargate* is his third, and to date most expensive, English-language venture.

I was pleasantly surprised. There are no internal inconsistencies of plotting; money was obviously expended at script stage to provide the characters with recognisable motivations; and the special effects in this case complement, rather than detract from, everything else. And the acting is much better, even though Kurt Russell is Kurt Russell is Kurt Russell (at any moment I expected him to sprout the huge moustache he wore in last year's *Tombs of the Ancients*). James Spader looks as winsomely boyish as ever, and Jaye Davidson is his usual wonderfully androgynous self (does he ever shave?).

Nevertheless, *Stargate* is a good example of Bruce Sterling's "comic book baroque": something on which great care and attention has been lavished, but whose premise is fundamentally silly — in this case, a scenario lifted almost wholesale from Erich von Däniken. James Spader is an Egyptologist whose dissident theories about the age of the pyramids and

alternate translations of hieroglyphs bring him to the attention of a team trying to decipher the inscriptions on some covering stones unearthed at Giza seventy years before. He duly interprets their meaning, and opens the stargate (a hyperspace tunnel) to a distant planet with an Earth-like atmosphere. He and a small team of US marines, led by Kurt Russell, are sent through to explore, and discover a tribe of humans descended from ancient Egyptians who were transported from Earth to work as slaves in a mine. Breaking into a hidden tunnel in their walled city, Spader discovers some hieroglyphs describing the star-god Ra's descent to Earth and the eventual revolt which ended his rule. Meanwhile, Kurt Russell has secret instructions to blow up the other planet's stargate to prevent any threat to Earth. Then Jaye Davidson, as the sadistic Ra, turns up in his giant pyramid spaceship, and the special effects go into overdrive — and, unfeasible though giant pyramidal spaceships doubtless are, it must be admitted that (especially when seen in cinemascope from the seventh row of a large theatre) its landing and opening up is a Real Treat.

Real Egyptologists will have been tearing their hair out long before this, of course. (As the British Museum's George Hart once remarked, the pyramids undoubtedly have great power, but it seems to be the power to abolish common sense.) Emmerich's vision of ancient Egypt is like Cecil B. de Mille's: huge

high-ceilinged halls, lots of flowing drapery, gold everywhere, and no regard for real period. The building in which the alien planet's stargate is located, for example, closely resembles a funerary temple of the New Kingdom; yet it is attached to a full-size replica of the Great Pyramid, which was built during the Old Kingdom, a millennium earlier. And the symbol referred to throughout as the Eye of Ra is, rather embarrassingly for the producers, well attested as the Eye of Horus.

It's all hokum, in other words — but then so are most sf films. A sociological reading of *Stargate*, however, tells us rather more about popular culture at the end of the millennium. The most obvious theme is the New Age one: the desire to uncover an understanding which lies beyond science, coupled in this instance to the wish not to be alone in the universe (even if the aliens turn out to be ourselves). But the most interesting theme is that thrown up by Kurt Russell's secret mission to destroy the other stargate, to prevent future threats to Earth: but for "Earth" read "USA" and for "prevention" read "isolationism" — the isolationism which is never very far from the surface of US politics and which, reflecting the mood of the US electorate, is once again out in force in Washington DC. The fear of the outsider, especially in a nation separated from the rest of the world by two oceans, is as powerful as ever.

— Joseph Nicholas

ALIEN WAR

WE WENT TO 'Alien War' for a laugh. It looked like the sort of thing that you get into stitches over — people running about trying to look scary in sad rubber suits etc. There was no way it could be as scary as the sets in *Aliens*.

Oh dear. Did we get it wrong ...

We were guided into a strange sort of briefing-room full of weird stuff and bundled into medium-sized groups which included small irritating children and some arrogant over-confident students who kept going on about how 'plastic' everything looked. They were quickly informed that we hadn't entered the game yet. Then we were told to walk through this big *Star Wars*-like metal power door which was a bit of a surprise — "Hey, cool!" came some quiet remarks ...

The first thing you notice is that the set actually looks like the film — real-ish. Very real-ish. This was a little disturbing in itself, but then these guys in colonial-marine getup start shouting orders at us. They have replica blank-firing guns and very large pulse-rifles. They are **very** loud when used at short range. This was even more disturbing than the sets.

After realising that a trip to Burger King would probably have been a less stressful decision, we hoped that the seven kids, four parents and two university students who were bundled along with us were not going to make things worse by screaming/panicking/running away and things like that. If everybody kept together and put a calm, humour-laced look on their face, things might just begin to look like fun again.

The uni students had stopped spouting arrogance and now had eyes the size of saucers. The kids were crying. The parents wanted to go home. We were having about as much fun as a patient in a Dentist's waiting room. Then one of the marines said something encouraging — "Don't stand at the back, because the stragglers are always first to get picked off." This was not something we wanted to hear. We had made a mistake. Burger King it was — let's get out.

Doug Little

experiences *Alien War* at the Trocadero in London's Piccadilly

Unfortunately, the lights went out and everything went a sort of red colour. We decided to stay with the group after all. The guys who run it are cruel people, because they had these pipes that spurt steam when you walk past them. This caught one of the students off-guard and he literally screamed and bolted up the dark passage, only to return about half a second later. He immediately began to employ ingenious ways of getting into the exact middle of the group, hoping to avoid a 'snatch' as the marines called it.

The thing that really triggered off intense panic was the fact that as we were creeping across the top of a T-junction with no lights in the adjacent corridor, this 7-foot, black, shiny, armoured thing popped its head out of the darkness and opened its jaws with a horrible hissing sound. It pounced on this guy and literally yanked him out of the group back into the dark passageway. We couldn't see properly through the dry-ice and this just made it all worse. I did not want that to happen to me, fake rubber suit or not. This whole thing was getting very bad indeed.

You have two parts to your brain — the logical, sensible, physics and maths Dr Spock part and the half that decides which bizarre video to stick in the old mind-VCR when you are asleep. At this point the Dr Spock part had locked itself in a small cupboard and passed control over to its counterpart which had proceeded to do incredible things with the lower limbs and larynx. We ran like hell. Where I don't remember, but it was better than putting up with this.

After the gunfire had died down, four kids, two students, three parents and a marine were missing. All that remained of them was a sort of horrible screaming noise and some nasty language in the

distance. We agreed between us that this was not what we expected and it was not very funny, and that if anybody ran away, we were not going to try to find them.

We eventually did get out after a number of 'incidents' involving lots of greenish eggs, people just disappearing and loads of interesting comments such as: "They're coming through the door," and "You go ahead — we'll hold them off as long as we can." The best one though, was "You go on ahead and check the next junction — there could be one waiting."

The next 15 minutes were spent in silence, studying the expressions on the faces of people who came out after us, marvelling at the change that took place since they entered. You could actually see the difference between the two lines of people coming in and out, looking across at each other, the 'exit' group trying to relay some sort of warning ...

If anybody does decide to go, please bear in mind that you will be able to cope better if you have not seen any of the films. If you have then you could have problems, and if you are a fanatic — then God help you.

I know it all sounds a bit sad and exaggerated — but you know that feeling that comes over you when you think a brother/sister/friend is hiding in a cupboard or something just waiting for the first opportunity to scare the shit out of you, and although you **know** what's going to happen your brain still moves to DEFCON1 and your hearing improves by about 150%?

Take that and add to it dry-ice, alert sirens, strange noises and the creatures from *Aliens* and that about covers it.

I would go again, but we had a sort of unspoken agreement after the last time where none of us would go near it for the remainder of our natural lives. It's very embarrassing to watch 27-year old students crack up and loose their marbles like that.

— Doug Little

Alien War

Is in the basement of the Trocadero Centre at Piccadilly Circus, London.

Phone 071 437 2678

Tours take approximately 20 minutes, and are organised in groups of 6 to 12 people.

Booking is advisable for weekend tours.

Opening times Sun-Fri 11.30am to 11.00pm, Sat 10.30am to 11.00pm.

Times may vary seasonally, so ring to confirm.

Prices Adult: £7.95; Student: £6.95 (valid ID required); Child: £5.95 (8-14 years inclusive)

Discounts are available for parties of twelve or more.

EVENTS

18 Feb 1930: Clyde Tombaugh discovers Pluto (65th anniversary).

22 February: BSFA London meeting

Jubilee Tavern, York Road (near Waterloo Station). Starts at 7pm in the upstairs room. Guest this month is **Brian Stableford**.

27 Feb: Russian Mars Rover to be tested in Hawaii.

Mar 1939: "Marooned Off Vesta", Isaac Asimov's first story, appears in *Amazing Stories*.

1 Mar 1980: Benoit Mandelbrot cheers T-shirt manufacturers by imaging the Mandelbrot Set at Harvard.

2 Mar: Space shuttle Endeavour launch.

2 March: London SF meeting

Wellington pub opposite the Old Vic exit from Waterloo Station. Usually starts about 5pm. No special events but very crowded and popular. * This is the meeting which originally took place in the White Hart and was made infamous by Arthur C. Clarke in his collection of tall *Tales From the White Hart*.

4-5 March: MicroCon 15

Exeter University. Guest of honour is **Ramsey Campbell**. Contact: *Microcon 15*, 17 Polsloe Road, Exeter, EX1 2HL.

4-5 March: Timewarp

is a **Star Trek** con to be held at the Grand Hotel, Malahide, Dublin. Contact: *Timewarp*, 30 Beverley Downs, Knocklyon, Dublin 16

12 March: Picocon 12

is a one-day convention at Imperial College Union, Beit Quadrangle, Prince Consort Road, London; it features **Iain Banks**. Contact: *Picocon 12*, 13 Lindfield Gardens, Hampstead, London NW3 6PX or email bmh@ee.ic.ac.uk

13 Mar 1855: Astronomer Percival Lowell born. 140 today! (He discovered 'canals' on Mars.)

17-19 March: Trek Dwarf 3

is a combined **Star Trek** and **Red Dwarf** convention at the Holiday Inn, Leicester. Registration is £35. Contact: *Trek Dwarf 3*, 47 Marsham, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough

18 Mar 1965: The first space walk, performed by Alexei Leonov from Voskhod 2 (30th anniversary).

18 March: Star Winds

Sponsored by Portsmouth City Council and Southern Arts, **Star Winds** is the South Hants Science Fiction Group's contribution to the literary season of the Portsmouth Festival. The format will be a 'mini convention' with everything you would normally expect to find at a con — talks, panels, quizzes and games — squeezed into one day. *EXPLORATION IN SCIENCE FICTION* is the theme of the day. It will provide the basis for panel discussions and talks by specially invited guests. These include **Ian Watson**, winner of the BSFA award for *The Jonah Kit* and the Prix Apollo for *The Embedding*, and **Gwyneth Jones**, winner of the James Tiptree Jr. Award for *White Queen*. There will be more to be announced. As a special surprise the shade of H.G. Wells will return to the city where he served his apprenticeship and be visiting us. Programming will run from mid day until late evening. Doors open at 11.00am. Portsmouth and Southsea are just one and a half hours from London by Rail from either Victoria or Waterloo stations. There are also direct rail links from Brighton, Bournemouth, Southampton and Reading. For those who prefer to travel by road Portsmouth is easily accessible via the M3 and M27 or via the A3(M). Membership of Star Winds will be £10.00 on the door or a special rate of £7.50 for advance registrations. Cheques should be made payable to Wincon. Contact: *Star Winds*, South Hants SF Group, 38 Outram Road, Southsea, Portsmouth, Hants PO5 1QZ or phone 0705 754934 or email 100102.1701@compuserve.com

22 March: BSFA London meeting

See above for details.

25 Mar 1655: Christiaan Huygens discovers Saturn's moon Titan.

31 March - 2 April: Contagion

The 1995 British role-playing game convention, held this year at Keele University. Attendance is £20.

Contact: *Contagion*, 17 Davenport Road, Stockport, Cheshire SK2 6JU or phone Neil McCallum on 0625 568470 or Richard Salmon on 081 549 0106.

Apr 1926: First issue of *Amazing Stories*.

Apr 1946: *New Worlds* magazine launched (editor E. J. Carnell).

Apr 1946: "Loophole", Arthur C. Clarke's first story, appears in *Amazing*.

1 Apr 1960: TIROS-1, the world's first weather satellite, is launched (35th anniversary).

6 April: London SF meeting

See above for details.

8-9 April: ConFusion

Held at Geraardsbergen in Belgium, ConFusion's guests will be **Christopher Priest**, **Leigh Kennedy**, **Jannelles Smit**, **Bob Van Laerhoven** and **Hugo Raes**. Rates: £21.50 until 15 Mar 95; £23.50 thereafter. Contact: **ConFusion**, c/o Peter Motte, Abdijstraat 33, B-9500 Geraardsbergen, Belgium.

11 Apr 1970: Launch of the ill-fated Apollo 13 moonshot at 13:13 hours Houston time (25th anniversary). On 13 Apr an oxygen tank exploded as the capsule was en route to the moon ... watch out for TV documentaries.

12 Apr 1961: Yuri Gagarin becomes first man in space.

15 Apr 1912: Titanic sinks. No connection with ...

14-17 April: Confabulation

The 1995 Eastercon. See page 23 for an article. Membership is £25 attending and £10 supporting; children born on or after 14 April 1981 pay £10 attending, and children born on or after 14 April 1987 do not need to pay anything, but can join the convention (and get a badge) for a nominal £1. Hotel room rates (inclusive of VAT and full English breakfast) are £31 per person per night for a twin or double, and £37 for a single.

Important: Please note that postal registrations will not be accepted after 31 March, and you will have to pay a lot more if you join on the day.

Contact: **Confabulation**, 3 York Street, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA15 9QH or email confab@moose.demon.co.uk

28 April - 1 May: SOL III

The national **Star Trek** convention is held this year in sunny Blackpool at the Norbreck Castle Hotel.

Contact: **SOL III**, 39 Dersingham Avenue, Manor Park, London E12.

4 May: London SF meeting

See above for details.

24-28 August: Intersection

'Oh beautiful **Scottish Convention** on the banks of the silv'ry Clyde! Your great magnificence makes fandon go all weak inside!'

— From "Ode to The **Scottish Convention**" by William McGonagall (as astrally projected to Abigail Frost and Dave Langford)

The 1995 World Science Fiction Convention will be taking over Glasgow in August. This may be literally true: according to *GQ* magazine it is 'expected to attract upwards of 50,000 people'. Has anyone told the committee?

See page 23 for an article by Chairman Easterbrook.

Membership is £80.

Contact: **Intersection**, Admail 336, Glasgow, G2 1BR or email intersection@smof.demon.co.uk

5-8 April 1996: Evolution

The 1996 Eastercon will be held at the Radisson Edwardian Hotel, Heathrow. Guests will be **Vernor Vinge**, **Jack Cohen**, **Colin Greenland**, and **Bryan Talbot**. Membership is £20 attending, £12 supporting and child rate; these apply until 18 April 1995.

Contact: **Evolution**, 13 Lindfield Gardens, Hampstead, London NW3 6PX or email bmh@ee.ic.ac.uk

INTERSECTION: Past, Present and Future

Martin Easterbrook on The Scottish Convention

Intersection intended to be a follow up to Confection: a convention which would be a meeting place for the diverse traditions of US, UK and European Science Fiction and Fandom. Only the World Convention is capable of bringing the diverse mix of people together needed to achieve this.

When we originally decided to bid for a World Convention we looked around for a site in the UK. We found 3 or 4 sites capable of handling this, depending on the assumptions you make about size. These were Jersey, The Birmingham ICC, Brighton and Glasgow.

Birmingham was the first site we saw, and in fact gave us the idea of bidding for a Worldcon in the first place. But Birmingham was a new facility at that time and was not able to give us prices which we could afford. A Jersey bid would have meant holding the convention at the end of their peak season so that we could only book facilities on a Saturday to Saturday basis rather than over a weekend, as is traditional. Brighton would certainly have been keen to have us back but the problems we experienced there during Conspiracy meant that few of the potential attendees would have been eager to vote for a repeat visit.

Glasgow and the SECC on the other hand were both eager to have us and willing to go to great lengths to help and support us. For them we were not just another small convention but a World class event that would help them promote their facilities. Because of this the Glasgow and Scottish tourist boards were able to give us very substantial support.

Having found our site we were able to refine our plans somewhat. The size and finances of the site dictate a target size of about 5 thousand attendees. So far our membership figures are on target for this figure.

The site itself is centred on the SECC. This is a Conference centre rather than a hotel and a rather different kind of building to those where we are used to holding conventions in the UK. It is however very similar to the centres used by North American Worldcons over the last decade making it possible to 'borrow' much of the planned layout from them. In contrast the hotels in Glasgow include 3 previous Easterncon sites and are exactly the sort of place one would choose for a traditional British Convention. With daytime programming centring on the SECC and the Moat House hotel next door while evening programming moves back to the hotels we hope

to mix both styles of convention within the one event.

As well as finalising our site winning the bid meant that we were able to announce our Guests of honour. These were Samuel Delany, our literary guest, Gerry Anderson our media guest, Les Edwards our artist guest and Vincent Clarke our fan guest. To complete our line up we invited Peter Morwood & Diane Duane to be our "Toast Mr & Mrs".

Going through this process brought home to us that the 'Intersections' of different types of SF and of Fandom as well as different nationalities were going to be the theme of this convention. A theme which was restated in a more Scottish manner as "The gathering of the fannish clans".

We have set up groups to develop each 'stream' of the convention programme. These include fan, literary, science, film, media, film and games. We are currently at the stage of developing these individual themes. After the first set of items are developed along from these themes we will be reworking them to produce as many items as possible which will deal with the 'Intersections' between the themes. We are aiming for a programme of about 500 items, something which is only possible because of the large number of interesting speakers who will be coming to such an event. These speakers will include several hundred SF professionals.

This kind of size is something of a mixed blessing. While it allows us to develop a wide and varied programme it also makes it difficult to define that programme in the concise way that UK fans expect for a Novacon or a Mexicon. This, added to the fact that most of the work which goes on in the first two years leading up to a Worldcon deals with the organisation of the event more like a business than a smaller convention, has led to a rather lower profile for the convention programme itself than we would have liked. Our approach to the programme has been to emphasise quality and commitment to each of the streams as each of these is the direct equivalent of a smaller specialist convention and then to intertwine them in unexpected ways.

Our aim is to provide an environment for 5 days where people will find as much as possible to stimulate and interest them and where they will feel encouraged to participate as much as possible both at the convention itself as active fans afterwards.

—Martin Easterbrook

CONFABULATION

Confabulation is the 1995 British National Science Fiction Convention, and will take place in the Britannia International Hotel, Marsh Wall, Docklands, London, over Easter weekend, 14-17 April 1995.

Our guests of honour are **Lois McMaster Bujold**, **Bob Shaw** and **Roger Robinson**.

Lois McMaster Bujold won the Hugo for best novel in both 1991, with *The Vor Game*, and 1992, with *Barry*. Her novels are predominantly extremely entertaining far-future space operas. Her characters are interesting and engaging, and the lightness of touch of her books serves to lighten some very serious subjects. This will be her first appearance as a guest at a UK convention.

Bob Shaw is one of Britain's best-loved authors and fans. A writer of considerable inventiveness, his novels and stories have been entertaining us for over forty years. In addition to his science fiction, he has been for many years a prolific fan writer. With Walt Willis, he wrote *The Enchanted Duplicator*, possibly the most famous piece of fan writing.

Roger Robinson has been active in UK fandom for many years. His small press, Beacon Publications, has produced a wide range of publications over the last decade, from magazine checklists to songbooks. He wrote the most authoritative collection of SF and other pseudonyms, *Who's Hugh?* Additionally, he has been

involved with charity fundraising for RNIB talking books and the Science Fiction Foundation.

Confabulation is taking place in the same year as the Worldcon comes to the UK. We are intending, therefore, that the convention should be lighthearted and relaxing. We will be having all the sort of things that you expect at an Easterncon, but possibly not all at once. We will have a single main programme, an alternative programme for some of the time, and a collection of irrelevant but enjoyable workshops. We'd like to recreate the atmosphere of a 50-person relaxacon on a slightly larger scale. There will of course be a dealers' room, an art show, and a bar.

Membership of Confabulation costs £25 pounds and £10 supporting, until 31st March 1995. **After that we will not take postal memberships.** Membership on the door is not guaranteed to be available, as we do not want to be an enormous convention, and will be considerably more expensive. We would like everyone who intends to come to Confabulation to join in advance if at all possible. We have reduced rates for children.

The official mammal of the convention is the moose. Why the moose? Well, why not? Bona fide soft toy moose can attend the con for nothing. Moose paraphernalia is also encouraged.

- Confabulation Committee

COMPETITION

O Roger Robinson

Competition 113 — "Limericks"

R Last month's competition ("Designer Stamps") was distinguished by a lack of entries, unfortunately, so Roger's famous hat remains empty and forlorn. So this time here's something to get your creative and comedic juices flowing:

N Write up to three limericks with the first line containing the name of a personality in the sf, fantasy or horror fields — authors, fans, artists, editors (even *Matrix* ones) are all allowed.

E Scurriosity is encouraged! Mucky limericks may win points — and what do points mean? PRIZES! — but they may not be printed as our libel fund is a tad low at present.

R Limericks managing to creatively rhyme "Sri Lanka" are encouraged, and stop smirking at the back.

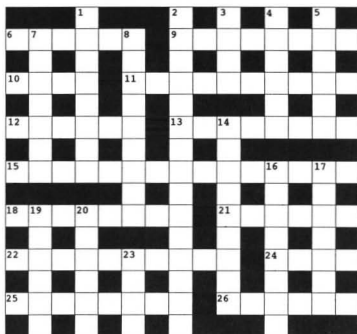
All answers to the usual address:

Roger Robinson
75 Rosslyn Avenue
Harold Wood
Essex RM3 0RG

by 17th March 1995.

Crossword 13

John English



Across

6. Approach Arthur Clarke initially with a price (6)
9. Star sign missing a curve in front. . . (8)
10. . . . until you finally turn to the next page (2,2)
11. Writing's attraction is about to repeat without end (10)
12. Black body has none, which upsets 12 bonny hacks (6)
13. Fellow lodger goes into space with spouse (8)
15. Film facing the past? (4,2,3,6)
18. Delany's (unaccented) series is not once over there (8)
21. Confine, for example, if brought back with spots (6)
22. Genetic engineer, perhaps? 'E's trapped in Chibo, confused by fog . . . (10)
24. . . . at Christmas, you'll hear (4)
25. Flatter an author and get inside (8)
26. Man finds queen next to ant-heap (6)

Down

1. Metal ore found in wine for new generation's recreation area (8)
2. How 16 go with one eating nothing when weighing little (6,4,5)
3. Mark's second vehicle (4)
4. Usage of copper's cat (6)
5. Write utter nonsense about Brunner's latest, "The Small Tower" (6)
7. Star of aviation authority orbiting Downbelow Station's planet (7)
8. Study of causes, or of TV by the sound of it? (9)
14. Eccentric's fort with fence destroyed (3-6)
16. Chaos; Tony, with nothing to lose, dissolves into supposed particles (8)
17. Goldcrest's star (7)
19. How villains smile, or half of them if caught by you coming up (6).
20. Age once formed in early English (6)
23. Record on silicon chip "Lord of the Rings" perhaps? (4)

Members' Noticeboard

Advertisements and announcements are free to BSFA members. Send your ad to the editorial address or to Maureen Speller.

FOR SALE: 1090 SF and Fantasy books, comprising: 70 new stock hardcover, 337 new p/b, 86 used hardcover, 597 used p/b. £950.00 the lot. Buyer to collect from Bournemouth. Phone 01202 432489.

A COMICS SCRIPTING / ART WORKSHOP, organised by Peterborough SF Writers' Group and featuring writer Noel K. Hannan and artist Rik Rawlings, is being held on Saturday 20th May at Peterborough Arts Centre, from 10am until 4pm. Cost £5. Onsite café facilities. Book early, places are limited. For further information contact Helen Gould at 28 Bathurst, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough, Cambs. PE2 5QH.

COMPLETE UK ANIME BUYERS GUIDE! Over 120 titles! Comprehensive A-Z listing and reviews of UK-PAL releases of dubbed and subtitled anime and "Manga Videos™". Only £2.99 inc. postage. Write to: G. Cowie, 9 Oxford Street, Bletchley, Milton Keynes MK2 2UA.

THE WAY TO WRITE SCIENCE FICTION by Brian Stableford. Signed pb copies available at £5. Also available: *The Empire of Fear*, £10 hardcover, £5 C-format pb; *Sexual Chemistry: Sardonian Tales of the Genetic Revolution* £8 hc; *The Asgard Trilogy*, £10 boxed set (limited to 500 copies) of 3 pbs. All prices post-free. Order from Brian Stableford, 113 St Peter's Road, Reading RG6 1PG.

PEN FRIENDS WANTED. Indonesian lady seeks to contact SF fans (35 years onward) in Munich and Germany, France, UK, USA. Contact: Irina Bückner, Einsteinstra. 102, D-81675, Munich.

SF PEN PAL WANTED for a 19 year-old physics undergraduate in Madras. Please contact Alison Cook, 52 Woodhill Drive, Grove, Oxon OX12 0DF for more information.

THE CHANGES (BBC 1975) and *Sky* (HTV 1975). Allister Lehan is looking for copies of these two children's TV series. If you can help, please contact him at: 7 Chesnut Avenue, Bomaderry, NSW, Australia.